



# Hawthorn Primary School

## Abducting from Site Policy



**'Where Every  
Child Matters'**

## **Introduction**

The welfare and wellbeing of all pupils at Hawthorn Primary School is paramount. This policy is to ensure that all pupils are protected and supported.

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

Mitigations:

- The school site will be secure as possible
- Children at risk of absconding will have a risk assessment
- Parent/Carer details will be kept in the school office

Actions to take when a pupil is found to be absent from the school site:

- A member of staff will inform the Headteacher, members of the SLT and staff in the main office.
- The 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 identified pupil is not found, then all available staff will complete a more thorough search of the premises and check the perimeter of the school grounds.
- A member of the SLT or office staff will immediately inform the parents/carers should the pupil have left the school. If the pupil is Looked After, then the Social Worker will also be informed at this time. Always keep parents updated.
- If the pupil is not found within 10 minutes, and parents have been unavailable for contact, an adult will inform the police.
- If the school has not been able to contact Parents/Carers then they will contact Children’s Services on 029 20536490 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 the school's knowledge of the child and on the levels of risk and any active risk assessment. Liaise with police at all times.
- Wherever possible, any member of staff who leaves the school grounds will take a mobile phone, 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 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 work with the child and their family to plan the way forward.
- The pupils risk assessment will be reviewed.
- A written report will be completed about the incident.
- The incident will be recorded on "My Concerns"

#### **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 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. Therefore, professional judgement must be used in deciding the level of pursuit. Never run after a child.

- De-escalation techniques must be attempted. In such stressful circumstances it is important that all 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. For more information on this policy, please contact the Local Team Teach Officer.
- Wherever possible any member of staff who leaves the school grounds will take a mobile phone in order to keep in contact with the 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 member loses sight of the pupil, or are concerned for the safety of the pupil or themselves, they must contact the school 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 pupils 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 review the procedures
- Review Absconding policy.

## **Information for Parents**

### **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 deliberately go away 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 goes “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. Parents will always be kept updated.
- An adult will inform the police on 101 if the adult has not been able to contact the parents/carers and the pupil has been 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 to 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 assessed to make sure they are safe and well. School staff will talk to the child to try and find out their reasons for leaving the premises. If your child wants to talk to someone outside the school, then 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 to 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 review.

## **Appendix 1**

### **De-escalation techniques**

#### **Where appropriate it may help to:**

- use TEAM TEACH de-escalation techniques
- Use Restorative Language (to avoid asking why they are doing something):
  - a) Move calmly
  - b) Make simple, clear statements to the pupil
  - c) Keep your voice, quiet, firm and assured
  - d) Lessen the perceived threat of your presence by sitting down, or allowing the pupil space
  - e) Talk to the pupil all the time
  - f) Offer comfort, reassurance and security
  - g) Maintain eye contact
  - h) When possible, have help at hand
  - i) Find a way to allow the pupil to "save face"

**It is usually unhelpful to:**

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