

**School Policy and Procedures for Managing Pupils who abscond from the school site or school staff whilst on an off-site activity****Introduction****KASS/KsENT Protocol for Managing Pupils Absconding from the School Care**

All pupils attending Kent Special Schools 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 attend schools that are several miles from home and they may be unfamiliar with the area surrounding the school they attend.

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 schools are not “high security institutions” and many 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. Each school will have its own policy and procedures for managing pupils who have left their site without permission, but all schools will follow the basic procedures outlined below:

**Principles**

- 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 Local Authority will be informed. However, if a child is missing and it is past the usual “home time”, the LA will be informed straightaway.

**At our School**

- The Senior Leadership Team must be alerted as soon as a student leaves the site or is reported as missing.
- If a child leaves the school site without permission, staff will follow at a distance to keep the student in sight. All staff carry 2 way radios and will keep the school informed of their whereabouts. 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 vehicle to pick up the student. If so, staff will arrive and encourage/escort a student into the vehicle for his 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.
- After 30 minutes if there is still not a sighting, the police will be informed.
- 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 5 – 6 p.m.) parents/carers will continue to liaise with the Police.
- The school will decide on the follow-up action according to the individual situation. The school may decide to impose a sanction or they may feel that a supportive approach is the best option. Parents and carers will be encouraged to be part of this process.

**Portal House School  
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This Policy has been approved by the Governing Body of Portal House School

Signed: ..... (Chairman of Governors)

Date: .....

Signed: ..... (Head Teacher)

Date: .....

Review Date: