

# Absconding Policy

## Bushmead Primary School



### Contents

1.	Aims and Objectives	1
2.	Legislation & Guidance	1
3.	Definitions	1
4.	Roles and responsibilities	1
5.	Internal absconding and external absconding	2
6	Control measures and procedures to prevent absconding site security	2
7	Effective supervision	3
8	Information to pupils	3
9	Individual Pupil Risk Assessments	3
10	External visits/sites	3
11	Actions to be taken in the event of absconding	4
12	Monitoring arrangements	5
A	Appendix A: Absconding pupil incident report	6
B	Appendix B: Site security risk assessment	7

## **1. Aims**

The purpose of this non-statutory policy is to set out clearly for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a child abscond in or from the School.

At Bushmead Primary School we actively work to provide a secure, safe environment, an School where children want to come to enjoy learning with others as part of a caring community. We recognise that it is highly unlikely that a child will try to abscond from our school but this policy is written to ensure we are ready to deal with this eventuality should it occur. If a child has specific needs and absconding is likely, then they should have a risk assessment.

## **2. Legislation and guidance**

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.

## **3. Definitions**

To abscond is to 'leave without permission'.

## **4. Roles and responsibilities**

### **4.1 The Governor/s**

Will work with the head teacher and to determine the strategic development of the Absconding policy and provision in the school. The Governing Body will review this policy in line with the Policy review schedule at the FGB / FPP / C&S committee meetings

### **4.3 The Head teacher**

The Head teacher is **Mr Steve Down**

Will work with staff, parents and governors to determine the strategic development of the Absconding policy and provision in the school.

Have overall responsibility for the provision and safety of all learners and adults throughout school.

### **4.4 Class teachers and teaching assistants**

Teachers and Learning Support Assistants will implement the Absconding policy fully throughout the school

## **5. Internal absconding and external absconding**

Internal absconding:

- Where the pupil leaves the care of the responsible person without permission but remains on the school site.
- Where a pupil leaves a lesson without permission but remains on the school site.
- Where a pupil leaves a club run on behalf of the school without permission but remains on the site.

External absconding:

- Where a pupil leaves the school site without permission.
- Where a pupil leaves an offsite provision without permission. e.g. curriculum swimming, alternate education, provision, etc.
- Where a pupil leaves a defined area or supervision of the responsible adult without permission e.g. when undertaking fieldwork or on an
- Educational visit

## **6. Control measures and procedures to prevent absconding site security**

The site has a perimeter fence and gates. Gates/doors are closed and locked outside of our stated drop off and pick up times. Doors into the school are either locked with an electronic system or have a suitable lock that complies with fire regulations. In addition a regular perimeter risk assessment is carried out on the school perimeter where potential absconding risks are rated between 1 and 5 with 1 being the lowest risk.

Staff are aware of specific children in school that may pose a potential absconding risk and the schools Cambridgeshire Therapeutic Thinking graduated approach tools are used to develop a preventative plan. Staff are aware of the plan and associated script.

Supervision at break and lunch times is specifically planned with key staff to ensure that areas of risk are supervised.

## **7. Effective supervision**

Effective supervision is dependent on a number of factors including:

- Age of the pupils
- Ability of the pupils
- Number of the pupils
- Activities being undertaken
- Pupil behaviour
- Site layout and security
- Specific identified risks e.g. pupils with history of absconding, building work, activity etc.

Bushmead staff have support the management structure and line managers in order to discuss activities and situations enabling the above factors to be considered before activities commence.

## **8. Information to pupils**

Bushmead's values are clearly displayed and reinforced throughout the academic year. There is a clear and consistent system in the behaviour management policies and procedures which covers absconding pupils.

## **9. Individual Pupil Risk Assessments**

Where there is a foreseeable risk of absconding, there should be either a predict and prevent plan in place or an individual risk management plan. This should be draw up in partnership with the parent and pupil where appropriate.

## **10. External visits/sites**

On an Educational Visit the security of the venue/location should be assessed and supervision levels altered accordingly. Staff will ensure that there are robust systems in place so that each group has specified members and leaders, and regular head counts occur throughout the visit.

In the planning for an educational visit the risks of absconding must be clearly assessed, where known absconders are in attendance. This should include transport communication between the groups and robust emergency procedures should be place.

## **11. Actions to be taken in the event of absconding**

Any action taken must be proportionate to the risk and in the best interest of the child.

