Littlegreen Academy

Our vision is that all pupils at Littlegreen Academy will grow to be confident adults who communicate well, so that they can live healthy, happy, and successful lives.

Absconding Policy

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1. Introduction and Rationale

This policy is written to guide staff in the event of a pupil going missing on the premises, going missing outside of the academy or having absconded. Staff are reminded to read the following academy policies and practice guidelines in conjunction with this policy:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy and Anti Bullying Policy
- Individual Risk Assessments

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a pupil abscond from the academy.

To abscond is to 'leave without permission'. Under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and in Common Law, academy's 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 academy at all times throughout the school day and during school led activities.

It is important for us as an academy to maintain a caring, welcoming ethos which establishes a safe, secure and stable environment to enable pupils to grow, develop and learn. Accordingly, we must take reasonable steps, in accordance to the pupil risk assessment and staff training programme, to minimise the likelihood of physical intervention becoming necessary in the case of one or more pupils absconding.

2. Procedures

A. Where a pupil present at formal registration, is found to be absent from school without authorisation, the following safeguarding procedures must be followed:

1. Member of staff to inform the Head of School, member of the Senior Leadership Team, pastoral support team and main office.

2. The Head of School or member of Senior Leadership Team organises search of buildings and the grounds and known places that the pupil may have gone to. This search should not exceed ten minutes.

3. If the pupil is not found, then all available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the academy and the grounds. This should not exceed a further fifteen minutes.

4. The academy office must phone the police when the area has been fully checked if the pupil is not found.

5. The academy office to immediately contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation when the police have been informed. Always keep parents updated.

6. Consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the academy perimeter. This decision will be based on staff's knowledge of the pupil and on the levels of risk, any active risk assessment and on what action is in the pupil's best interests. Liaise with the police at all times.

7. Any staff who leave the academy grounds must take a school radio and/or a personal mobile to contact the academy. Staff should (where possible) leave the site accompanied by another member of staff.

8. Once the pupil has been found police and parents are immediately informed. The Senior Leadership Team member will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.

9. A written report must be filed on the incident using CPOMS.

10. Member of the Senior Leadership Team must brief police and parents.

B. Absconding from a school visit offsite

Pupils involved in an outing are entered into off site sheets in reception. When going off-site staff must wear their ID badges.

All staff on visits out should ensure they have a fully charged mobile phone with them.

A 'head count' of the pupils should be made at regular intervals and always before a minibus leaves a venue. If a pupil is discovered as missing, then a search (not exceeding ten minutes) of the immediate area is undertaken by all available members of staff, ensuring that all other pupils continue to be appropriately supervised.

If the missing pupil is not located, then:

1. A staff member should notify the most senior member of staff at the academy (Head of School or Assistant Principal) and act on any instructions given.

2. The senior member of staff will notify the police and provide them with as precise a description of the pupil as possible, the last known whereabouts of the pupil and any other details they may require.

3. Notify, the venue that is being visited and ask them to initiate their lost child protocols.

4. The senior leader will notify the pupil's parents and keep them updated as necessary.

5. The member of staff initiating the search should remain in situ until the police or assistance from the academy arrives in case the missing pupil should return or be found.

6. If a member of staff is following the pupil, they must keep with them until the pupil is safe even if this extends after work hours

7. In such stressful circumstances it is important that staff remain as calm and collected as possible.

C. Where a pupil attempts or is seen to be leaving the academy premises without authorisation the following procedures must be followed:

1. Staff must follow the pupil to the perimeter of the academy, the fence or gate and must try to persuade the pupil to stay in the academy.

2. De-escalation techniques must be attempted. In such stressful circumstances it is important that staff remain as calm and collected as possible and follow procedures.

3. If a pupil is deemed to be a high risk to themselves or other people then staff should adhere to the Positive Handling Strategies agreed by the academy as part of the Positive Behaviour Policy with reference to holding the pupil, if appropriate.

