



*International, Inspiring, Incredible*

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## Absconding Procedures

The purpose of this non-statutory document is to set out the procedures for all stakeholders should a child leave the school without permission.

## Aims

We actively work to provide a secure, safe environment, a school where children are inspired to enjoy learning with others as part of an international and incredible community. We recognise that it is highly unlikely that a child will try to abscond from our school but these procedures are in place to ensure we are ready to deal with this eventuality should it occur.

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.



Although the British Section, SHAPE, is situated on an open site with unrestricted entry/exit to the school grounds, its position within a secure NATO base means that the potential dangers associated with absconding are reduced. It is possible for a child to leave the base whilst unsupervised, but the availability of police and security services, the lightness of road traffic, and the restricted access of persons to the base help to minimise any potential dangers.

**Where a pupil, present at registration, is found to be absent from school without authorisation the procedures should be as follows:**

- Class teacher to inform the head teacher, or a member of the SLT, and the school office.
- Head teacher or member of the SLT to organise a search of the building and known places that the child may have gone to.
- If the child is not found then all available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the school and grounds.
- School office to phone the police when the school and grounds have been fully checked if the child is not found.
- School office to contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation. Every attempt to contact parents to be recorded.
- Consideration will be given as to whether the search should be extended beyond the school buildings and grounds. This decision will be based on staff knowledge of the child and levels of risk and on what action is in the child's best interests.
- Any staff who leave the school grounds should take a mobile phone to contact school.
- Once the child has been found then the lead member of the SLT will use their professional judgement as to outline the response towards the child and the support required.
- A My Concern! report will be made and the details of the incident will also be recorded in the Behaviour and Incident Log.
- The lead SLT member will brief parents and the police.

Upon his or her return to school, and when the pupil is calm, the pupil will meet with a member of 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.

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

- A member of staff will alert the head teacher, the deputy head teacher or the deputising member of the SLT: this lead person will direct the course of action.
- A member of Staff who knows and has a good relationship with the child will follow and try to persuade her/him to return to the school. That member of staff must be equipped with a mobile phone.
- In the event of the child leaving the International School grounds (heading towards the residential area, the shopping centre or a gate), the member of Staff will inform the school via mobile phone and follow the child at a discrete distance. As active pursuit may cause the pupil to panic and increase the risk to his/her safety, staff will not chase.
- A member of the SLT will contact the pupil's parents/carers. The call or attempted calls will be recorded.

- The searching staff member will attempt to reassure the child and to persuade him/her to return to the school. The staff member must use his/her professional judgement in these circumstances and avoid any actions that might lead to the child placing him/herself at further risk.
- If the searching staff member loses sight of the pupil they must contact the school office giving details of their location and the clothes that the pupil is wearing. The head teacher or deputy head teacher will call the police to log the incident and to request support in locating the child.
- In the event of a child returning to the school of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed immediately.
- A My Concern report will be made and the details of the incident will also be recorded in the Behaviour and Incident Log.
- Upon his or her return to school, and when the pupil is calm, the pupil will meet with a member of 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.

### **Pupils who return to school after absconding**

Pupils who abscond will do so as a result of a specific incident which may have taken place at school, at home or on the way to school. For those pupils who return to school either by their own choice, with parental support or following intervention by a member of staff, thought should be given to their welfare. They are likely to need support, understanding and perhaps some time apart from their peers.

### **Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers of pupils are responsible for supporting the work of the school and encouraging their children to keep to all school procedures and policies. Once school has informed the parents that their child has absconded, parents and carers are responsible for actively supporting the school with subsequent procedures and actions. This could include coming into school to help secure the safety of their child as well as meeting with a Senior Leader in order to agree subsequent actions.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Each incident will be monitored and evaluated. Individual risk assessments for pupils may be appropriate.