

Manston St James C of E Primary Academy **Policies & Procedures**

Absconding Policy

Approved on	26 th October 2025
Approved by	Local Governing Board
Last reviewed on	24 th October 2025
Next review due	24 th October 2028

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a child abscond from school. 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-led activities.

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

- Member of staff to inform member of SLT, inclusion team and main office.
- SLT request class Teacher to do a head count to determine if other pupils have left with the pupil
- SLT member organise searches of buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to.
- If the pupil is not found then all available staff complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.
- School office to phone the police when the area has been fully checked if the child is not found.
- School office to contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation.
- 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 on what action is in the child's best interests.
- Any staff who leave school grounds to take mobile phones to contact the school.
- Once a pupil has been found then the lead SLT member 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.
- Member of SLT to brief police and parents.

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

1. Staff must follow the student to the perimeter fence or gate and must try to persuade the student to stay in the school. Staff member try to alert other staff to the situation so that they may assist. This assistance may include the closure/ staffing of the schools exit points, which are the main gate and back gate (if during arrival time). A member of the SLT team to be informed as soon as possible.
2. If a student is deemed to be a high risk to himself or other people then staff should adhere to the Behaviour Policy with reference to holding the student, if appropriate.
3. At all times staff must be aware that active pursuit may encourage the student to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and may also cause the pupil to panic, possibly putting him or herself at risk by running onto a busy road, for example.

4. If the student 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.

5. Staff will follow the student and engage in a local search, following the student at a safe distance if in view.

7. The school office will contact the student's parents/carers.

8. If the searching staff lose sight of the student they must contact the school office giving details of their location and the clothes which the student is wearing.

If the pupil(s) has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and is no longer visible then the SLT will make a decision as to how to take matters further which will take into account the age of the student, the prevailing weather conditions, the nature of the incident which led to the pupil absconding, the pupil's previous history of being involved in episodes of absconding and their outcomes.

If the student returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.

Upon their return to school, and when the student is calm, the student must be seen by the SLT 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. A written report will be filed on the incident.

Absconding Plan

Pupil absconds from the classroom. Whereabouts are unknown within the school grounds;

Response;

Key worker uses walkie-talkie to notify Behaviour Support, SLT and main office.

SLT requests class teacher to carry out a head count to determine if other pupils have left with the pupil

SLT member organise searches of buildings and known places where the pupil may have gone to.

Pupil is found and returned to class/ OASIS for a restorative conversation.

Risk Assessment put in place/ updated to identify control measures required.

If the pupil has been seen leaving the school grounds or is not found within school;

Response;

Key worker uses walkie-talkie to notify Behaviour Support, SLT and main office.

SLT requests class teacher to carry out a head count to determine if other pupils have left with the pupil

SLT member organise searches of buildings and known places where the pupil may have gone to.

Found, return to school;

Pupil located and returned to school. Restorative conversations held. Risk Assessment put in place/ updated to identify control measures required.

Found, refusal to return;

Pupil located but refuses to return to school.

Designated staff member will alert school who would send additional pastoral support.

Parents/carers to be informed of location.

Parent/carer to arrive as soon as possible.

Risk Assessment put in place/ updated to identify control measures required.

Found, refusal to return and runs from staff;

Do not chase but keep a safe distance if in view

Phone 101 or 999 if it is deemed to be an emergency

Risk Assessment put in place/ updated to identify control measures required.

A written report will be filed on the incident (CPOMS)

A member of SLT to brief parents and police

Not found;

If pupil is not found, then all available staff will complete a more thorough sweep of school and complete a check of the perimeter of the grounds

Alert school

Alert parents/carers

Phone 101 or 999 if it is deemed to be an emergency

If the search staff lose sight of the pupil, then they must contact the school office giving details of location and detail of clothes the pupil is wearing

Risk Assessment put in place/ updated to identify control measures required.

A written report will be filed on the incident (CPOMS)

A member of SLT to brief parents and police