



Absconding Policy

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1. Aim of the Policy

Victory Park Academy strive to provide a secure and safe environment where pupils will want to come and enjoy learning with others. It is always our expectation that pupils will choose to comply with policies and procedures whilst on Academy premises or under the direct supervision of staff whilst on educational visits. There are occasions however where pupils choose to abscond from the Academy site or the supervision of staff whilst on educational visits. This policy is written to ensure that if a pupil chooses to abscond then we are ready to deal with that eventuality.

Absconding refers to a pupil leaving the supervision of staff or the school site without permission or failing to remain with staff during off-site activities.

2. Statutory Guidance

This policy is informed by statutory guidance including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), Working Together to Safeguard Children, and local authority guidance.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 All Staff

- responsible for immediate response and maintaining safety

3.2 Senior Staff / DSL

- responsible for decision-making and escalation (including police)

3.3 Office Staff

- responsible for communication with parents and recording

3.4 Trip Leader

- responsible for off-site incidents

4. Procedures for Absconding of School Site

- Staff should always bear in mind that pupils who have chosen to abscond may be upset and as such, may not be thinking rationally. It is important that the response of staff is to remain calm, maintain visual contact and work to re-engage the pupil and return them safely to the Academy. At no point should staff run after pupils, nor should they ask other pupils to assist in pursuing the absconding pupil. Active pursuit may encourage the pupil to leave the immediate vicinity of the Academy and may also cause the pupil to panic and possibly put themselves at risk, for example by running into a busy road. If, however a pupil is deemed to be a high risk to himself and/or other people then staff should adhere to the use of positive handling policy with reference to holding the pupil. This does not mean that staff should run after a pupil in order to hold them.
- In all instances of absconding, a senior member of staff should be informed.
- If a primary pupil absconds and are out of sight a call to their parent / carer is made and a phone call to the police to report the child missing.
- The date and time of the incident should be recorded on the sleuth system by the staff member dealing with the pupil.
- Where staff visual contact with a pupil is lost then the parent/carers should be telephoned and informed. A record of this call including time and any agreements should be recorded on Sleuth.

- In circumstances where there are serious concerns for a pupil who has absconded, and the parents or carer cannot be contacted then the police should be informed and the necessary details passed on. Specifically, where there are concerns for the physical or mental wellbeing of a child.
- Looked After Children – In the event that a Looked after Child has absconded, the Child's carer and social worker must be informed, and the incident reported to the Police. A record of time of call should be made.
- If a pupil returns, the time of return should be noted on the sleuth system and parents / carers / social worker and police informed. Normal checks should take place upon re- entry into the building and as a precursor to the pupil continuing with the school day.
- Following return, the pupil should have a debrief with a member of staff to understand the reasons for absconding and to reduce the likelihood of recurrence. Any actions should be recorded and, where appropriate, added to the pupil's support plan."
- Records must clearly state time of absconding, time of call home / social worker / Police and time of return to the school's site.
- An updated Risk Assessment should be completed after a pupil has absconded. This will be completed by the pupil tutor and should be completed within 24 hours of the incident. The risk assessment should consider triggers, patterns and safeguarding issues.

5. Procedures for Absconding whilst off-site on educational visits or trips.

- If a pupil chooses to abscond, the trip leader must follow absconding procedures as laid out above, directing staff to maintain visual contact with the pupil if possible and informing the Academy office immediately.
- Office staff will inform the pupil's parents and record details as communicated by the trip leader on the sleuth system. A record of the telephone call to parents must be made in the pupil file.
- Emergency procedures as set out in the risk assessment must be followed.

6. Information required when reporting to the Office.

Please see below the exact details that are needed when reporting to the office:

- The precise location
- Who was the absconding pupil with?
- When was the pupil last recorded as being seen?
- How did the pupil abscond?
- What time did the pupil abscond?

If you are asking the office to inform the police, additional information is required:

- Height and build of the pupil.
- Colour of the pupil's hair
- What the pupil was wearing including any distinguishing accessories, i.e. bags, sunglasses.

In the event that the pupil returns to the group, then the Academy office must be informed immediately, and details recorded on the sleuth system. Calls home must be made, and details recorded in the pupils file and the senior staff on duty informed.

Parents and carers of pupils are responsible for supporting the work of the Academy. Once the academy has informed a parent/carer 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 the child/young person as well as meeting with senior staff to agree subsequent actions.

This policy has been informed by the Safeguarding Policy and the advice given by the LA with regard to education off site.