

Old Clee Primary Academy

'Inspired to Believe, Learning to Succeed'

Absconding Child Policy



Approved by:	Head Teacher	Date: June 2025
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Last reviewed on:	January 2024
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Next review due by:	Summer 2026
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This is the policy for Old Clee Primary Academy which sets out the actions taken if a child absconds in or from the Academy. It is set within the context of the whole Academy values:

- *Provide innovative, inspirational and challenging opportunities which encourage children to become lifelong learners, and to be the best they can be.*
- *Develop confidence, independence and a 'can-do' attitude within a safe environment so that children are ambitious for themselves and for others.*
- *Develop caring, considerate, well rounded individuals, who are polite, well behaved, respectful and resilient.*

It reflects the Academy's values, philosophy and mission statement in relation to safeguarding children in our care.

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this non-statutory policy is to set out clearly for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a child abscond in or from the Academy.

Aim

At Old Clee we actively work to provide a secure, safe environment, an Academy 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 Academy but this policy is written to ensure we are ready to deal with this eventuality should it occur. If a child has specific needs and absconding is likely then they should have a risk assessment.

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 Academy at all times throughout the Academy day and during Academy led activities.

Definition

To abscond is to 'leave without permission'.

Internal Absconding	External Absconding
Internal absconding - where the pupil leaves the care of the responsible person without permission but remains on the school site.	External absconding - where a pupil leaves the school site without permission.
Where a pupil leaves a lesson without permission but remains on the school site.	Where a pupil leaves an offsite provision without permission. E.g., curriculum swimming, alternate education provision, etc.
Where a pupil leaves a club run on behalf of the school without permission but remains on the site.	Where a pupil leaves a defined area or supervision of the responsible adult without permission. E.g. when undertaking fieldwork or on an educational visit.

Control measures and procedures to prevent absconding

Site security

- The site has a secure perimeter and gates. Gates/doors are closed and locked outside of our stated drop off and pick up times.
- Unsecured gates are locked during break times or if there is a significant risk of absconding.
- Doors into the Academy are locked from the outside with a fob system to open them. There are also several doors inside the Academy requiring access using a fob.

Effective supervision

Effective supervision is dependent on a number of factors including:

- Age of the pupils
- Ability of the pupils
- Number of the pupils
- Activities being undertaken
- Pupil behaviour
- Site layout and security
- Specific identified risks e.g. pupils with history of absconding, public rights of way through Academy grounds, building work, etc.

Information to pupils

- Academy rules and expectations are clearly displayed and reinforced throughout the academic year.
- There is a clear and consistent system in the Academy which covers absconding pupils.

Individual Pupil Risk Assessments (IPRA)

- Where there is a foreseeable risk of absconding, there should be an IPRA in place.
- The IPRA should clearly detail the individual control measures required to reduce the risk of absconding.
- A Positive Handling Plan (PHP) or Personalised Behaviour Plan (PLP) should be drawn up for a child who absconds, in partnership with the parent/guardian.

External visits/sites

- On an Educational Visit the security of the venue/location should be assessed and supervision levels altered accordingly.
- Ensure that there are robust systems in place so that each group has specified members and leaders, and regular head counts occur throughout the visit.
- In the planning for an educational visit the risks of absconding must be clearly assessed, particularly in the case where known absconders are in attendance. This should include transport.
- Communication between the groups and robust emergency procedures should be place.
- When using staff cars to transport known absconders the RA should specifically refer to the risk of absconding.

Actions to be taken in the event of absconding

Any action taken must be proportionate to the risk and in the best interest of the child.