### **11.1 Where a pupil, leaves a lesson without permission but remains on the School site (Leaving the room without permission):**

- A member of the SLT will be alerted.
- Member of staff supervising child at the time of absconding to accompany the child, if safe to do so, but keep a safe distance. Use the Cambridgeshire Therapeutic Thinking script
- Wellbeing Lead to support child in distress
- Emotional support offered to support child in distress.
- Discussion with SLT to discuss whether the child will return to class or continue their learning elsewhere, to prevent further incidents.
- Parents/carers made aware.

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

- Member of staff to inform Head Teacher or member of SLT in charge immediately.
- Staff must follow the child to the school fence or gate and use the CTT training to deescalate the situation.
- If by leaving the school the child is known to be putting themselves in danger, adults must exercise their duty of care and make a judgement in line with CTT as to whether the child leaving would constitute a serious risk of significant harm and if so and practical attempt to stop the child, physically if necessary.
- As active pursuit may encourage a child to leave the site and may also cause the child to panic; possibly putting him or herself at risk by running onto a busy road, staff will not chase but will try to keep a child in sight at a distance.
- The school office will contact the child's parents/carers.
- If the child has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and is no longer visible then the Police must be informed and the following procedure followed
  - o Lead member of SLT to remain in school with mobile phone
  - o Adults that know the local vicinity to be assigned areas, as a minimum, to search initially the following areas. This can be adapted by the lead SLT member depending on their knowledge of the child and situation.
    - Linton Close and surrounding area
    - Darrington Close and surrounding area
    - Bushmead Road (Water tower to Queens Gardens)
    - Kings Road play area (Nisa park)
    - Any other area deemed appropriate by the lead adult
  - o All adults that leave the building to be part of the search must have a mobile phone with them and report in to school as soon as they have sight of the child.
  - o On a sighting of the child all adults that area searching will be contacted by the SLT lead and directed to move toward the last know location
  - o Once an adult has made contact with the child they should be joined by a second adult as soon as is practical and then make their way back to school.
- Staff will follow the pupil and engage in a local search, following the pupil at a safe distance if in view.
- The SLT lead may direct additional staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone to contact school.
- If the child returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.
  
- Upon his or her return to school, and when the child is calm, the child must be seen by the Head Teacher 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.
- A meeting with parents/carers will be arranged.
- A written report will be filed on the incident and recorded on MyConcern.

## 12. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed by the Head teacher **every 3 years**. It will also be updated if any changes to the information are made during the year.

It will be approved by the governing board.

<b>Version:</b>	[1]	
<b>Written by:</b>	[S Down]	<b>Date:</b> [01/09/2025]
<b>Last reviewed by staff:</b>	[Sept 25]	
<b>Last reviewed by governors:</b>	[Sept 25]	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	[Sept 28]	

## Absconding Pupil Incident Report

Name of pupil:	
Class/Teacher	
Date:	
Outline of the incident	<p>(Please include time of day, staff involved and how the issue was resolved.)</p>
What triggers led to this incident occurring?	
Actions to be taken to ensure safety in school	
Signed by adult supporting	
Signed by Headteacher	
Signed by Parent/carer	

Risk No	Area	Risks	Reasonable adjustments	Risk Score 1 – 5 (high) before adjustment made		Risk Score 1 – 5 (high) after reasonable adjustments made
1	Main entrance to the school	1. Main door lock is openable from the inside with a suitable piece of equipment. A child could potentially open the door	1. Cover the inside of the lock with a robust cover. (Complete)	3		1
		2. Green exit button located on the wall in front office access which would allow a child to open the door	2. Ensure main door is kept shut and door locked. Code to be put on the outside of the door so only adults can access the office. (Not complete)	4		2
		3. Windows open fully which could allow a child to exit.	Alternative adjustment: Exit button on wall to be deactivated or replaced with a key pad. 3. Window lock restrictors to be fitted (Complete)	3		1
2	Willow classroom	1. Door exits to small courtyard area which has a 3 foot fence and with a gap that a child could easily fit through.	1. No reasonable adjustments possible. A new 10 ft fence would need to be put up ideally with inward angled top (Not complete)	4		4
		2. Windows open fully which could allow a child to exit.	2. Window restrictors (Complete)	3		1



