



Venture
Learning

Missing Student / Absconding from Supervision Policy and Procedure.

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Missing Student / Absconding from Supervision Policy and Procedure.

All pupils attending Venture Learning are more vulnerable than those in mainstream schools due to their Special Educational Needs. They may lack basic road safety awareness or an awareness of the dangers of engaging with strangers. Many of our pupils have been commissioned by schools that are several miles from our venue and they may be unfamiliar with the area surrounding the school they attend.

Venture Learning recognises that any student who leaves supervision without permission or whose whereabouts become unknown may be at risk of significant harm. All such incidents will be treated as safeguarding concerns and managed using a dynamic risk-assessment process led by senior leaders and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

All pupils are expected to remain onsite unless they are taking part in a supervised, planned offsite activity. All offsite trips are appropriately risk-assessed and follow individual school policies. Pupils are made aware of the school boundaries and there are clear expectations that pupils must not go offsite without permission. Most schools have clear boundaries consisting of fencing/walls and gates. However, our school is not a “high security” venue and pupils are able to leave the site if they choose to do so.

There are several reasons why pupils might leave the site, including going to the local shop, smoking, peer pressure to “run off,” anxiety about something at school and or home. Our priority is always the safety of pupils and staff. Venture Learning will follow the basic procedures outlined below:

Principles

- Any incident of a student leaving supervision or going missing will be treated primarily as a safeguarding matter. The school's response will focus on the student's safety, welfare and protection from harm rather than disciplinary considerations.
- The SLT are responsible for all students and therefore will assume responsibility for procedures to be followed in the event of an absconding pupil.
- All staff involved in any incident will be aware of the specific needs and behaviours of the student.
- All students likely to engage in this behaviour will have a specific risk assessment/plan.
- The student's welfare and safety will be the primary concern during any incident.
- The school will manage the communication of information to parents and other professionals depending upon the dynamic risk assessment by the SLT.
- If a child has been missing for more than a significant period of time, the commissioner will be informed. However, if a child is missing and it is past the usual “home time”, the commissioner will be informed straightaway.

At our School

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL must be informed as soon as reasonably practicable and involved in all risk assessments and decision-making.
- If a child leaves the school site without permission, staff should not place themselves, the student or members of the public at risk. Staff may observe and maintain visual contact where safe to do so but should not physically restrain, chase, run after or enter unsafe environments unless there is an immediate risk to life or serious harm and they are trained and authorised to do so.
- If at all possible, staff will encourage the student to make some good choices (listen to staff advice and return to school). The member of staff following the student may request a parent

to pick up the student. If so, staff will encourage/escort the student into the vehicle for their own safety.

- If a student goes missing, staff will search the buildings and grounds to confirm that student has left site.
- Once a student is confirmed as missing, the school will begin its own log, detailing all times and events.
- Staff will then search the surrounding neighbourhood. If the student is not found then parents/carers are informed.
- A dynamic risk assessment will be carried out, taking into account the age, vulnerability and general ability of the student, as well as the likely reason for the absconsion and where they may have gone.
- The decision to contact police will be determined through an ongoing dynamic risk assessment. Police may be contacted immediately where vulnerability, age, medical need, risk of exploitation, risk of self-harm, adverse weather conditions or known risk factors indicate heightened concern.
- When the student returns to school or is brought back by staff, parents will be informed straightway. If the Police have been called, they will be told the student is back on site.
- If for whatever reason the student has not been found by the time school closes at the end of the day (between 14.14 – 15.30) parents/carers will continue to liaise with the Police.
- The school will decide on the follow-up action according to the individual situation.
- Following a review of the incident, the school will determine whether a restorative, supportive or disciplinary response is appropriate. Safeguarding concerns and underlying causes will be considered before any sanction is imposed.
- A formal risk assessment may also need to be developed for the individual and will include specific considerations for:
 - Child criminal exploitation
 - Child sexual exploitation
 - County lines involvement
 - Online contact with unknown adults
 - Self-harm or suicidal ideation
 - Substance misuse
 - Medical vulnerabilities
 - Known missing episodes

Following every incident:

- A return-to-school conversation will be undertaken.
- Parents/carers will be involved.
- The DSL will determine whether further safeguarding action is required.
- Risk assessments and behaviour support plans will be reviewed.
- Lessons learned will be recorded.

Procedures for Off-Site Visits

Off-Site Activities

- Trip leader immediately informed.
- Group safety maintained.
- One member of staff designated to search where appropriate.
- Venue security informed.

- School notified immediately.
- Parents contacted.
- Police informed according to risk assessment.