

# Ebor Gardens and Victoria Primary Academies



## Absconding, lost and missing pupils policy

<b>Policy updated:</b>	<b>September 2019</b>
<b>Adopted:</b>	<b>November 2019</b>
<b>Review date:</b>	<b>November 2022</b>

## Introduction

Ebor Gardens Primary Academy and Victoria Primary Academy are committed to providing a broad, balanced and effective education for all the children who attend our schools.

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.

We take pupil safeguarding very seriously and all staff share a commitment towards ensuring the safety of our children at all times.

## Preventative Measures:

In our schools, we take site security very seriously and have the following measures in place to minimise the risk of absconding or loss of a pupil at any time:

- School gates are opened from 07:30 to 08:55 and 14:50 to 15:20, and remain closed at all times in between.
- Access onto/off the school site in between these times must be taken via the school office. School staff will establish the identity and purpose of visit for any adult in school not wearing a staff or visitors badge and refer them back to the main office where appropriate.
- Deliveries which warrant vehicular access will be received via reception and will be supervised by school staff.
- School doors leading onto the school site remain closed during the day except during play and lunchtimes and use of the playground during curriculum time e.g. PE. Staff should ensure gates are locked prior to using the playground.
- There must always be a minimum of four adults on duty outside during any outside break time and adults on duty must maintain good visibility across all areas of the site.
- High levels of adult/pupil ratio during school visits (minimum 1:8) and a practice of frequent head counts by group leaders on school trips.
- If a child refuses to come in at the end of play or lunchtime, an adult must maintain visibility to ensure his/her safe return into school. Staff should notify the Class Teacher / Head of School of any incidences of refusal to comply with adult request to return to class.
- We operate secure sites where all fences are maintained in good condition. All staff have a responsibility under Health & Safety to monitor and report any failing in perimeter security.

In addition to these measures, we take very seriously our entry/exit procedures so that pupils arrive at school and into our care safely and remain our responsibility until they are safely discharged into the care of a responsible adult.

- All pupils arrive between 7:30am and 8:45am. Pupils attending Breakfast Club (7:30am – 8:25am) are greeted by adults and supervised within the dining hall. Pupils make their way to classroom doors for 8.45am, at which point their arrival is registered via Arbor (electronic registration). Pupils in Breakfast Club are escorted to their classrooms at 08:45am. Pupils late after the register has closed (9am) arrive via the front office and are signed in before being escorted to class.
- Registration procedures and arrangements for first day contact (linked to attendance policy) ensures all pupils are accounted for by 9.30 each day.
- Parents are asked to escort their children into and collect from the classroom door. All pupils must be collected by a designated adult. The only exception to this is for year 5/6 students. Parents of children in Y5/6 can provide written consent for them to make their own way home. Any Y5/6 child who does not provide written consent will be discharged into the care of a responsible adult by school staff at the end of each day.

## Absconding Pupils

To abscond is to 'leave without permission'.

## In the event of a pupil absconding:

When it is suspected that a child has absconded (or is missing from their class) **where there is no knowledge of his/her whereabouts** multiple staff should be directed to search the school site, cloak

and toilet areas. If the child is still unaccounted for, the Head of School or Vice Principal – in their absence – the Assistant Principal(s) should be informed at once.

**If the child has been seen leaving or reported to have left the school site, staff should notify the Head of School or the Vice/Assistant Principal(s) immediately.** If the child remains within the vicinity of the school perimeter and where possible, staff should establish a calm conversation with the pupil, making clear that leaving school is dangerous and the consequences of their decision to leave the school site will involve notifying the police.

***The probability that a child who has taken the decision to leave the school will be distressed, angry, aggressive or unwilling to cooperate by returning to the building when asked is high. With this mind it is important not to add to his/her distress by communicating panic, anger or giving chase as this could result in the child running across a road without concern for the traffic and injuring themselves.***

Once aware of the situation, The Head of School/Vice/ Assistant Head(s) leading the process will then:-Initiate a thorough search of the school site, if appropriate.

- If the child remains within the vicinity of the school perimeter, use their professional judgement to decide whether to engage the child in calm, reasoned conversation and persuade them to return to school. If, upon the approach of that member of staff, the pupil starts to walk further away then this approach must be abandoned at that time.
- If the child has left the direct vicinity of the school and is no longer in view, direct office staff to inform police **and then** parents.
- Consider whether it is appropriate to extend the search beyond the school perimeter, following the student at a safe distance if in view. This decision will be based on staff's knowledge of the child, on the levels of risk (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) and on what action is in the child's best interests. Members of staff who leave the school grounds should take a mobile phone to maintain contact with school and notify school immediately should they lose sight of the pupil.
- Advise parent(s) and the police the moment the child is located and safe.
- Initiate an investigation to establish the events leading to the pupil absconding, complete a written report about the incident and meet with parents to establish an individual pupil risk assessment to prevent future incidences of this nature.

