

Pupils Who Abscond Policy

Status	Non-Statutory
Version	6
Responsible Directors' Board	Education and Standards Committee
Responsible Persons	Head of Safeguarding, Attendance and Behaviour
Date Policy Reviewed	August 2026
Next Review Date	August 2027
Academy to implement without Amendment, using appendix when required	



Summary of Changes from Previous Version

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Updates
V2	20/06/2023	Dawn Slater	- Changes to flowchart on page 6 to reflect secondary phase actions and changed position in chart of warning note. - Section 4 – differentiated between primary and secondary phases. - Section 10 – addition of change of adult to procedures. - Addition of risk assessment in Appendix 1.
V3	18/03/2024	Matt Copestick – Strategic Safeguarding Leader	Clarity of language – - Section 2, clarity that parents/carers will be advised of all occasions of their child absconding (as opposed to ‘<i>if this happens on more than one occasion</i>’) - Section 10c, clarity that if it is believed a child has absconded the police will be advised (as opposed to ‘<i>if there is no doubt that the pupil has absconded</i>’)
V4	August 2024	Strategic Safeguarding Leader	Move to new Trust branding Section 8 renamed ‘Parents and carers responsibilities’ from ‘Parents and carers’ Section 10 renamed ‘Additional procedures’ from ‘Procedures’ Section 11 added ‘Other policies that support this policy’
V5	August 2025	Head of Safeguarding and Inclusion	References to ‘academy/school’ changed to ‘academy’ References to ‘they’ and ‘them’ changed to ‘they’ Section 1 – reference to KCSIE 2025 added (children going missing from education may be an indicator of other safeguarding concerns) Section 5 – Responsibility for ensuring risk assessments are completed changed from ‘Principal/Headteacher/Deputy/SLT Member’ changed to ‘Principal’ Section 6 – Reference to ‘pushing or pulling’ as a form of restraint removed



V6	August 2026	Head of Safeguarding, Attendance and Behaviour	Update KCSIE 25 to KCSIE 26
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1. Aim

The academy actively works to provide a secure and safe environment, a place where children/young people want to come to enjoy learning with others as part of a caring community. In most cases, it is highly unlikely that a child/young person will try to abscond from the academy, but this policy is written to ensure readiness to deal with this eventuality should it occur.

To abscond is to 'leave without permission'.

The Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and in common law, academies 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 academy at all times throughout the school day and during school-led activities.

As outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) academy staff should recognise that children and young people going missing from education can be an indicator of other safeguarding needs.

2. Pupils who abscond before the end of registration period

Academies are required to register their pupils at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. This should take place within a period, of not less than 10 minutes, set aside when the register is open.

If a pupil absconds from the academy during the period of registration, the class register should show the pupil as being absent.

Should the pupil return to the academy after the end of the registration period, the class register should be amended to indicate a late arrival.

If a pupil absconds in these circumstances, the academy will make every effort to advise the parents/carers if this happens on more than one occasion.

3. Pupils who abscond after the end of registration period

Once a pupil has been registered as present, the registration period has ended and the class register has closed, the academy is "in loco parentis".