4. At all times staff must be aware that active pursuit may encourage the pupil to leave the immediate vicinity of the academy and may also cause the pupil to panic, possibly putting them at risk by running onto the road, for example.

5. If the pupil has left the immediate vicinity of the academy the academy office, Head of School or Senior Leadership Team members must be contacted immediately, and the lead person will direct the course of action.

6. Staff will follow the pupil and if they lose sight of them engage in a local search. Staff follow the pupil at a safe distance if in view. Staff must take a school radio and/or a personal mobile phone.

7. The Senior Leadership Team lead may direct additional staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone to contact the academy.

8. If the searching staff lose sight of, or are concerned for the safety of the pupil or themselves, they must contact the academy office giving current details of their location and the clothes which the pupil is wearing.

9. The Senior Leadership Team or designated staff must contact the police and pupil's parents/carers immediately. These phone calls must be made concurrently.

10. If the pupil(s) has/have left the immediate vicinity of the academy grounds and is no longer visible then the Senior Leadership Team will make a decision as to how to take matters further which will take into account 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.

11. If the pupil returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.

12. Upon their return to the academy, and when the pupil is calm, the pupil should be seen by the Senior Leadership Team so that the reasons for absconding may be discussed in detail if this is appropriate. At this point a decision will be made as to the appropriateness of further actions.

13. A written report will be filed on the incident using CPOMS

It is important that following an incident the issues that arise are addressed and staff must:

- The individual pupil risk assessment for the pupil will be reviewed and updated.

- Where appropriate, talk through the incident with the pupil and parents involved. Ensure that a record is kept of the discussion held with the pupil and parents.

- Keep all colleagues informed and discuss the incident in a staff meeting and/or in supervision meetings.

- Review procedures for the individual every half term to ensure appropriate control measures are in place and that all staff are fully informed.

- Inform Governors every term in the SEF report about any incidents of absconding.

3. Information for Pupils and Parents

What happens if you / your child / go missing?

What is meant by "missing"?

- You will be considered missing if members of staff do not know where you are.

What is meant by "absconding"?

- You have absconded if you deliberately go off site or from where you should be without telling a member of staff or without a member of staff giving you permission.

What will happen if you go missing?

- The people looking after you have a responsibility to know where you are and to make sure you are safe. If you are 'missing' they will speak to your friends, teachers and family to see if they can help. If there is concern for your safety, then staff will need to search for clues as to where you are. The Police may be informed that you are missing, and they and the school staff will look for you.

What happens if you can't be found?

- A phone call and then a meeting will be held between the academy and the Police to plan how to search for you. Your name, description and a photograph will be given to the Police in order to help them with their search.

What happens when you are found?

- You will be returned to a safe place and will be asked about the reasons for you going missing. This is to try and find out if anything is troubling you and to see if anyone can help. You do not have to run away to talk to someone. If you want to talk to someone outside of the academy, this can be arranged. You may also be visited by a Police Officer who will check that you are back. This is called a "Safe and Well Check". You will be able to speak to the Police Officer without any member of staff present if you wish to do so.

Will anything else happen?

- If you are injured or unwell then you will be checked by a Doctor or Nurse. Your teacher or teaching assistant will want to talk to you about going missing. If you have deliberately run away (absconded) then the people responsible for your safety will meet to discuss ways in which such incidents can be prevented by looking at the reasons for your actions.

Remember:

You have the right to use a telephone to talk to someone. If you are worried about something or just want to talk, a school counsellor or nurse may be available.

The national ChildLine number is 0800 1111.

Your Safeguarding members of staff to talk to are:

Louise Quaid	**Executive Principal**
Hannah Davies	**Head of School**
Fay Cripps	**Assistant Principal**
Jo Howard	**Assistant Principal**
Faye Watton-Lawrence	**SAT Safeguarding Lead**
Jessica Maier	**Safeguarding Governor**