

Conquest Centre

Missing Client / Absconding Policy

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Animals • Wellbeing • Nature • Connection

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MISSING CLIENT / ABSCONDING POLICY

Table of Contents

	Page
1. Policy Statement	3
2. Data Protection	3
3. Disclosure of Information	3
4. Missing Clients	3
5. Absconding Clients	4
6. Policy Review	4

MISSING CLIENT / ABSCONDING POLICY

1. Policy Statement

This policy is written to guide staff and volunteers in the event of a client going missing on the premises or having absconded. Absconding is when a client goes beyond the boundaries of Conquest Centre without agreement from their mentor. Many of our clients have difficulties managing their anxiety and will often seek to abscond as a result. In any circumstance, due to the vulnerable nature of our clients, the absconding policy will be followed by all staff to ensure that clients and staff are safeguarded at all times. The absconding policy will also be followed if a client absconds during an off-site activity/ trip.

2. Data Protection

Conquest Centre supports the objectives of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and other legislation relating to Data Processing, including the Human Rights Act 1998, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Conquest Centre has a statutory obligation to process personal data in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Every member of Conquest Centre has an obligation to ensure that the information they process (use) is collected, maintained and disclosed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Conquest Centre Data Protection Policy.

3. Disclosure of Information

Any use or disclosure of information held within Conquest Centre, without there being a legitimate purpose or legal basis, will be classed as unauthorised and is a criminal offence under Section 55 of the Act Right of Access (Subject Access Requests).

4. Missing Clients

A client is deemed 'missing' if their whereabouts are unknown. If a client is deemed missing, the following procedure should be followed:

- An immediate monitor of Conquest Centre CCTV should take place.
- If the client is not visible on CCTV, an immediate search is to be made of Conquest Centre's buildings with all available staff. This search should not exceed five minutes. All the usual frequently used locations for that client should be searched. If the client is a known absconder this should have been recorded in their Pupil Passport.
- Staff should then regroup and extend the search to Conquest Centre's grounds and immediate surroundings. This should not exceed a further fifteen minutes. Staff must take potential dangers into account and not put themselves at risk.
- At the same time, the senior member of staff usually the Centre Manager will contact the parents/carers of the client who is missing. In some cases, the parents may be able to give information about the client's current whereabouts.
- The Centre Manager will also contact the client's school/referring agency. Where appropriate, Social Services will be contacted.
- Following this, and if the client has not yet been found after 20 minutes, the Centre Manager or staff member will make a phone call (101) to the local police station to report the client missing. They will give a clear description of the student and clothing being worn.

The Centre Manager or senior member of staff should:

- Not leave the premises but remain on site to co-ordinate the search, answer phone calls and provide photos and information. The police will want to visit Conquest Centre as part of their search and enquiries.
- Ensure that there are adequate staff left in the building to deal with other contingencies.
- On discovery and/or return of the Client the Centre Manager is to inform the Police, school/agency, Social Services and parent if they have not already been informed.
- Following the incident, ensure a MyConcern record has been completed as soon as possible.
- Discuss with Mentors the circumstances of the incident and the effectiveness of the current procedures.

5. Absconding Clients

A client is considered to have 'absconded' if they intentionally/knowingly leave Conquest Centre site without agreement.

If a client absconds then:

- Where possible, a member of staff should follow the student at a safe distance and/or respond in line with guidance from the student's individual risk assessment.
- The Centre Manager must immediately be informed of the situation.
- Where possible, the member of staff following the student should remain in contact with the Centre Manager or another member of staff via a mobile phone.
- The staff member following should not endanger themselves or follow the student on to the main road.
- The Centre Manager or another member of staff will then, if appropriate, allocate further staff members to go and collect the client and return them to Conquest Centre.
- The Centre Manager will also inform the client's parents and school/referring agency and keep them updated as necessary.

If a student absconds and is then deemed to be 'missing', procedures will follow as if the student were missing - see above.

It is important that following an incident the issues that arise are addressed and staff should:

- Request the individual risk assessment for the client involved is reviewed by the school/referring agency.
- Where appropriate, talk through the incident with the client involved.
- Complete a MyConcern of the incident.
- Keep all colleagues informed.

6. Policy Review

The Centre Manager is responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy. This policy will be reviewed annually. In addition, changes to legislation, national guidance, codes of practice or government advice may trigger interim reviews.