



AL AMEEN
PRIMARY SCHOOL



ABSCONDING CHILD POLICY

Approved by: Mohammed Rahman (Head Teacher)

Date effective from: September 2026

Next review due by: September 2027

Signed: M A Rahman

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF
MUHAMMAD

Introduction

This policy sets out the actions to take if a child absconds from school. It reflects the school's values, philosophy and mission statement in relation to safeguarding children in our care.

Purpose

The purpose of this non-statutory policy is to set out clearly for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a child abscond from school.

Aim

In Al Ameen Primary School we actively work to provide a secure, safe environment, a school where children want to come to enjoy learning with others as part of a caring community. We recognise that it is highly unlikely that a child will try to abscond from our school but this policy is written to ensure we are ready to deal with this eventuality should it occur. If a child has SEND needs and absconding is likely then they should have a risk assessment. Individual absconding risk assessments for such pupils are produced and held by the SENDCO (Shefa Malik), in consultation with parents/carers and class staff, and cross-referenced in the pupil's records in line with the SEND Policy.

This policy applies to a pupil absconding or going missing on the school site during the school day. During educational visits and trips, the heightened headcount checks and procedures in the Educational Visits Policy also apply.

Definition

To abscond is to 'leave without permission'. Under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and in Common Law, 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. The school also has a duty under the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Schedule 1, Part 3, to have a written risk assessment policy addressing risks of this kind. This policy is distinct from, and does not replace, the separate statutory guidance on Children Missing Education, which concerns pupils who are not registered at any school and not receiving suitable education elsewhere — not a registered pupil who leaves the school site during the school day.

Early Years (EYFS) Provision

Children in our Early Years setting require closer supervision than older pupils. In line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, children must be within sight or hearing of staff at all times. Early Years staff will carry out a headcount or register check at every transition, including arrival, outdoor play, room changes and collection. Where a search is needed, staff will not be pulled below required ratios — additional staff will be called from elsewhere in the school if needed. Any incident involving an Early Years child will also be considered under the setting's own safeguarding and welfare requirements.

Safeguarding and the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Every incident under this policy will also be treated as a safeguarding matter. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) will be informed as soon as reasonably possible, in addition to the Head Teacher or member of SLT, so that consideration can be given to whether the incident indicates, or is linked to, an underlying safeguarding concern. Incidents will be recorded and considered in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Contacting the Emergency Services

The following applies whenever the police need to be contacted under either procedure below.

- Call 999 immediately if a child is out of sight beyond the school grounds, or is judged to be at immediate risk (for example, near a road or open water).
- Call 101, the non-emergency number, once a child has been found safe, or where a search remains contained within the school site.
- If a pupil confirmed missing at registration cannot be found within 10 minutes of the search beginning, the police must be called regardless of whether every area of the school has yet been checked. Searching will continue in parallel.

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

- Member of staff to inform Head Teacher or member of SLT, and main office.
- Head Teacher or member of SLT to organise a search of buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to in the school environment.
- If the pupil is not found, then all available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.
- School office to phone the police if the child is not found, in line with the Contacting the Emergency Services section above.
- School office to 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 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 who leave school grounds to take mobile phone to contact school.
- Once a pupil has been found then the HT will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.
- A written report will be filed as an incident, using the school's Missing Child / Absconding Incident Report form. Completed reports are filed with the Head Teacher's office and reviewed as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation arrangements below, and retained in line with the school's records retention schedule.
- Member of SLT to brief police and parents.

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

- Member of staff to inform Head Teacher or member of SLT, and main office.
- Staff must follow the child to the school fence or gate and must try to persuade the child to stay in the school.
- As active pursuit may encourage a child to leave the site and may also cause the child to

panic; possibly putting him or herself at risk by running onto a busy road, staff will not chase but will try to keep a child in sight at a distance.

- The SLT lead will contact the child's parents/carers
- If the child has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and is no longer visible then the Police must be informed — see Contacting the Emergency Services above.
- If the child returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.
- Upon his or her return to school, and when the child is calm, the child must be seen by the HT or a member of SLT 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 meeting with parents/carers will be arranged.
- A written report will be filed as an incident, using the school's Missing Child / Absconding Incident Report form. Completed reports are filed with the Head Teacher's office and reviewed as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation arrangements below, and retained in line with the school's records retention schedule.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Each incident will be monitored and evaluated. Risk management plans for any children believed to pose a risk of absconding will be created by school with the support of staff and parents/carers.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers of pupils are responsible for supporting the work of the school and encouraging their children to keep to all school procedures and policies. Once school has informed the parents that their child has absconded, parents and carers are responsible for actively supporting the school with subsequent procedures and actions. This could include coming into school to help secure the safety of their child as well as meeting with a Senior Leader in order to agree subsequent actions. Risk management plans will be shared and signed by parents/carers.

Parents and carers are asked to keep at least two emergency contact numbers up to date with the school office at all times, so that they, or another nominated contact, can be reached quickly if their child goes missing or absconds.