

Turton & Edgworth



C.E.M.P.S.

Children who abscond Policy

Compiled by:	C Wheatley
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Bolton Road, Edgworth, BL7 0AH | Tel: 01204 852 932 | HEADTEACHER Mr Craig Wheatley
Email: office@turtonedgworth.blackburn.sch.uk | Website: www.turtonandedgworthprimary.co.uk



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To abscond is to 'leave 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 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.

Procedures for children who abscond from school.

The purpose of this non-statutory document is to set out the procedures for all stakeholders should a child leave the school without permission. We actively work to provide a secure, safe environment, a school where children want to come to enjoy learning with others as part of a caring community. We recognise that it is highly unlikely that a child will try to abscond from our school but these procedures are in place to ensure we are ready to deal with this, should it occur.

For all scenarios, should the child be a known flight risk, staff should ALWAYS defer to his or her personal risk management plan.

Pupils, present at registration, who are found to have absconded from school/class without authorisation.

1. The member of staff who first notices a missing child should inform the head teacher, member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or a Team Teach (de-escalation) trained staff member using their red card. That member of staff will then inform the school office.
2. Head teacher, SLT or Team Teach staff member to organise a search of the building and known places that the pupil may have gone to.
3. If the pupil is not found then all available staff to complete a thorough sweep of the school and grounds.
4. School office to phone the police when the school and grounds have been checked if the child is not found.
5. School office to contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation. Every attempt to make contact with parents to be logged.
6. The search will then be extended beyond the school buildings and grounds. This decision as to who leaves the school grounds will be made by the head teacher or member of the SLT and based on staff training (De-escalation), knowledge of the child and on what action is in the child's best interests.
7. Any staff who leave the school grounds should take a mobile phone to contact school.
8. Once a pupil has been found, the staff member will inform the school office who will inform parents/carers and the police and advise whether they need to attend the scene. As active pursuit may encourage a child to run again and may also cause the pupil to panic; possibly putting him or herself at risk by running onto a busy road, staff will not chase but will try to keep a child in sight at a distance. De-escalation techniques will be used to calm the pupil and try to persuade him/her to return to the school grounds or safe place. If this is not possible, the member of staff

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should keep the child in sight and out of danger, to the best of their ability, until a parent/carer or police officer arrives.

9. Upon his or her return to school, and when the pupil is calm, the pupil will meet with the head teacher and will be offered some support to find out the reasons for absconding. The head teacher may delegate this task to another suitable member of staff.

10. A written report will be made and added to CPOMS (Child Protection Online Management System).

11. The head teacher/SLT member will brief the parents/carers of the absconded child and the police.

12. The head teacher may consider a fixed term exclusion as a sanction.

Pupils who are seen attempting to abscond from the school grounds.

1. The member of staff who first notices a child attempting to abscond from the school grounds should inform the head teacher, member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or a Team Teach trained staff member using their red card. That member of staff will then inform the school office.

2. The head teacher, SLT or Team Teach trained member of staff will follow the pupil to the perimeter fence, exit or gate and will try to persuade the pupil to stay in the school. They may also consider enlisting the support of a member of staff who knows the pupil well and has a good relationship with him/her.

3. As active pursuit may encourage a child to leave the site and may also cause the pupil to panic; possibly putting him or herself at risk by running onto a busy road, staff will not chase but will try to keep a child in sight at a distance.

4. The school office will contact the pupil's parents/carers. The call or attempted calls will be logged. A member of the office team will also call the police to log the incident and make a log of the call.

5. If the pupil leaves the school grounds, the head teacher/member of the SLT will follow and attempt to keep the child in sight. If they lose sight, they will contact the office to keep parents/carers and the police up to date - giving details of their location and the clothes that the pupil is wearing. They may request additional staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone to contact the school.

6. Refer to points 8-12 above.

Pupils who are seen absconding from class/school but remain on the school grounds.

In these circumstances, school staff will not pursue a pupil or force him/her back into the school building. School staff will use their judgement, knowledge of the pupil and assessment of the pupil's safety in deciding what to do. De-escalation should be used if there is a trained member of staff available. This will include taking into account the pupil's age, vulnerability and any specific risk assessment they may have. The demeanor of the pupil will need to be taken into account. If the pupil is upset or angry, care should be taken in approaching the child. The size of the pupil will also be taken into account. In all cases, staff should not place themselves in situations of potential danger of injury. When calm, the head teacher should offer the child some support to find out the reasons for absconding or delegate this task to another suitable member of staff. If a period of 20 minutes elapses without the child choosing to return to where they are asked, the office

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will contact the child's parents/carers and ask them to come to school to aid staff in resolving the situation. The head teacher may consider a fixed term exclusion as a sanction.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Each incident will be monitored and evaluated. Risk management plans for any children believed to pose a risk of absconding will be created by school with the support of staff and parents/carers.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers of pupils are responsible for supporting the work of the school and encouraging their children to keep to all school procedures and policies. Once school has informed the parents that their child has absconded, parents and carers are responsible for actively supporting the school with subsequent procedures and actions. This could include coming into school to help secure the safety of their child as well as meeting with a Senior Leader in order to agree subsequent actions. Risk management plans will be shared and signed by parents/carers.

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