



# Absconding Policy

## Impact Independent school

<b>Approved by:</b>	Terence Breen	<b>Date:</b> October 2021
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	October 2021	
<b>Next review due by:</b>	October 2022	

At Impact Independent School we strive to:

- ✓ **Value everyone**
- ✓ **Create a happy, safe, supportive and stimulating learning environment**
- ✓ **Develop everyone's personal, social, emotional health and wellbeing**
- ✓ **Promote relevant academic and vocational skills**
- ✓ **Meet individual needs through an imaginative and flexible approach**
- ✓ **Enable all learners to achieve their full potential**

### **UNCRC United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

- Impact Independent School places the values and principles of the UNCRC at the heart all policies and practices
- Impact Independent School is a Rights Respecting School

**This policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and other key national and local legislation, guidance and policies.**

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

### **INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE**

This policy is written to guide staff in the event of a student going missing on the premises, going missing outside of the school (offsite activities) or having absconded from school site.

Staff are reminded to read the following school policies and practice guidelines in conjunction with this policy –

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Individual Risk Assessments

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly, the process that will take place should a child abscond from school.

#### **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 led activities.

It is important for us as a school to maintain a caring, welcoming ethos which establishes a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. Accordingly, we must take reasonable steps, through our staff training programme, to minimise the likelihood of positive handling becoming necessary in the case of one or more pupils absconding.

**Where a pupil present at formal registration, is found to be absent from school without authorisation or knowledge, the following safeguarding procedures must be followed:**

1. Member of staff to inform Behaviour Lead, a member of ELT, and main office.
2. Behaviour Lead ensures student is not hiding on site
3. School Office will call home and make parents/carers aware that child has absconded from site
4. School Office will call the Police to report the child has absconded
5. School office will log on Arbor that child has absconded from site
6. Once a pupil has been found then the lead SLT member will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.

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

1. Staff must follow the student to the perimeter fence or gate and must try to persuade the student to stay in the school.
2. **De-escalation techniques must be attempted.** In such stressful circumstances it is important that staff remain as calm and collected as possible
3. If a student is deemed to be a high risk to themselves or other people then staff should adhere to the **Positive Handling Strategies for Pupils in Schools and Other Educational Settings Policy** with reference to holding the student, if appropriate.
4. At all times staff must 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 risk by running onto a busy road, for example.
5. If the student has left the immediate vicinity of the school the school office, Behaviour Lead and ELT members must be contacted immediately and the lead person will direct the course of action.
6. The SLT or designated staff **must** contact the Police and student's parents/carers immediately. These phone calls must be made concurrently.
7. If the pupil(s) has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and is no longer visible then the ELT will make a decision as to how to take matters further which will take into account the age of the student, the prevailing weather conditions, the nature of the incident which led to the pupil absconding, the pupil's previous history of being involved in episodes of absconding and their outcomes.
8. If the student returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.

9. Upon his or her return to school, and when the student is calm, the student should be seen by the Behaviour Lead or a member of ELT so that the reasons for absconding may be discussed in detail if this is appropriate. At this point a decision will be made as to the appropriateness of further actions.

10. A written report will be filed on the incident and reported on Arbor.

11. It is important that following an incident the issues that arise are addressed and staff **must**:

- Consider an individual risk assessment for the student involved. If there is a second incident within an academic year then a risk assessment **must** be completed.
- Where appropriate, talk through the incident with the student and parents/Carers involved. Ensure that a record is kept of the discussion held with the student and parents.
- Complete an incident form and/or an absconding record (a copy of which should be placed in the student's personal files).
- Keep all colleagues informed and discuss the incident in staff meetings and/or in supervision meetings.
- Review procedures for the individual every half term to ensure appropriate control measures are in place and that all staff are fully informed.

## **INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

### **What happens if you / your child / go missing?**

#### **What is meant by “missing”?**

You will be considered missing if members of staff do not know where you are.

#### **What is meant by “absconding”?**

You have absconded if you deliberately go off site or from where you should be without telling a member of staff or without a member of staff giving you permission.

#### **What will happen if you go missing?**

The people looking after you have a responsibility to know where you are and to make sure you are safe. If you are 'missing' they will speak to your friends, teachers and family to see if they can help. If there is concern for your safety, then the Police may be informed that you are missing.

#### **What happens if you can't be found?**

Your name, description and a photograph will be given to the Police in order to help them with their search.

#### **What happens when you are found?**

You will be returned to a safe place and will be asked about the reasons for you going missing. This is to try and find out if anything is troubling you and to see if anyone can help. You do not have to run away to talk to someone. If you want to talk to someone outside of the school, this can be arranged. You may also be visited by a Police Officer who will check that you are back.

This is called a “Safe and Well Check”. You will be able to speak to the Police Officer without any member of staff present if you wish to do so.

#### **Will anything else happen?**

If you are injured or unwell then you will be checked by a Doctor or Nurse.

Your teacher or mentor will want to talk to you about going missing. If you have deliberately run away

(absconded) then the people responsible for your safety will discuss ways in which such incidents can be prevented by looking at the reasons for your actions.

**Remember** - You have the right to use a telephone to talk to someone. If you are worried about something or just want to talk, a mentor will be available.

The national ChildLine number is 0800 1111.

You can talk to any member of the Pastoral Team at school or another trusted adult.

## **De-escalation techniques**

It may help to:

Use Restorative Language (to avoid asking why they are doing something).

- move calmly
- make simple, clear statements to the pupil
- keep your voice quiet, firm and assured
- lessen the threat of your presence by sitting down or allowing the pupils space
- talk to the pupil all the time
- offer comfort, reassurance and security
- maintain eye contact
- when possible, have help at hand
- find a way to allow the pupil to 'save face'

### **It is usually unhelpful to:**

- give complex advice or instructions
- speak quickly and loudly
- corner a child or stand too close
- attempt to reason by asking questions