



# FALCONER SCHOOL

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## ABSCONDING PUPILS MANAGEMENT POLICY

*May Reid*

.....  
**Signed – Governor**

.....  
**Print Name**

**Date:** December 2017

**Review:** December 2018

*Children who go missing from care or home are amongst our most vulnerable Children. Running should be seen as an indicator of underlying problems which may need further intervention, however whatever the reason, children who decide to runaway are, vulnerable and at risk. – Hertfordshire Safeguarding Board.*

Falconer School takes pupils absconding very seriously; this policy aim is to outline what to do in the event that a pupil absconds from School during the school day and from residential in the evening. It is paramount that the welfare of the child is taken into account and all staff has a duty to react immediately to a pupil choosing to abscond.

### **During the school day:**

- Staff member responsible for the child reports that the child has left their care to the Senior Management Team in the support centre immediately.
- Senior Management take responsibility for locating the child or for internally reporting the child missing.
- Senior Management search or instruct another member of staff to look for the pupil; search starts from where the pupil was last seen through the building including toilets and store areas and then throughout the School grounds. If either the Senior Management Team (SMT) member or staff member instructed to search is unable to locate the pupil within the school buildings or grounds the following actions should be taken:
  - Senior Management Team inform Headteacher/School Office and Home Liaison Coordinator (HLT) immediately that a child is out of the care and supervision of staff and is believed to be “offsite”. This should happen immediately after the search has been concluded and within 10 minutes of the original report that the child is missing.
  - School Office staff to log in the absconding record that a pupil is off site and time reported – this should be done as soon as the office staff has been informed.
  - HLT Coordinator or if they are unavailable Headteacher has the responsibility to inform parents
  - Parents to be advised that the school will “call out” the pupil to Missing Persons or in cases where it is believed that the child is in immediate danger the Headteacher will authorise a 999 call to the Police. This should happen in the first 15 minutes of the report coming in that the pupil has absconded
- Missing persons/Police to be called and the following information to be given:
  - Pupil’s name
  - DOB
  - Personal description
  - Time and location last seen
  - Circumstances around the young person choosing to abscond
  - Parents name, contact details and address
  - Information shared relevant to the young person if applicable

- Staff member reporting to missing persons should record the time and the reference number for future information.

*NB: Hertfordshire Constabulary automatically reports young persons under the age of 16 to Hertfordshire CSF Client Services Team. If the Young person has an allocated worker they will be informed that the Young Person is missing from School.*

- Parents informed of the reference number and given information on who to call if the young person's arrives at home.
- Form tutor informed that the young person has absconded and what action has been taken so far.

#### **Return after a short period within the School Day:**

- Once the pupil is back in school they should be placed in the support centre.
- School office, HLT Coordinator and Headteacher informed that they are back onsite
- HLT Coordinator or Headteacher to inform parents and Missing Persons/Police that the pupil has returned.
- A return interview should be conducted by SMT on duty in the support centre or Headteacher with information shared with HLT Coordinator and learning mentor. HLT Coordinator will share relevant information with parents and where applicable other professionals involved with the young person.

#### **Return to school after a longer period of absence:**

- Form tutor to escort the pupil prior to the school day beginning to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher who will conduct a return interview.

#### **Return Interview's:**

- SMT member or pupil's Learning Mentor to conduct a return interview. A return interview should cover the following points and should be held in a private space where the pupil is able to speak openly and freely:
  - Explore why the pupil chose to abscond
  - Summarise why the pupil thought absconding was the best option for him
  - Connect their feels to their behaviour
  - Discuss strategies for the pupil to use in circumstances where they think they may chose to abscond
  - Practice conversations/strategies with the pupil so they feel comfortable using these in the future
  - Conclude with the pupil and again summarise what they can do, and give them an action plan for them to use.

- Return interviews should happen within 30 minutes of the pupil being back on site or as soon as the pupil is able to discuss why they absconded
- Inform HLT Coordinator and Headteacher that the return interview has been conducted and the outcomes. Records should be taken and stored in the pupils mentoring file for future reference.
- During the return interview the member of staff holding this should inform the pupil of any consequences for their behaviour so that the pupil is aware and is able to express how they feel about this.
- Following a pupil absconding all staff should be notified and any agreed actions shared with all during the following mornings briefing.

### **Children Looked after:**

Where a child is looked after and he has absconded the HLT Coordinator or Headteacher should consult with his worker in regards to suspected circumstances leading to them absconding. The HLT Coordinator should consult with the worker prior to any return interview being held. The worker will decide if the return interview should be held by the school or a professional worker from their service.

All information that is able to be shared should be done so by the Headteacher where he feels it necessary and appropriate

### **Residential:**

- If a pupil absconds from residential and especially if after dark staff have to act very quickly to ensure the safety of the pupil. The Residential Manager must be informed immediately and without delay even if staff believe the pupil is still within the school grounds.
- An immediate search of the residential unit and surrounding area is to be conducted.
- If staff believe that the pupil has in fact absconded and is “offsite” then the residential manager or most senior person on site at the time is to contact the pupils parents offering to contact the police on behalf of the parent. This should be done within 10 minutes of the pupil absconding.
- Residential Manager to record in the residential absconding log the details required
- Residential Manager to inform on duty SMT member and also Headteacher/HLT Coordinator.
- The same procedures apply for notifying missing persons as within the school day.

**Bedtime or later:**

- If the pupil absconds during the night the night supervisor is to contact the residential manager who in turn will inform SMT and give instructions on what to do until they are onsite and able to take the lead.

**Return to Residential:**

- If the pupil returns that same night before 21:00 a return interview will be conducted by the residential manager or on duty SMT member.
- If the pupil returns after 21:00 then they will go to bed as sleep is needed and the return interview will be held in the morning.

**Sanctions:**

When a pupil absconds there needs to be consequences for their actions which are in line with the schools behaviour management policy. The Headteacher will decide the overall consequences and he will take into account the pupils behavioural needs. Listed below are some potential sanctions:

- Internal removal from lessons
- Detention
- Exclusion
- Withdrawal of privileges

This is not an extensive list as the sanctions are decided on a pupil by pupil basis and the severity of their actions.