

Mount Street Nursery & Infants School



Absconding Policy

Date	November 2023
Review Date	November 2026

Absconding Policy

Purpose

To ensure that all children at Mount Street Nursery and Infant School are safe and that the school promotes the welfare of all children.

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 activities.

It is important for us as a school to maintain a caring, welcoming ethos which establishes a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. Accordingly we must take reasonable steps, through our pupil management and staff training programme, to minimise the likelihood of positive handling becoming necessary in the case of one pupil or more pupils absconding.

Actions

- the school site will be as secure as possible
- children at risk of absconding will have a risk assessment
- parent / carer details will be kept up to date in the school office

Where a pupil is found to be absent from the school site:

- a member of staff to inform the Headteacher, the members of SLT and staff in the main office.
- Headteacher or member of SLT organises a search of the school building and known places that the pupil may have gone to.
- if the pupil is not found then all available staff will complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.
- a member of SLT or office staff will **immediately** inform the parents/carers if a pupil leaves the school. If the pupil is Looked After, then the Social Worker will also be informed at this time. Always keep parents updated.

- an adult will inform the police (101) if the adult has not been able to contact the parents/carers and the pupil is gone for more than 10 minute.
- if the school has not been able to contact the parents/carers then they will contact Children's Services after 10 minutes (029 2053 6490 if the pupil has no Social Worker or 029 2053 6400 if the pupil has a Social Worker).
- 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 and any active risk assessment. Liaise with the police at all times.
- wherever possible any member of staff who leaves the school grounds will take a school mobile phone, or personal mobile in order to keep in contact with school. Where possible staff should be accompanied by another member of staff.
- once the pupil has been found then the Headteacher and other SLT members will use their professional judgement in the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.
- the Headteacher will discuss the absconding with the child, parents/carers, together with the consequences of their actions.
- the pupil's risk assessment will be reviewed.
- a written report will be completed about the incident.

Where a pupil is seen to leave the school site:

- an adult will keep them in sight as far as possible.
- an adult will **immediately** inform the parents/carers if a pupil leaves the school and if the pupil is Looked After, then the Social Worker will also be informed at this time. Always keep parents updated.
- an adult will inform the police (101) if the adult has not been able to contact the parents/carers and the pupil is gone for more than 10 minutes.
- if the school has not been able to contact the parents/carers then they will contact Children's Services after 10 minutes (029 2053 6490 if the pupil has no Social Worker or 029 2053 6400 if the pupil has a Social Worker).
- staff must follow the pupil but staff must also be aware at all times that active pursuit may encourage the pupil to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and

may also cause the pupil to **panic**, possibly putting them at risk, for example by running on to a busy road.

- de-escalation techniques must be attempted. In such stressful circumstances it is important that staff remain as calm and collected as possible and follow procedures (see Appendix 1).
- if a pupil is deemed to be a high risk to themselves or other people then staff should adhere to the **Policy for Physical Intervention** with reference to holding the pupil, if appropriate.
- wherever possible any member of staff who leaves the school grounds will take a school mobile phone, or personal mobile in order to keep in contact with school. Where possible staff should be accompanied by another member of staff. Staff will follow the pupil at a safe distance and keep the pupil in view.
- if the staff lose sight of or are concerned for the safety of the pupil or themselves, they must contact the school office giving current details of their location and the clothes the pupil is wearing.
- once the pupil has been found then the Headteacher and other SLT members will use their professional judgement in response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.
- the Headteacher will discuss the absconding with the child, parents/carers, together with the consequences of their actions.
- the pupil's risk assessment will be reviewed.
- a written report will be completed about the incident.

After all absconding incidents school will:

- keep all colleagues informed and discuss the incident at staff briefing sessions
- review procedures for the individual every half term to ensure appropriate control measures are in place and that staff are fully informed
- review site security and Absconding Policy

Information for parents

What happens if your child goes missing?

What is meant by “missing”?

Your child will be considered missing if members of staff do not know where your child is

What is meant by “absconding”?

Your child will have absconded if they have deliberately gone from where they should be without telling a member of staff or without a member of staff giving permission

What will happen if your child goes missing?

- The staff looking after your child have a responsibility to know where your child is and to make sure they are safe. If your child does go ‘missing’ staff will speak to other pupils, friends, teachers and family to see if they can help. If there is concern for your child’s safety then staff will need to search for clues.
- an adult will **immediately** inform the parents/carers if a pupil leaves the school and if the pupil is Looked After, then the Social Worker will also be informed at this time. Always keep parents updated.
- an adult will inform the police (*101*) if the adult has not been able to contact the parents/carers and the pupil is gone for more than 10 minutes
- if the school has not been able to contact the parents/carers then they will contact Children’s Services after 10 minutes (*029 2053 6490 if the pupil has no Social Worker or 029 2053 6400 if the pupil has a Social Worker*)

What happens if your child can’t be found?

A meeting will be held between the school and the Police to plan how to search for your child. Your child’s name, description and a photograph will be given to the Police in order to help them with their search.

What happens when your child is found?

Your child will be returned to a safe place and will be asked about the reasons for them going missing. This is to try and find out if anything is troubling them and see if anyone can help. If your child wants to talk to someone outside of the school, this can be arranged. You and your child may

be visited by a Police Officer who will check that your child is safe. This is called a “Safe and Well Check”.

Will anything else happen?

The Headteacher will want to talk you and your child about going missing. Staff responsible for your child’s safety will meet to discuss ways in which such incidents can be prevented by looking at the reasons for your child’s actions.

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the overall Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy review.

Signed: (Chair of Governors)

Date:

Date of Review: November 2026

Appendix 1

De-escalation techniques

It may help to:

Use TEAM TEACH de-escalation techniques

Use Restorative Language (to avoid asking why they are doing something)

- Move calmly
- Make simple, clear statements to the pupil
- Keep your voice quiet, firm and assured
- Lessen the threat of your presence by sitting down or allowing the pupil space
- Talk to the pupil all the time
- Offer comfort, reassurance and security
- Maintain eye contact
- When possible, have help at hand
- Find a way to allow the pupil to 'save face'

It is usually **unhelpful** to:

- Give complex advice or instructions
- Speak quickly and loudly
- Corner a child or stand too close

