

Absconding Policy

Key Document Details

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Version no: 1
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Approved by: Principal/LGB

Ratified date: January 2021
Interim review date: n/a
Next review date: January 2023



Policy Statement

Many of the students at St. Luke's Academy have difficulties dealing with problems in a socially acceptable way. One of the ways some of the students decide to deal with problems which have occurred in school is to 'walk out' and leave school grounds without permission. This leads staff at having to balance the need for close supervision against the freedom and dignity of the individual student.

Aim of the Policy

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles and policies underpinning the school's approach to the discovery that a student is missing.

Preventing Missing Persons Incidents

Staff should remain vigilant at all times and try to be aware of exactly where students are at any given time. Students who are prone to wandering should have this identified during risk assessment. Such students should be kept under observation as appropriate to the level of risk identified.

Raising the Alarm

Staff should raise the alarm immediately they suspect that a student may have absconded by informing a senior manager.

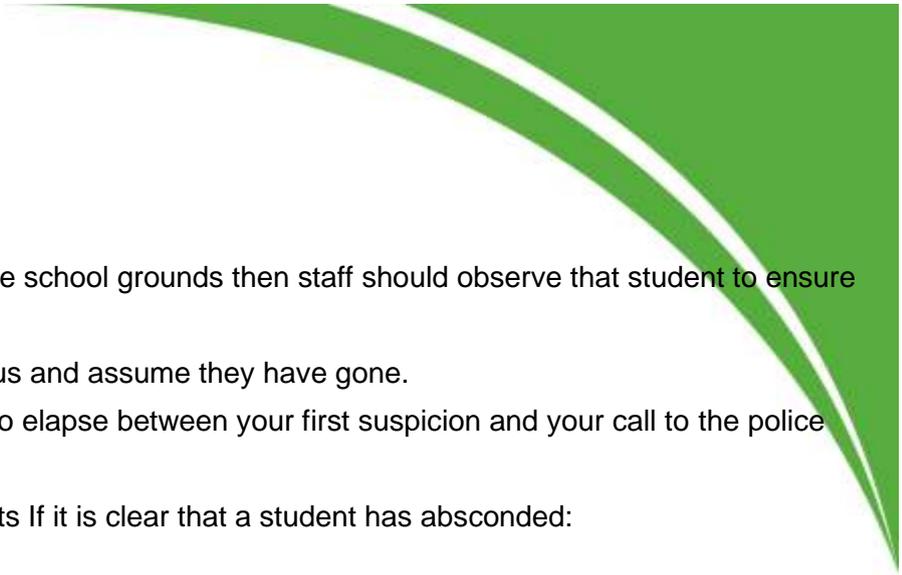
Situations where a student has absconded will include the following:

- Where a student has not returned from an arranged outing, activity or walk.
- Where a student cannot be found in the school or grounds and no arrangements have been made for an outing, activity or walk.

Procedure

If it is initially unclear as to whether they have actually left the school grounds:

- Inform a senior manager of your concerns.
- Check that the student is not on a prearranged outing, activity or walk.
- Briefly and promptly tour the school buildings and grounds to search for the student.

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- If the student is on the outskirts of the school grounds then staff should observe that student to ensure they do not later leave the grounds.
 - If you cannot locate them, be cautious and assume they have gone.
 - Do not allow more than 30 minutes to elapse between your first suspicion and your call to the police and parents.
 - Check CCTV for their last movements If it is clear that a student has absconded:
 - Inform a senior manager.
 - Alert all staff to the possibility of the student being missing and ask for information / sightings
 - Seek support, (via the walkie – talkie) and make a judgement whether you can safely stop and return the student who has absconded.
 - Do not compromise the health and safety of staff or students with an inappropriate or poorly judged physical intervention.
 - Do not compromise the safe running of the school and the care, control and safety of the rest of the school community by leaving the school premises or advising others to do so unless there are exceptional circumstances.
 - Find out who last saw the student and attempt to discover reasons why the student may have absconded.
 - Where necessary, tactfully question relevant students about the missing student's plans and movements.
 - Do not allow more than 30 minutes to elapse between your first suspicion and your call to the police.
 - Parents / Guardians are informed of the situation, external agencies if relevant [CLA, social worker]
 - Families should be requested to telephone the school if the student contacts them and relatives should be kept informed at each stage of the search.
 - The senior manager will decide whether to conduct further searches around the local vicinity, or whether to wait for police assistance. This will depend on the vulnerability of the student whilst they are out in the local community.
 - Once the student has been found, it is essential that all the parties who were advised of the emergency be contacted again and informed that the search has been concluded.
 - Staff should, at the earliest opportunity, complete a Sleuth report. Times of actions and decisions should be noted as accurately as possible.