

Absconding Policy



Redbridge Community School

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly for teachers, parent, students and other agencies, the process that will take place should a child abscond from school.

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ABSCONDING

Absconding: A student is considered to have 'absconded' if they intentionally/ knowingly leave the school site or the immediate area of an off-site activity without permission.

Under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and in Common Law, schools and other education settings owe a duty of care towards their students. This duty of care requires that all responsible steps are taken to ensure that students are safe and remain within the care of the school at all times throughout the school day and during school led activities.

PROCEDURE

Where a student, present at formal registration, is found to be absent from school without authorisation the following procedures should be followed:

- The Attendance Officer will use the truancy call if a student has failed to register for registration, but not a lesson, the Attendance officer will contact the 'on-call' member of staff.
- 'On-call'/ Progress Leader/ Assistant Progress Leader/ SMT will organise a search of the buildings and known places that the student may have gone to.
- If the student is not found then all available staff will complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.
- The school office will phone the parents and then the police when the area has been fully checked if the student has not been found.
- Consideration will be given as to whether the search should be extended beyond the school perimeter. This decision will be based on staff's knowledge of the student and on the levels of risk, and on what action is in the student's best interests.
- Any member of staff who leaves the school grounds will take a mobile phone to contact school.
- Once the student has been found then the SMT line manager will consolidate with the Headteacher to outline the response towards the student and the support the student will need in the future.
- A report will be filed on CPOMS regarding the incident.
- A courtesy call will be made to the student's parents/ carers

PROCEDURE

Where a student attempts or is seen to be leaving the school premises without authorisation the following procedures should be followed:

- Staff must follow the student to the perimeter fence or gate and must try to persuade the student to stay in the school.
- If a student is deemed to be high risk to themselves or other people then staff should adhere to the Behaviour Policy with reference to restraint, if appropriate.
- The police must be contacted immediately to safeguard the student and a phone call to parents must be made.
- At all times staff must be aware that active pursuit may encourage the student to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and may also cause the student to panic, possibly putting themselves at risk by running onto a busy road.
- If the student has left the immediate vicinity of the school the school office and 'on-call' must be contacted immediately and the lead person will direct the course of action.
- Staff will follow the student and engage in a local search, following the student at a safe distance if in view.
- The SMT lead may direct additional staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone to contact school.
- If the searching adults lose sight of the student they must contact the school office giving details of their location and the clothes which the student is wearing.

If the student(s) has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and is no longer visible then SMT, DSL and/ or Headteacher will make the decision as to how to take matters further, which will take into account the age of the student, the prevailing weather conditions, the nature of the incident, which led to the student absconding, the student's previous history of being involved in episodes of absconding and their outcomes. If the student returns of their own choice, parents/ carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.

Upon the students return to school, and when the student is calm, the student must be seen by the SMT and/ or the Headteacher so that the reasons for absconding may be discussed in detail. At this point a decision will be made as to the appropriateness of further actions.

A report on CPOMS will be filed on the incident and a relevant Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) referral to be made.