

Mereside Primary Academy

Absconding Pupil Policy 2024 - 2025



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Electronic copies of this plan are available from	Mereside Primary Academy
Hard copies of this plan are available from	Mereside Primary Academy
Date of next review	November 2026 (or as required)
Person Responsible for Review	Lauren Richardson (Deputy Headteacher)

Intent

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a child abscond during school time. At Mereside Primary Academy, we actively work to provide a secure and safe environment where children want to come to school and enjoy learning.

Definition

Internal Absconding

Where a pupil leaves the care of the responsible person without permission but remains on the school site or premises of an educational visit.

This may include:

- a) leaving the **classroom** without the permission of an adult.
- b) leaving a **shared space** in school without permission of an adult.
- c) entering the **playground** at an inappropriate time.
- d) moving around the **corridors/stairways** without permission of an adult.
- e) entering the school **car park** or **school grounds** without permission of an adult.
- f) leaving the designated areas as part of a **trip** out of school
e.g leaving the changing rooms at the leisure centre without the permission of an adult.

External Absconding

- a) Where a pupil leaves the **school site** without permission of an adult. i.e. beyond the school grounds.

or

- b) Where a pupil leaves an **off site provision** without permission: e.g. curriculum swimming.

or

- c) Where a pupil leaves a **fieldwork or on an educational visit** without permission of an adult.

or

- d) Where a pupil leaves the school provided **designated transport** without permission.

Implementation

These are the control measures and procedures that Mereside Primary Academy have in place to prevent a pupil absconding.

Site security

The site has secure perimeter fencing and gates, which are kept locked during school hours, with the exception of the external front gates which lead onto the carpark or walkways to the front entrance of school. The main entrance to the school prevents pupils from leaving the site without adult permission as the doors are securely closed at all times and only open via a key fob.

Effective supervision

At Mereside Primary Academy we supervise our pupils at all times during the school day.

Information to pupils

School rules and expectations are revisited throughout the school day/week and reinforced by positive praise and prompts. When a pupil does not understand it is unsafe to leave without permission, the importance of remaining safe by listening to adults and following instructions will be explained to the pupil at their development level.

Parents and Carers

The Absconding Policy is accessible to parents and carers via the school website. If a child externally absconds parents will be informed immediately. If a child internally absconds on multiple occasions parents will be informed. Parents and the school will work in partnership to prevent future incidents of absconding.

Individual Pupil Risk Assessments

If a pupil tries to abscond from the premises i.e. external absconding, an individual risk assessment will be put in place and shared with relevant staff and parents. The absconding policy will be reshared with the parents.

If a pupil has information about them on record stating they are at risk of absconding, a risk assessment will be put in place and followed.

If a pupil internally absconds repeatedly the absconding policy will be reshared with the parents.

The risk assessment will identify individual control measures required to reduce the risk of absconding.

If a pupil has a SEND needs and the policy requires adapting this will be addressed according to a pupil's individual need.

External visits/sites

All educational visits will have been risk assessed prior to the trip taking place. This will include the identification of pupils who have a risk assessment in place for absconding. All risk assessments relating to the trip will be shared with the accompanying adults.

Procedure

Internal absconding:

- For internal absconding we will follow our school behaviour and discipline policy, routines and procedures.

External absconding:

- If a child leaves the school premises a member of staff will follow the pupil in a calm manner. The member of staff will not chase or run after the pupil as this can put the pupil at more danger.
- Parents will be contacted immediately by the school office as soon as the school is aware a pupil has left the school premises without permission.
- If the pupil remains in sight, once they have left the school premises, the member of staff will calmly follow the pupil and encourage their return. If the member of staff can, they will remain in contact with the school. The school office will liaise with the parent and if possible with the assisting member of staff.
- If the staff member loses sight of the pupil and the parents do not know where the pupil is or the member of staff is unaware if the parent is with the child, the member of staff will return back to the school office and the police will then be contacted to assist in finding the missing pupil.

Follow Up Action

- If a child returns back to the school premises calmly with a member of staff - they will be praised for returning. They will carry out a restorative activity which highlights the dangers of absconding. Parents will be requested to attend a meeting.
- Parents will be asked to return to school with their child that day once they are calm, safe and ready to learn. The parent and the child will then be asked to attend a restorative meeting.

Consequences

- The child will be expected to complete any missed school work due to their absconding.
- The following school day will involve accessing learning away from their peers. This will be recorded as an internal suspension.

1st incident = 1 day
2nd incident = 2 days
3rd incident = 3 days

- Following an initial incident a risk assessment will be written.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Each incident will be monitored and evaluated.