

Absconding Pupil Policy (including Abduction of Pupil)

Policy Statement

Under Section 3 of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, Section 175 of the Education and Inspections Act 2002, and in Common Law, schools and other educational settings owe a duty of care towards their pupils. This duty of care requires that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that pupils are safe and remain within the care of the school at all times throughout the school day and during school led activities.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Pheasant Bank Academy provides a safe and secure learning environment and puts safeguards in place to monitor pupil attendance. Where an absconion takes place staff will follow the procedures listed to assist in the safe recovery and return of the pupil, and report all events for review of such incidents.

1. School Security and Monitoring

The School will monitor pupils' attendance throughout the school day and provide a secure site by:

- Recording pupil attendance at morning class registration at 9.00am
- Securing all designated security gates between the hours of 9.15am and 3.00pm;
- Logging late arrivals at the office;
- Monitoring and supervising pupils with the designated number of staff during play-time;
- Teachers will report any missing pupils during class time to the main office;
- Monitoring and supervising pupils with the designated number of staff during lunch-time break;
- Recording pupil attendance at the afternoon class registration at the end of the lunch break at 1.00pm
- Ensuring all none teaching/activity area doors are closed and any non-fire escape doors locked, where these could be used as absconding routes or obscure hiding places.

During out of school activities the responsible adult will register the class/group and monitor pupil attendance. Any discrepancies will be reported to the main office. School visits will have an individual risk and supervision assessment, using EVOLVE.

2. Absconding Procedures

Whilst attending school

There are occasions when pupils may leave the school grounds without permission for a variety of reasons, e.g. they have been unduly teased and/or bullied; they are angry and upset about some incident which has occurred, or they may leave the school grounds for

totally trivial reasons. Whatever the circumstances the following points should be borne in mind:

i. If a child is seen to leave the school grounds without permission staff must not run after them, nor should they ask any other child or groups of children to pursue them. Experience shows that this often exacerbates the situation since it is often the case that a pupil will go no further than outside the school gates and after a short period of time will return of his/her own volition. Active pursuit may encourage the child to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and may also cause the pupil to panic and possibly put themselves at risk by, for example, running onto a busy road. Every effort, however, should be made to keep visual contact if this is possible.

If a pupil is deemed to be a high risk to him/herself or other people, staff should adhere to the Positive Handling Policy (this does not mean that staff should chase after a child in order to hold him/her).

ii. There may be occasions when a pupil has left the immediate vicinity of the school and it is felt to be appropriate by the members of staff dealing with the situation to engage in a local search. If the pupil, upon seeing the staff, continues to run away then active pursuit must not be undertaken since this course of action could also cause the pupil to panic and put him/herself at further risk.

iii. On all occasions whenever a pupil(s) absconds from school then this should be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) immediately and it will be for them to decide the course of action to be undertaken. In making his/her decision, they will take into account a number of factors:

a) Is the pupil outside the school grounds but still within the immediate vicinity of the school and not showing signs of venturing any further?

In this circumstance the SLT member may decide to do nothing except to monitor the pupil's whereabouts on a regular basis in the expectation that the pupil will eventually return to school of their own volition. If the pupil persists in remaining outside the immediate school grounds then the SLT (or a trusted adult) may eventually decide to approach the pupil in a friendly manner to see if the pupil can be persuaded to return to school. Obviously if the pupil, upon the approach of that member of staff, starts to walk further away, then this approach must be abandoned at that time. Experience shows that in the majority of cases when a pupil remains in the immediate vicinity of the school then he/she will normally return in due course.

b) Is the pupil(s) no longer visible and has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds?

In this circumstance the SLT will need to make a decision as to how to take matters further which will have to take into account:

- the age of the pupil(s);
- how vulnerable he/she is;
- the time of day and how long the child has been off site;
- the prevailing weather conditions;
- the nature of the incident which led to the pupil absconding; and
- the pupil's previous history of being involved in episodes of absconding and their outcomes.

Having taken such factors into account the SLT member will initiate the following course of action:

- Nominate a team of staff tasked with dealing with the absconding procedures;
- Check that the pupil has not returned to school;
- Ensure the pupil's parents/carers are informed that their son/daughter has absconded;
- If after reviewing the incident and there is no further notification of the pupil's whereabouts, the SLT (at their discretion) will report the pupil as missing to the Police Community Support Officer.;
- Undertake the completion of the School's Absconding form in which relevant members of staff will be required to outline the nature of any incident (if known) which led to the pupil absconding and a pupil profile (dress, appearance, discerning features) and the SLT dealing with the matter should log the steps that they have taken until the matter is finally resolved. The completed form/information to be uploaded to CPOMS and the incident must be reviewed to decide upon further action in keeping with school's behaviour policy.

If the pupil returns of their own volition, following the steps outlined above having been taken, then the parents/carers and the Police will need to be informed as soon as possible of the pupil's return to school.

Upon their return to school the pupil must be seen by the SLT or Learning Mentor so that the reasons for the absconsion may be discussed in detail. At that point a decision will need to be taken as to whether it is appropriate or not for the pupil to be sanctioned for their actions.

In all circumstances of absconding, parents/carers will be informed unless the SLT recognise, through consultation with the Designated Member of Staff for Safeguarding, that this would lead to risk of harm.

School Visits

A full risk assessment (EVOLVE) will be undertaken for each school visit and this, together with any pupil behaviour or absconding record, will assist in determining any measures required for specific pupils.

Where it is considered the risks and histories of absconding are too hazardous for taking an identified pupil on a visit, the pupil will initially be excluded from the visit and a letter sent to the parent/carer informing them of the academy's decision and reasons. The parents/carers have a right to appeal against this decision and attend an arranged meeting with the relevant academy staff to discuss any alternative/additional arrangements that would eliminate or reduce the risks associated with the pupil attending the visit e.g. a family member accompanying the child on the visit.

For the purpose of this Policy, visits are categorised into three levels and have appropriate management and assessment criteria. The following chart will be used to assess and manage school visits and provide the appropriate procedures to be adhered to. Category of Visit Description	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
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Examples of school visit

Outside activities including:
Water based
Water close proximity
General public spaces

Internal Site Specific activities including:
Museums/Galleries
Theatres

Local visits including:
Post Office
Church
Library