



HILBRE HIGH SCHOOL HUMANITIES COLLEGE

ABSCONDING STUDENT POLICY

Author:
Name of Committee approved:
Date ratified at Full Governors:
Date to be reviewed:

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Pastoral
28th March 2019
February 2021

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding, Behaviour and Health & Safety policies.

The purpose of this policy is to remind all staff and visitors of 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 & Safety at Work Act, 1974 and in Common Law, schools and other education settings owe a duty of care towards their students. This duty of care requires that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that students are safe and remain within the care of the school at all times throughout the school day and during school led activities.

Where a student, present at registration points, is found to be absent from school without authorisation, the following procedures should be followed:

- Member of staff to inform House Staff that student is not present in lesson.
- House staff to check with Main Office that child has not been signed out.
- House team to contact individual staff member on walkabout to conduct a search of the school grounds.
- If the student is not found then all available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.
- Available SLT member will instruct the School Office to phone the police when the area has been fully checked, if the child is not found. The School Office will contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation.
- Consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the school perimeter. This decision will be based on the member of staff's knowledge of the child and on the levels of risk, and on what action is in the child's best interests.
- Any staff (familiar to the child) who leaves the school grounds must inform the Main Office and a member of the SLT. In this instance, all staff must carry a mobile phone in order to be contacted and to contact school.
- Once a student has been found then the familiar staff and, if necessary, a member of the SLT will use their professional judgement to escort the child back to school. Once the child is back safely in school, or the search has been handed over to the police, the following must be completed:
 - ✓ A written report will be filed on the incident.
 - ✓ Member of SLT to brief police and parents/carers.
 - ✓ Risk Assessment completed (or the risk assessment reviewed).

Where a student attempts, or is seen to be leaving the school premises without authorisation, the following procedures should be followed:

- Staff must follow the student to the perimeter fence or gate and use appropriate de-escalation skills to support the child to remain in school.
- 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 student to panic, possibly putting him or herself at risk by running onto a busy road, for example.
- If the student has left the immediate vicinity of the school the Headteacher/member of the SLT and the School Office must be contacted immediately and the lead person will direct the course of action.
- Staff will follow the student and engage in a local search, following the student 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.
- The SLT lead will contact the student's parents/carers.
- If the searching staff lose sight of the student, they must contact the School Office giving details of their location and the clothes which the student is wearing.
- If the student has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and is no longer visible, then the SLT will make a decision as to how to take matters further which will take into account the age, ability and vulnerability of the student as well as the prevailing weather conditions, the nature of the incident which led to the student absconding, the student's previous history of being involved in episodes of absconding and their outcomes. Police contacted.
- If the young person returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.
- When the young person returns to school, and when the student is ready, a repair and reflection must take place to reinforce and remind the student of keeping safe, their rights and responsibilities and the reasons for absconding. The following must be completed:
 - ✓ A written report will be filed on the incident.
 - ✓ Member of SLT to brief police and parents/carers.
 - ✓ Risk Assessment completed (or the risk assessment reviewed).