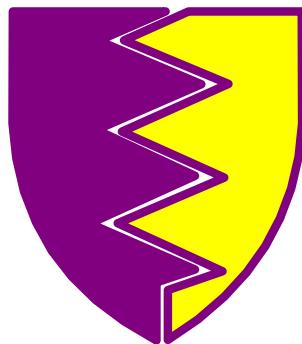


ST. MARY'S



'Dream, Believe, Achieve!'

'With God, all things are possible.' Matthew 19:26

1 John 3 v 7: Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray

Absconding Policy

Policy Date:	November 2025
Policy Review Date:	November 2027
Signature of Headteacher:	
Ratified by Governors-Date:	November 2025
Signature of Chair:	

Purpose of the policy:

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

Aim:

At St Mary's Church of England Primary School, we actively work to provide a secure, safe environment, a school where children want to come and enjoy learning with others as part of a caring environment. 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 should have a risk assessment.

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 throughout the school day and during school led activities.

Where pupils, present at registration, are found to be absent from school without authorisation the following procedures should be followed:

- Member of staff to immediately inform the Headteacher or members of SLT, and main office.
- Headteacher 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 a pupil is not found, then all available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.
- SLT/School office to phone the police when areas have been fully checked if the child is not found.
- SLT/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 knowledge of the child and on all levels of risk, and on what actions is in the child's best interest.
- Any staff who leave school grounds to take a mobile phone to contact school.
- Once a pupil has been found then the Headteacher will use their professional judgment to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.
- A written report will be filed on the incident and added to CPOMS.
- Members of SLT to brief police and parents.

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

- Member of staff to immediately inform the Headteacher or members 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 school.
- If, by leaving the school, the child is known to be putting themselves in danger, adults must exercise their duty of care and stop the child.
- As active pursuit may encourage a child to leave the site and may cause the child to panic and possibly put 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.
- 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 Headteacher so that the reasons for absconding may be discussed in detail. At this point a decision will be made as to appropriateness of further actions.
- A meeting with parents/carers will be arranged.
- A written report will be filed on the incident and recorded on CPOMS.

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.

Appendix A

Absconding Pupil Incident Report

Name of Pupil:

Date:

An outline of the incident (please include time of day, staff involved and how the issue was resolved).

What triggers led to this incident occurring?

What actions will be taken to support the pupil to feel happy and safe in school?

ST. MARY'S

