



Absconding Policy



Document Control

Organisation	The Saints' Federation All Saints' C/W Primary School St David's CiW Primary School St. Mellons CiW Primary School
Title	Absconding Policy
Author	Schools
Owner	Executive Headteacher and Governing Body
Protective Marking	Not protectively marked
Review Date	Every 3 years or sooner if required

Revision History

Revision Date	Revision	Previous Version	Description of Revision
March 2024	Created		Adopted by the Governing Body
May 2026	Name changes and addition of St. Mellons		Adopted by the Saints' Federation Governing Body

Signed by the Chair of the Governing Body:

Signed by the Executive Headteacher:

Date approved:

Date of review:

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is at the heart of our school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. As a rights respecting school we not only teach about children's rights but also model rights and respect in all relationships. This policy is linked to:

Article 19 *Everyone who works with children should always do what's best for each child*

Purpose
To ensure that all children across the federation are safe and to promote 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 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 is to inform the Head of School/Executive Headteacher, the members of SLT and staff in the main office.
- The Head of School/Executive Headteacher or member of SLT will organise 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. Parents will always be kept 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.
- 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. Staff will 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 the school. Where possible staff should be accompanied by another member of staff.
- Once the pupil has been found then the Head of School/Executive 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. Parents will always be kept 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 if the child does not have 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 *Use of Reasonable Force Policy* with reference to holding the pupil, if appropriate. For more information on this policy, please contact the Local Authority Team-Teach Officer.
- 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 Head of School/ Executive 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 Head of School/ Executive 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 in INSET and 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 the Absconding Policy.
- Inform governors at every full Governing Body meeting about any incidents of absconding.