Where a pupil, leaves a lesson without permission but remains on the Academy site (Leaving the room without permission):

- Member of staff to alert SLT and Behaviour/Welfare and Wellbeing Lead
- Member of staff supervising child at the time of absconding to accompany the child, if safe to do so, encouraging the child to take some time to 'calm' until SLT arrive.
- Behaviour/Welfare and Wellbeing Lead to support child in distress and encourage child to stay calm. Offering strategies where possible.
- Emotional support offered to support child in distress.
- Discussion with SLT to discuss whether the child will return to class or continue their learning elsewhere, to prevent further incidents.
- Parents/carers made aware.
- Internal doors that are lockable by fob to be locked straight away by notified personnel

Where a pupil, leaves the care of the responsible person without permission but remains on the Academy site. (Leaving the building without permission):

- Member of staff to inform SLT, Behaviour/Welfare and Wellbeing Lead, Premises team and Office.
- SLT organises search of buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to.
- If the pupil is not found then all available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the Academy and check the perimeter of the grounds.
- SLT to phone the police when area has been fully checked if the child is not found.
- Reporting staff member to contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation.

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

- Member of staff to inform Head Teacher or member of SLT, Behaviour/Welfare and Wellbeing Lead, Premises team and Office.
- Head Teacher or member of SLT to organise a search of buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to in the Academy environment.
- If the pupil is not found, then all available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the Academy and check the perimeter of the grounds.
- Office to phone the police when area has been fully checked if the child is not found
- Member of SLT to contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation.
- Consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the Academy perimeter. This decision will be based on staff's knowledge of the child and on the levels of risk, and on what action is in the child's best interests.
- Any staff who leave Academy grounds to take mobile phone to contact the Academy.
- Once a pupil has been found then the Head Teacher will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future. A written report will be filed on the incident and added to CPOMS.
- Member of SLT to brief police and parents/carers

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

- Member of staff to inform Head Teacher or member of SLT, Behaviour/Welfare and Wellbeing Lead and Office.
- Staff must follow the child to the Academy fence or gate and must try to persuade the child to stay in the Academy.
- If by leaving the Academy the child is known to be putting themselves in danger, adults must exercise their duty of care and stop the child, physically if necessary.
- As active pursuit may encourage a child to leave the site and may also cause the child 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.
- The SLT lead will contact the child's parents/carers.
- If the child has left the immediate vicinity of the Academy grounds and is no longer visible then the Police must be informed.
- If the child returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.
- Upon his or her return to the Academy, and when the child is calm, the child must be seen by the Head Teacher 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.
- 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.
- Staff will follow the pupil and engage in a local search, following the pupil at a safe distance if in view.
- The SLT lead may direct additional staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone to contact school.
- A meeting with parents/carers will be arranged.
- A written report will be filed on the incident and recorded on CPOMS.

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 the Academy with the support of staff and parents/carers.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers of pupils are responsible for supporting the work of the Academy and encouraging their children to keep to all Academy procedures and policies. Once the Academy has informed the parents that their child has absconded, parents and carers are responsible for actively supporting the Academy with subsequent procedures and actions. This could include coming into the Academy to help secure the safety of their child as well as meeting with a Senior Leadership Team member in order to agree subsequent actions.

Risk management plans will be shared and signed by parents/carers.

