

Mottram CE (Aided) Primary School

Absconding Policy

Introduction

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.

Purpose

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.

Terms and Definitions

Abscond is to 'leave without permission'.

Policy Details

Information to Pupils

- School rules and expectations are clearly displayed and reinforced throughout the school year.
- There is a clear and consistent reward and sanction system in school which includes all pupils.

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

- If a pupil is known to have arrived at school but is not in class the teacher will inform the Headteacher or in their absence the most senior member of staff.
- The Headteacher will organise a search of the building/ grounds and known places that the pupil may have gone.
- If a pupil is not found then all available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.
- If the missing child is known to be vulnerable then the school will phone parents/carers and the police to inform them of the situation once the school has been fully checked if the child is not found.

- Consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the school perimeter. This decision will be based on staff's knowledge of the child and on the levels of risk, as well as the action which is in the child's best interests.
- Any staff who leave the school grounds should take a mobile to contact school.
- Headteacher to brief the police and parents/ carers
- A written report will be filed on the incident.

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

For Vulnerable Pupils

- Staff must follow the student to the perimeter fence or gate and must try to persuade the student to stay in the school.
- 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 pupil to panic. Talk calmly to the child try and coax him/her back in. **However, if the pupil is running away then active pursuit is the only option as this is a vulnerable pupil.**
- If the student has left the immediate vicinity of the school the school office with the Headteacher (or in their absence the most senior member of staff) must be informed to lead the direct course of action.
- Headteacher will direct additional members of staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone to contact school.
- If the searching staff lose sight of the student they must contact the school office giving details of their location and a description of the clothes which the student is wearing. **The school office must immediately call the police and parents/ carers** by dialing 101.

For other Pupils

- Staff must follow the student to the perimeter fence or gate and must try to persuade the student to stay in the school.
- 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 pupil to panic, possibly putting him or her at risk by running onto a busy road, for example. Talk calmly to the child try and coax him/her back in – do not try and chase for the following reasons:

- The child might run faster than the staff member and put themselves in more danger
- The child may enjoy the chase seeing it as a game and put themselves in more danger
- If the student has left the immediate vicinity of the school, the school office with Headteacher (or in the absence the most senior member of staff) must be contacted to lead the direct course of action.
- If the pupil(s) has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and is no longer visible, the Headteacher (or in absence the most senior member of staff) will make a 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 pupil absconding, the pupil's previous history of being involved in episodes of absconding and their outcomes. If the student returns of their own volition parents/ carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.
- Upon his or her return to school, and when the student is calm, the student must be seen by a member of the SLT so that the reasoning for absconding may be discussed in detail. At this point decision will be made as to the appropriateness of future actions.
- A written report will be filled on the incident.