

MANSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Manston 

Absconding Policy

Manston Primary is committed to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all children and expects our staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Policy reviewed by: James Clay

Review Date: January 2028 [or earlier if deemed necessary]



Absconding Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy, the Behaviour Policy and the Care and Control Policy and includes guidance taken from Leeds City Council's Health and Safety Handbook for Schools.

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a child abscond from school.

To abscond is to 'leave without permission'. Any pupil who has the potential to abscond, would have an Behaviour Individual Pupil Risk Assessment (BIPRA) already in place

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 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.

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

- Member of staff to notify a member of SLT, the Safeguarding and Welfare Office, the Behaviour and Inclusion Officer and main office.
- Staff will immediately organise a search of buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to. This will be coordinated using walkie talkies.
- If the pupil is not found, then all available staff will be called to complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.
- The school office to phone the police when the area has been fully checked if the child is not found.
- At the instruction of SLT or Pastoral staff, the school office (or other staff member) will contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation.
- Consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the school perimeter. This decision will be based on the BIPRA. If no BIPRA is in place the decision will be based on: the staff's knowledge of the child; the levels of risk (CME, SSE, Stanger danger.), and what action is in the child's best interests at that time.
- Any staff who leave school grounds is to take mobile phone to contact school and would be ideally accompanied.
- Once a pupil has been found, then an SLT member will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future. If no BIPRA is in place this will be reviewed as soon as possible after the event. Any existing BIPRAS will also be reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate.
- A written report will be filed on the incident, and recorded on CPOMS system
- A member of SLT would brief police and parents as appropriate.

Where a pupil attempts or is seen to be leaving the school premises without authorisation, the BIPRA should be followed. If no BIPRA is in place staff should follow the procedures below:

1. Staff must follow the pupil to the perimeter fence or gate and must try to persuade the pupil to stay in the school.
2. If a pupil is deemed to be a high risk to themselves or other people, then staff should adhere to their BIPRA and the Care and Control Policy with reference to physically supporting the pupil, as they deem appropriate at this time.
3. At all times, staff must be aware that active pursuit may encourage the pupil to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and may also cause the pupil to panic, possibly putting him or herself at risk by running onto a busy road, for example.
4. If the pupil has left the immediate vicinity of the school, the school office and SLT members must be contacted immediately and the lead person will direct the course of action.
5. Staff will follow the pupil and engage in a local search, following the pupil at a safe distance if in view.
6. The SLT lead may direct additional staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone to contact school. Ideally in pairs.
7. The school office will contact the pupil's parents/carers.
8. If the searching staff lose sight of the pupil, they must contact the school office giving details of their location and a description which can be relayed to police.

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

Upon their return to school, and when the pupil is calm, the pupil must be seen by a member of SLT 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 written report will be filed on the incident, and recorded on CPOMS.

Appendix 2 - Example School Procedure if a child is missing / absconds.

Staff member informs SLT / Head that pupil is possibly missing / absconding.

Staff check location of pupil / if pupil still on premises by:

- Staff check last known location, known hiding points / calm down areas / areas pupil may regularly go to if absconding.
- Staff members man any points of easy exit from school grounds / building whilst others sweep building / grounds systematically (add specifics here for your site e.g. one end to other, first to ground floor, outside edges of playground to middle).

Pupil not found on the premises

Pupil sighted leaving the

Pupil is found on the grounds / premises

Pupil deliberately absconded

Pupil accidentally lost / misplaced

Staff leave premises to search / follow if safe to do so

- Staff inform parents by phone to alert them and maintain contact
- Staff inform the police

- SLT and other staff informed

Pupil is found

Pupil refuses to come in / go to Head

Pupil comes in / goes to Head

- Parents, pupil and police (if appropriate) attend school to discuss the matter. This should be done as soon as possible.

- Keep watch from discrete distance (if applicable)
- Call parents (if applicable)
- Pupil and parent discuss matter with Head

Investigate incident, determine how it happened and any lessons to be learnt. Take action to prevent recurrence and amend pupil and site risk assessments to reflect any changes.