

# *Lyminster Primary School*



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## Pupils Absconding Policy and Procedure

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Lyminster Primary School Wick Street, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 7JZ

**POLICY**

Approved Date: July 2023

Review Date: July 2024

Reviewed and updated by: SBM

A risk assessment is completed for all pupils identified as likely to abscond. Where risks are high, this information is to be shared with all staff members. 1:1 provision to be considered in high-risk cases, where there are additional factors (such as SEN needs).

## **1. Where there is a known risk that a student may abscond;**

- The student should where viable be taught as far away from entrances and exits as possible.
- Student behaviours/triggers that elicit absconding documented and communicated to all staff
- Prevent students from reaching 'trigger point' - staff trained in de-escalation techniques
- Staff to remain calm and follow the school's documented de-escalation techniques
- Identified staff trained in positive handling and if a student is deemed by dynamic risk assessment as high risk to themselves or others positive handling strategies may be employed.

Unseen absconding - Where a student is present at first registration but is later found to have absconded from the school without permission:

- Member of staff to inform relevant staff i.e. Head teacher, SLT, designated safeguarding officer and main office.
- Search to be conducted of the site, SLT member to ensure that all external gates are secure.
- If these gates found not to be secure, gather a team to search the immediate vicinity for 5 minutes
- If, after 7 minutes of searching the student cannot be located, SLT to contact the Police
- Contact the Parents/Carers and keep them updated.
- If the external gates were found to be secure, School management should decide if the search should then be extended beyond the perimeter of the school, this would be based on the staff's knowledge of the student's level of risk. Procedures for staff leaving the school grounds to make an extended search should be part of the school's risk assessments e.g. lone working.
- If the student's whereabouts are confirmed school management will use their professional judgement to outline the school's response/action taken.

## **2. Where a student attempts to leave the premises without authorisation:**

- Staff to notify SLT and Main Office using two-way radios or class phones, whichever is closer to hand
- Where circumstances determine it appropriate (taking into consideration the specific needs/risks to the individual child) decision may be made by SLT to implement lockdown if student is known to still be in the school building.
- At all times staff should 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 them at greater risk e.g. running onto a busy road.

## **If pupil is seen leaving the site**

- Staff to follow the student at a safe distance if in view and/or engage in a local search.
- Procedures for staff leaving the school grounds to make an extended search should be in accordance with Procedures to ensure Personal Safety and Lone working.
- Where possible several staff to follow student and if area allows one or more members of staff to try and get ahead of student without being seen, in order to facilitate students safe return to school.
- If staff lose sight of or are concerned for the safety of the student or themselves they must contact the school office giving details of their current location and ask for assistance.
- Should the child leave the school grounds and immediate vicinity (go beyond 50 metres down Beaconsfield road or head towards either of the main roads) notify SLT immediately, who will then notify parents/Carers. These phone calls must be made concurrently with the search.
- If the student has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and is no longer visible then the school management will decide how to take matters further, they will take into account the students age, vulnerability, weather conditions, nature of the incident, and students previous history and Police advice.
- If the student returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the Police will be informed immediately and the school will check the student is 'safe and well' and has not been injured/harmed during the incident.

## **Post Incident**

- The school should make an assessment of site security and consider additional measures where necessary to prevent absconding.
- All staff should be reminded to be vigilant and ensure fire doors, gates and other entrances and exits are always closed/secured.
- Following an incident where a student absconds, their individual risk assessment and the schools overarching procedures should be reviewed and if required amended/updated and re-communicated to staff via staff meetings, training etc.
- Where appropriate school management should talk thorough the incident with the student and their Parents/Carers and keep a record of discussions.
- Inform Governors termly of any incidents of absconding and what control measures are in place.

## **Off site Visits**

- Additional control measure may need to be put in place for off-site visits. These should be detailed on the relevant EVOLVE off-site risk assessment.