



NEW PARK SCHOOL – SECONDARY SITE

ABSCONSION POLICY AND PROTOCOL

FIRST CREATED: JULY 2012 – EDITION 1

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Policy Agreed	04/02/2021
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Owner	Laura Clegg
Designation	Deputy Head Teacher

ABSCONSION POLICY and PROTOCOL

‘Believe And Succeed’

(This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Greater Manchester ‘Standardised Approach to Dealing with Missing and Absent People of all Ages’ that has been put into force in Salford in August 2012. The school absconson protocol is based on the guidance offered in this document. Please see also Policy and Practice for Promoting School Attendance)

Staff Responsible for Promoting and Monitoring Positive Attendance

Name	Area of Responsibility
Laura Clegg, Deputy Headteacher	Leadership Responsibility
Yahna Pemberton	Operational Manager for Attendance and Welfare
All Staff	Daily registration, promotion of positive attendance and positive engagement and communication with parents and carers

We want our pupils to be:

- Eager, excited, curious and engaged in learning.
- Have a sense of self and are happy, confident and emotionally healthy.
- Able to co-operate and communicate socially.
- Be healthy and safe.
- Feel equipped to make life choices, recognize their own achievement, take responsibility for themselves and behave in a way that enhances their well being and the well being of others.
- Achieve their personal best in education which is only possible if they attend their lessons

Introduction

We define absconson to be an act whereby a pupil goes beyond the school perimeter without permission. There are circumstances when staff will physically stop a young person from leaving their classroom and/or school premises. This will definitely be the case for KS2 pupils and may also be the case for younger KS3 pupils. However, staff have not the right to physically stop a young person from leaving school premises and detain them unless the risk to the pupil outweighs the risks posed to them or staff by using physical intervention (Human Rights Act)

Preventative Approach

‘Keeping Safe’ is a topic regularly discussed with young people in class tutorials, PSHE lessons and counselling sessions. Additionally, support is available and used regularly from other services such as the Integrated Youth Service. Peer

mentoring has also been identified as having a positive impact on in reducing the risk of young people feeling overwhelmed by their own issues which may be school or home related.

Monitoring In School Truancy and Absconsions

(See Policy and Practice for Promoting School Attendance)

- Staff on duty before school hrs record any pupils leaving school premises in monitoring book which is kept in school office.
- Staff are placed on duty and will endeavor to escort/monitor students who leave premises during social times.
- At start of day, the monitoring book is returned to the school office, informing reception staff of any student who has not returned and if there is currently any staff with them.
- Office staff will inform tutor team by phone or in person. Office staff will follow up by sending email to Operational Attendance Manager and SLT by email.
- Tutor team will try to contact parents/carers of their child's absconsion from school if they do not return within 15 minutes of their last sighting by staff.
- If Tutor team cannot reach parents/carers, they inform Operational Attendance Manager or SLT so this can be followed up
- Time allowed before parents/carers are notified is recorded in individual risk assessment but must not exceed 30 mins)
- Parents/carers will be advised to report their child missing if they do not return home (or to school) within an agreed time frame as laid out in LA Absconsion Policy adopted by New Park). School will report a child missing if parents cannot be reached and there is an imminent risk as identified in individual risk assessment (see below: GM guidelines)

Guidelines for dealing with young people who return after a brief period

If a young person absconds but returns within approx 20 minutes, the young person must be offered the opportunity to speak to an adult of the young person's choice so that the cause of his/her action can be ascertained where ever this is deemed appropriate .

There are other behaviours that involve children in absenting themselves from prescribed activities. These include:

- Walking out of class/activity on and off site.
- Failure to return to class/activity from a break.

These absconsions will most likely be dealt with within the behaviour policy guidelines, i.e. the young people involved will be given a negative consequence and will have to 'make up the time lost'.

Guidelines for dealing with young people who abscond from school

As stated in the document referred to above, 'going missing' is a dangerous activity and can have short and long term consequences, ...and it is imperative that services working with children are able to and actively do identify those who are commencing a pattern of running behaviour and provide the appropriate interventions at the earliest opportunity to prevent future incidents which may place them, or others, at risk.

Many children will exhibit normal adolescent behaviour in testing boundaries and it is not helpful to consider every incident of lateness or absence for all people as high risk. However, some will need to be treated as missing immediately due to their vulnerability. This protocol is based upon the principles of sound individual risk assessment, by carers and agency professionals and by GMP in classifying and responding to the incident.”

GMP distinguishes between young people going missing, and young people absenting themselves:

- **Missing** – Anyone whose **whereabouts cannot be established and** where the circumstances are **out of character**, or the context suggests **the person may be the subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another**.
- **Absent** – A person **not at a place** where they are **expected or required** to be but where carers or Police do not feel the need to start a full missing investigation at that stage.

It is further stated in the document that young people should not be reported missing as a behaviour management tool. A clear risk analysis will establish the risk to the young person involved:

High	The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the subject is in danger through their own vulnerability, or may have been a victim of a serious crime; or the risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public is in danger.
Medium	The risk posed is likely to place the subject in danger, or they are a threat to themselves or others.
Low	There is no apparent risk of danger to either the subject or the public.

On return to school, a **Safe and Well Check** will have to be carried out. In many cases this may not be undertaken by the police as it is recognized that the young people might be more likely to confide in a trusted adult who can support them longer term and help reduce further risk.

Guidelines for reporting the young person missing to the police

(See 'Standardised Approach to Dealing with Missing and Absent People of all Ages')

If a young person under 16 (or 18 if in care) is found to be missing from school, school must inform the parent or carer with parental responsibility. **It is the parent's / carer's responsibility then to notify the police of the missing person.** Only if the individual is aged over 16 years (over 18 years if in care), school may decide to report the individual missing directly to the Police.

The only exceptions to this rule are:

- When a member of the senior leadership team makes a professional judgment that circumstances indicate too high a risk so any delay must be avoided.
- In cases where school cannot get in contact with the person with parental responsibility.
- If the school has concerns about compromised parenting and/or believes the parents will not report the young person missing in a timely manner.

School will follow the usual Safeguarding procedures and report to Children's Services if there are concerns for the young person's safety and welfare during or following a missing or any absent episode. Other agencies will be involved to support the young person as appropriate, and additional support will be offered to parents/carers on a multi-agency basis (Early Help Assessment, TAF, CIN, CP as appropriate). If a young person is considered at risk of Sexual Exploitation, appropriate referrals will be made and a strategy meeting called to identify the risk level and what can be done to further support the young person.

(Missing from school should not be confused with "Missing from Education" which is about an individual's access, or lack of access, to education rather than their physical location.)

Related Policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Greater Manchester 'Standardised Approach to Dealing with Missing and Absent People of all Ages'
- Policy and Practice for Promoting School Attendance
- RSE Policy
- Counselling Protocol
- Calling Emergency Services Protocol
- CFC Policy
- Early Help Assessment Policy