### **Lost and Missing Pupils**

There are a limited number of situations where a child could be lost and these are:

- Where a child goes missing from the school premises;
- Where a child is taken from the school premises by an unapproved adult;
- Where a child goes missing during an off-site visit.

### **In the event of a pupil being identified as lost or missing from the school site:**

Where there is no knowledge of his/her whereabouts - multiple staff should be directed to search the school site, cloak and toilet areas. If the child remains unaccounted for, the Head of School or Vice Principal or – in their absence – the Assistant Principal(s) should be informed at once.

Wherever possible, CCTV footage should be considered to identify the possible exit of a pupil as quickly as possible. Once the site has been thoroughly searched and the pupil has not been located within a suitable timeframe, the Head of School or Vice Principal or – in their absence – the Assistant Principal(s) should treat the situation as a possible absconsion and follow the procedure outlined above.

### **In the event of a pupil being identified as lost or missing whilst on a school visit off-site:**

Should a child become lost whilst on a school visit off-site, the following action should be taken by the responsible staff member:

- Ascertain where and when the child was last seen;
- Safely position all other children and adults so that designated adults are free to actively search for the child. The search should re-trace the most recent route as soon as possible.

- Alert the trip leader, who will notify a member of the Leadership Team back at school to seek further advice.

Please note that all off site visits are subject to a thorough risk assessment by the trip leader prior to a visit and specific procedures in the event of a lost or missing child will always be considered as part of that process, with due regard for the individual venue and the pupils attending the trip.

Should the child be found to have suffered an injury, emergency First Aid procedures will apply and contact made with parents as necessary.

Should the child be unwilling to return to the school building or the school party, the member of the Leadership Team/experienced staff member involved will make a judgment on the next step with due regard to:

- a. the Health, Safety and Wellbeing of the child and any staff involved and;
- b. a Risk Assessment of the circumstances.

When the situation has been resolved members of staff should document the incident including any conversations/advice from Police before leaving the premises in the presence of a member of the Leadership Team.

A member of the Leadership Team will ensure that the incident is reviewed; the reasons for it happening identified and ensure measures are taken to prevent the situation happening in future.

**Appendix 1 – Procedure if a child is missing/absconds from the school site**

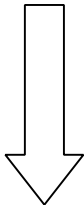
**Staff member informs SLT / Head that pupil is possibly missing / absconding**

- Staff check location of pupil / if pupil still on premises by:**
- Staff check last known location, known hiding points / calm down areas / areas pupil may regularly go to if absconding
  - Staff members man any points of easy exit from school grounds / building whilst others sweep building / grounds systematically.

Pupil not found on the premises.

Pupil sighted leaving the premises.

Pupil is found on the grounds / premises or perimeter of school.



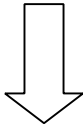
Staff leave premises to search / follow safe to do so

Pupil deliberately absconded

Pupil accidentally lost

Staff inform the police  
Staff inform parents by phone to alert them and maintain contact

SLT and other staff informed



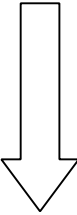
Pupil is found

Pupil refuses to come in / go to Head

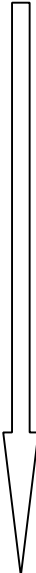
Pupil comes in / goes to Head



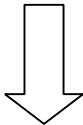
Keep watch from discrete distance



Call parents  
**Pupil and parent discuss matter with Head**



Parents, pupil and police (if appropriate) attend school to discuss the matter. This should be done as soon as possible.



Investigate incident; determine how it happened and any to be learnt. Take action to prevent recurrence and amend pupil and site risk assessments to reflect any changes.

**Appendix 2 – Procedure if a child is identified as lost or missing whilst on a visit off-site**

**Staff member informs Trip Leader that pupil is lost**

**Staff member ensures safety of wider group**

**Trip Leader informs Head of School**

**Staff member coordinates search**

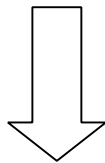
**Trip Leader alerts venue staff**

**Staff check location of pupil by:**

- ☐ Re-trace route up until the point of the last known location
- ☐ Staff members man any points of exit from the venue / building whilst others sweep the venue systematically.

**Pupil not found by retracing the route**

**Pupil is found**

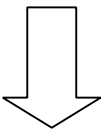


**Pupil deliberately absconded**

**Pupil accidentally lost**

- ☐ Staff inform the police
- ☐ School based staff inform parents by phone to alert them and maintain contact

**SLT and other staff informed**



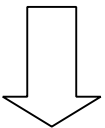
**Pupil is found**

**Ensure pupil is calm before return to group. Identify best adult for 1:1 supervision. Complete dynamic Risk Assessment for remainder of trip.**

**Pupil re-joins group. Discussion with all pupils to reiterate safety expectations.**

**Parents, pupil and police (if appropriate) attend school to discuss the matter. This should be done as soon as possible.**

**Inform parents  
Pupil and parent discuss matter with Head.**



**Investigate incident; determine how it happened and any lessons to be learnt. Take action to prevent recurrence and amend pupil and site risk assessments to reflect any changes.**