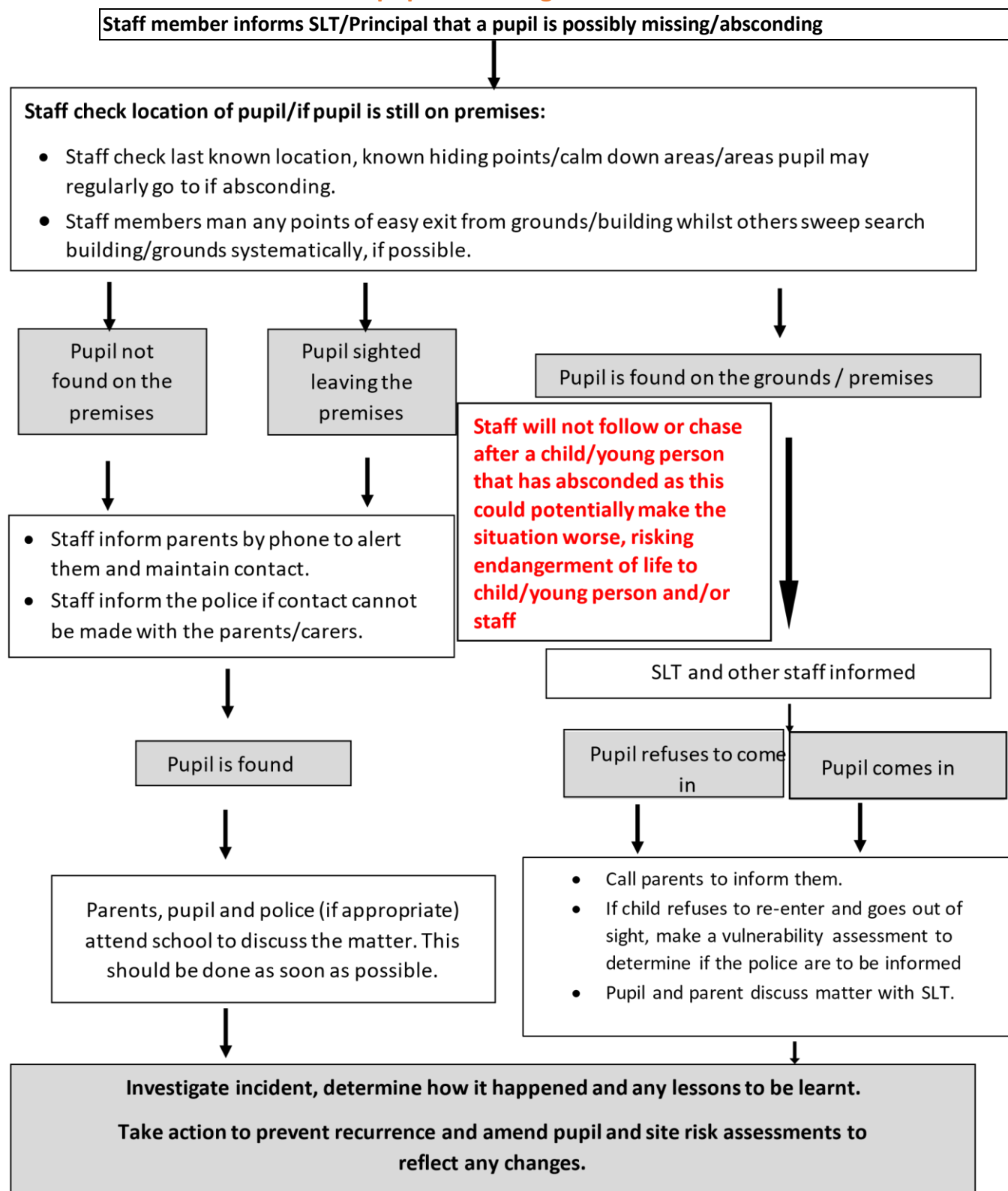
Should a pupil abscond after the end of the registration period, the academy, technically, remains "in loco parentis".

Every attempt should be made to contact the parents/carers to advise them that their child/young person has absconded from the academy. When parents/carers are contacted, it should be made clear that the responsibility for their child/young person is being passed back to them.



The academy will follow the procedures outlined below:

Procedure if a pupil is missing or absconds



Contact with parents/carers will be by telephone in the first instance. In all circumstances, the academy will record details of attempts to establish contact. If the parents/carers are contacted, the attendance register should be amended to show unauthorised absence.



If the parents/carers cannot be contacted, the attendance register should remain unamended. At this stage, telephone 101 and inform the Police that the child is missing and unaccounted for. However, the responsibility for the student remains with the academy.

4. Pupils who are suspended / excluded but come on the academy site

If a pupil is suspended or excluded, either for a fixed period or permanently, they should not be on the academy site.

Should a suspended or excluded pupil appear on the academy site, they should be asked to leave (or parents contacted should the child be in the primary phase). If the pupil refuses or is causing a nuisance or disturbance which requires action, the academy should, in the first instance, make every effort to contact the parents/carers to ask them to remove their child from the academy property.

If the parents/carers are either not contactable or are not able to remove their child from the academy property, the Police should be contacted for assistance.

5. Pupils who abscond from the academy but remain in the school grounds

Academy staff should not pursue the pupil or try to force them back into school. However, there may be circumstances where academy staff will need to use their judgement and possibly knowledge of the pupil along with any control measures/procedures contained within the individual risk assessment of the pupil if they have one.

A pupil's age, vulnerability and other factors need to be considered. For example, it may be dangerous to let a particular pupil wander about the academy grounds. In cases where there are foreseeable risks (from climbing etc) the Principal of SLT will ensure a site survey is undertaken to reduce risks as low as is reasonably practicable.

The demeanour of the pupil will need to be considered. If the pupil is upset or angry, care must be given to how they are approached.

In all cases, staff should not place themselves in situations of potential danger and/or put themselves at risk.

6. Pupils who may abscond

In situations where it is foreseeable that a pupil may abscond, it is imperative that a thorough risk assessment is carried out in advance to determine the best way of managing the individual. This will naturally include trigger factors and thus where possible find ways to prevent the behaviour or at least deescalate, but also must include procedures to follow. This procedure must be agreed in advance with all stakeholders. A positive handling plan or care plan may need to be drawn up.

A pupil absconding from the academy should not be restrained unless there is evidence that they are at serious risk. Physical restraint is to be used only in exceptional circumstances. Restraint must be reasonable and in proportion to the circumstances. Warning of intended restraint should be given, when practicable, in a nonthreatening manner. This might involve holding individuals. It should not involve the more restrictive or percussive forms of force.



7. Pupils who return to the academy after absconding

Most pupils who abscond will do so as a result of a specific incident which may have taken place either at the academy, at home or on the way to school.