Appendix A

Absconding Pupil Incident Report

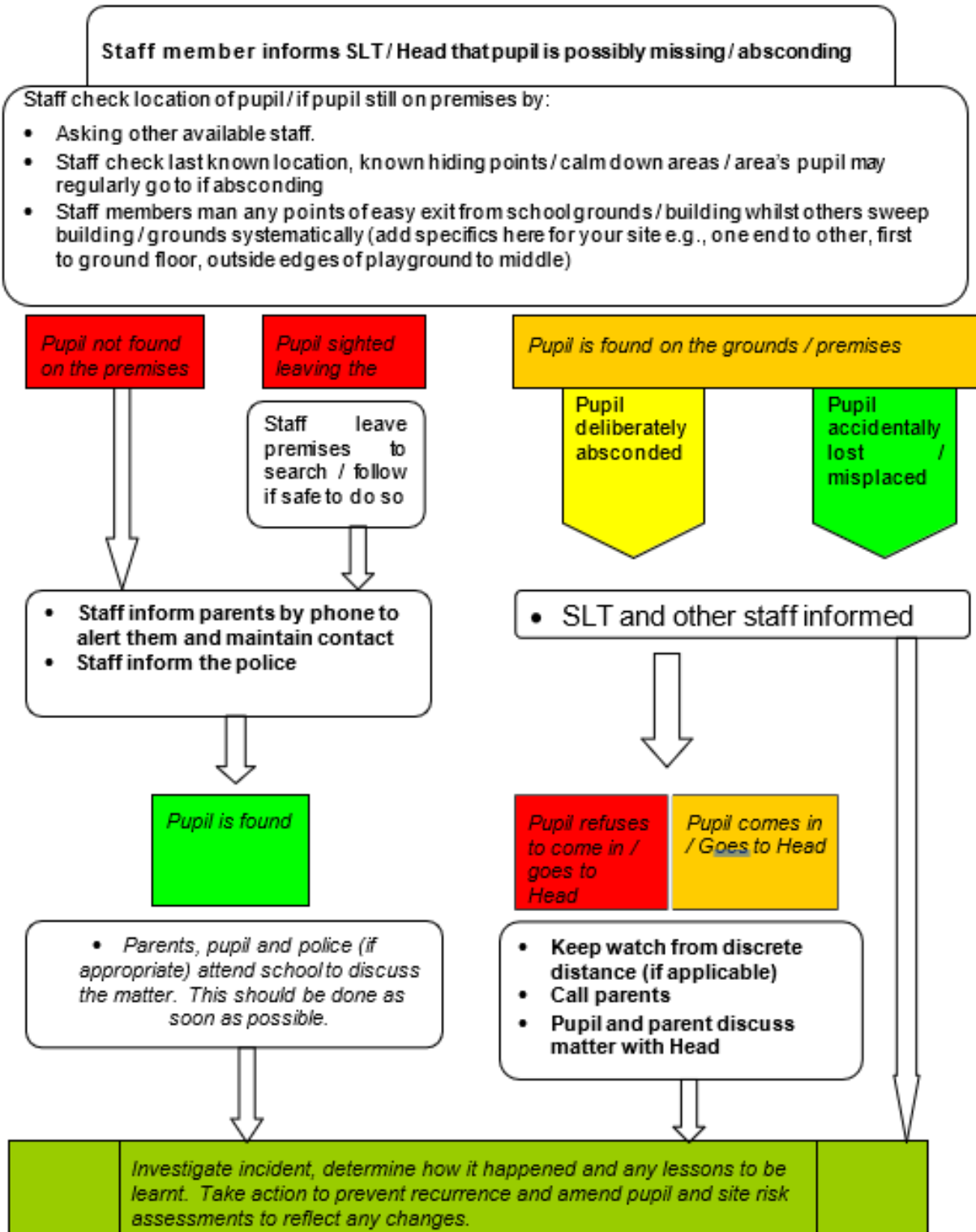
Name of pupil:	
Class/Teacher	
Date:	
Outline of the incident	<p>(Please include time of day, staff involved and how the issue was resolved.)</p>
What triggers led to this incident occurring?	
Actions to be taken to ensure safety in school	
Signed by adult supporting	
Signed by Headteacher	
Signed by Parent/carer	

Appendix B.

Parental Agreement

Date:	(To be completed by the parent or carer)
I have read the record of the absconding incident (Appendix A).	
I wish to make the following comments relating to the incident (optional):	
I understand that it is always unacceptable for my child to leave the Academy site without permission and a repeated action of this nature might result in the Academy following exclusion procedures.	
I understand that the following actions have been agreed in order to help my child be happy and safe in the Academy.	
I know my child needs to keep to the Academy rules and not leave the Academy grounds without permission.	
I understand that there are agreed actions for all parties involved. For my part, I will support this agreement by encouraging my child to comply.	
Parent/carer signature:	
Any other comments:	

School Procedure if a child is missing / absconds.



Ratification

Date ratified by the Head Teacher: July 2025

Date of last review: June 2025

Next review date: July 2026

Signed by Head Teacher: Miss D Richardson

Date: 1st July 2025