Risk No	Area	Risks	Reasonable adjustments	Risk Score 1 – 5 (high) before adjustment made		Risk Score 1 – 5 (high) after reasonable adjustments made
3	Main school kitchen	1. Door exits to small courtyard area which has a 3 foot fence and with a gap that a child could easily fit through.	1. No short term reasonable adjustments possible. A new 10 ft fence would need to be put up ideally with inward angled top (Not complete)	4		4
		2. Windows open fully which could allow a child to exit.	2. Window restrictors (Complete)	3		1
4	Main playground vehicle gate and fencing (approx. 10ft)	1. Climbing the fence to leave school grounds	1.No measures needed	2		2
5	Playing field side 6ft hedge (north facing) with 6ft fence behind	1. Crawling through bushes and over fence.	1. No measures needed	1		1
6	Playing field fence (north facing). Last 3 metres before rear fence.	1. Fence is 6ft high but has cross members and side struts that make it climbable. Logs could easily be moved into position that would make fence easy to climb	1. No short term reasonable adjustments possible. A new 10 ft fence would need to be put up ideally with inward angled top (Not complete)  Additional adjustment made: Staff on duty are all aware of the risk in this area of the field and have been instructed to be vigilant	5		5  Adjusted risk 4

Risk No	Area	Risks	Reasonable adjustments	Risk Score 1 – 5 (high) before adjustment made		Risk Score 1 – 5 (high) after reasonable adjustments made
7	West face fence to A1	1. Climb the fence and access the roads adjacent to the school or the bank to the A1. 10ft fence exists.	1. No measures needed	2		2
8	Forest school corner fence	1. Climb the fence and access the roads adjacent to the school.	1. No short term reasonable adjustments possible. Instal new 10ft fence along top 20m section of the Forest school  (Not complete)  Additional adjustment made: Staff on duty are all aware of the risk in this area of the field and have been instructed to be vigilant	5		5  Adjusted risk 4
9	South boundary	1. Climb 6ft fence into back gardens of houses.  2. The bottom of the fence is loose so potentially could be climbed underneath	1. No measures needed to restrict climbing as no routes out of the gardens  2. Peg fence the bottom of the fence to the ground	2		2
10	EYFS playground	1. Multiple equipment types on playground to climb on that could easily be moved to the 6ft fence and used to climb over.	1. No measures feasible as equipment is needed for outdoor provision	3		3

Risk No	Area	Risks	Reasonable adjustments	Risk Score 1 – 5 (high) before adjustment made		Risk Score 1 – 5 (high) after reasonable adjustments made
11	EYFS double gate	1. Gate could potentially be pushing through by a strong child which would lead them to the exit path	1. Repair ground stakes to ensure gate is adequately secured	4		1
12	Small hall	<p>1. White door has been a previous exit route to the outside. The door cannot be locked as a fire route. It has a high level bolt currently</p> <p>2. Brown door to kitchen and then out of the white external door. The door cannot be locked as a fire route. It has a high level bolt currently</p>	<p>1. No reasonable adjustment possible. Electronic system would be needed with all staff magnetic keys (Additional adjustment made: Main corridor door locked with key available in main office. Door will always be locked unless adult is in the room)</p> <p>2. No reasonable adjustment possible. Electronic system would be needed with all staff magnetic keys (Additional adjustment made: Main corridor door locked with key available in main office. Door will always be locked unless adult is in the room)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>4</p>		<p>4</p> <p>Adjusted risk 3</p> <p>4</p> <p>Adjusted risk 3</p>

Risk No	Area	Risks	Reasonable adjustments	Risk Score 1 – 5 (high) before adjustment made		Risk Score 1 – 5 (high) after reasonable adjustments made
		3. Windows open fully which could allow a child to exit.	3. Window lock restrictors to be fitted (Complete)  ** Note: it would be possible to lock the doors into the small hall as this is not a fire route. This however would significantly affect the usability of the room	3		1
	SENDCo and Heads office	1. Windows open fully which could allow a child to exit.	1. Window lock restrictors to be fitted	3		1

This risk assessment was completed at 8am on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2025 with the following professionals combining their experience and knowledge to make joint assessment of the risks of children being able to exit the school grounds.

Steve Down                      Head Teacher Bushmead Primary School



5<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Mark Leonard    Deputy Head Teacher Bushmead Primary School

Bex Owen

Head Teacher Little Paxton Primary School

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bex Owen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

6<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Jodie Flowerday

Health and Safety Governor Bushmead Primary School