For those pupils who return to the academy either by their own choice, with parental support or following intervention by a member of staff, thought should be given to their welfare. They are likely to need support, understanding and perhaps some time apart from their peers.

8. Parents and carers responsibilities

Parents / carers of pupils are responsible for supporting the work of the academy. They are responsible for encouraging their children to keep to all academy procedures and policies.

Once the academy has informed the parents that their child has absconded, parents and carers are responsible for actively supporting the academy with the subsequent procedures and actions. This could include coming to school to help secure the safety of the child/young person after they have absconded as well as meeting with a senior staff member to agree subsequent actions.

9. Monitoring and evaluation

Each incident will be recorded, monitored and evaluated and individual risk assessments amended if necessary and appropriate.

10. Additional procedures

If a pupil is suspected of leaving the academy site without permission, in an emotional state:

- a) The member of staff will alert a member of the Safeguarding team.
- b) If the pupil has left the immediate vicinity of the academy grounds and is no longer visible then the Safeguarding team will decide as to how to take matters further which will consider the age of the pupil, 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.
- c) If there is no doubt that the pupil has absconded, the academy will contact the police as an emergency situation and the pupil's parent to inform them. Staff will not chase or follow the pupil closely as this could lead to the pupil wandering further afield, acting impetuously or causing a traffic accident.
- d) If the child/young person is within an easy distance of the academy, staff are not to engage in conversation as the child/young person might be in a distressed state and unable to act in a controlled manner. This would mean there is still the potential for traffic accidents. However, staff should be aware (through the risk assessment process) of any potential triggers and techniques to use in such events if this is a foreseeable incident. It may be appropriate to have a change of adult to deal with the situation to enable the child not to associate them with the dysregulation.



- e) If the child/young person appears to be missing but there is no evidence that they have left the site, a quick but thorough search of the site should be conducted by the pastoral team before the parents/police are informed.
- f) If the pupil returns of his/her own volition, parents and (if necessary) the police will be informed. Upon his or her return to school, and when the pupil is calm, the pupil must be seen by the pastoral team so that the reasons for absconding may be discussed in detail. At this point a decision will be made as to the appropriateness of further actions. A written report will be filed on the incident on CPOMs.

If the academy is aware that a pupil is not acting emotionally but has left the academy grounds, the above procedures may be adapted.

11. Other policies that support this policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection suite of policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Attendance Policy
- General Data Protection policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Academy Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Policy Reviewed: **August 2026**

Signed Chief Executive Officer:

Signed Chair of Directors:

Policy to be reviewed: **August 2027**

Appendix 1 – Pupils who abscond risk assessment

GENERAL INFORMATION	
PUPIL'S NAME	
ASSESSMENT COMPLETED BY	
SIGNATURE	
DATE OF ASSESSMENT	
REVIEW DATE	

IDENTIFICATION OF RISK	
What risks does this behaviour pose?	For example: - May causes harm or injury to other pupils, staff or wider community (if leaving the academy grounds) - Pupil may injure or harm themselves
Who is affected by the risk?	For example: - The pupil absconding - Other pupils - Staff members - Wider school community

ASSESSMENT OF RISK

In which situations does the risk usually occur?	Describe any triggers that you know of, e.g. in retaliation to being told off.
How likely is the risk to arise?	Consider any past incidents to help with this. For example, if the pupil has absconded on many occasions when being told 'no', presume that the risk is likely to arise.
If the risk arises, where is the child/young person likely to go?	
Are any injuries or harm likely to occur?	For example: Physical injuries, such as cuts, bruises or concussion Non-physical harm, such as anxiety and distress



How serious are the adverse outcomes?	Would the child/young person require medical attention? How long-lasting would the impact be?
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RISK REDUCTION

TYPE OF MEASURE	OPTIONS	BENEFITS	DRAWBACKS
Proactive interventions to prevent risk, i.e. before the pupil absconds	For example: Being aware of triggers Setting clear boundaries for what is acceptable and what isn't	For example: The measure is easy to implement – the class teacher can avoid grouping the pupil with pupils X, Y and Z, which triggers the risk The measure is set out in the pupil's behaviour plan	For example: The measure is only easy to implement for staff who are in regular contact with the pupil – it may not be possible for all staff members (including supply staff) to be aware of the triggers The pupil may not respond well to the boundaries set
Early interventions to prevent risk, i.e. at the first sign that the child/young person is dysregulated	For example: Removing the pupil from class to calm down	For example: Provides a change of scenery that may help diffuse the pupil's behaviour	For example: May require the use of reasonable force and pose a risk to the member of staff carrying out the reasonable force



Reactive interventions to manage risk, i.e. where the pupil has already absconded	For example: Reasonable force or physical restraint where necessary	For example: May be the only way for a member of staff to step in and prevent injury or harm	For example: Can put the member of staff stepping in at risk
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