



Absconding Policy

Updating Policy Procedure

When a policy is due for review it will be emailed to the reviewer who will revise and highlight those updates and return the policy in full with the highlighted updates back to the Administrator.

When a policy reviewer becomes aware of **any updates** they will ask the Administrator to email the policy to them and follow the above procedure.

A policy is a statement of intent and the guidelines we follow, that is adopted by the Fortuna and Athena Federation's Governing Body.

Policy Reviewed by:

Craig Chaplin – Fortuna
Andy Smallcombe – Athena
Chris Mills - Athena

Updated on:

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Date to be reviewed:

April 2027

Date Ratified at FGM

07/07/2025



In order to keep children and young people safe, it is necessary to ensure they are appropriately supervised at all times. Whilst pupils are under the school's duty of care, all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that they are kept safe and remain within the care of the school throughout the school day and during school led activities.

Absconding is to leave without permission. This may occur within the school or external to the school.

It is necessary for all staff to be familiar with the individual risk assessments of all children within their care, particularly children within their own class group. Some of our children have a history of attempted absconding and others may "fly" from a particular situation when they feel anxious or uncertain. Appropriate mitigations to this risk should be detailed in this risk assessment for each child and this should be updated should new presenting behaviour emerge.

Universal provision that should mitigate the likelihood of a pupil absconding includes:

- External gates are locked during the hours pupils are in school.
- Doors that lead out of the building are all magnetically locked and only staff have keys.
- Cloakroom doors onto the playground are locked until it is time to go out to playtime and are then locked again once pupils return to class. (Fortuna only)
- Staff supervise pupils whilst in the cloakroom area, as well as to the toilet and walking through the corridor.
- Each classroom has a safe base area which children can be directed to should there be escalating behaviour and increased risk of a flight response.
- During outdoor breaktimes, staff position themselves so they can maintain a good line of vision of where all the pupils are.
- Clear rules and consistent boundaries relating to movement around the school communicated to all pupils.
- Each pupil has an individual risk assessment for known behaviours including absconding.
- Off-site visit risk assessments have specifically planned mitigations for known absconders such as increased staff:pupil ratios.
- Child locks to be used on school vehicles. For the school minibus an adult will sit by the rear and side exits.



In the event of a pupil absconding either internally or externally the following protocols are in place:

Internal Absconding

Internal absconding is when a pupil leaves the care of the responsible person without permission but stays within the school site. This may be a pupil leaving the classroom or exiting the school building.

- SLT to be made aware at the earliest opportunity.
- Staff to keep the child in sight, using de-escalation techniques to encourage them to a safe space (following a behavioural incident, an immediate return to the classroom may not be in the interest of the child or their peers).
- If the child places themselves or others at the risk of harm, or is considered at risk of further absconding, staff will approach the child and guide/escort them to a safe space.
- Parents will be informed of this behaviour via phone call.

External Absconding

Offsite absconding is when the pupil leaves the school site or offsite provision (e.g. educational visits, sporting activities) without permission.

- Ensure the safety of any other pupils present.
- Inform SLT immediately.
- For vulnerable pupils (age, ability/understanding, specific needs, environmentally etc) the police should be informed immediately by calling 101.
- Pupil to be kept within line of sight if possible.
- Staff are not to 'chase after' the pupil, unless they are behaving in a significantly dangerous manner, which puts themselves at risk of serious harm or someone else.
- Any risk assessment specific to the child and their absconding pattern, should be observed.
- SLT to decide whether to*
 - a) continue watching and attempting to de-escalate from a distance.
 - b) have an identified member of staff familiar with the pupil approach calmly.
 - c) have available staff search for the pupil in the last area they were seen, taking mobile phones with them.
 - d) contact parents/carers to alert may shortly turn up at known location (ie home) allow certain amount of time for this to happen.
 - e) call the police if immediate high risk and pupil is out of sight or the pupil has not returned to home or school within a reasonable time frame. ***At Fortuna the police will be contacted after no more than 10 minutes should the pupil not be in sight.***

*Each case is individual. SLT must make appropriate decisions based on the consideration of all information available to them and considering the factors above. One approach does not fit all, therefore decisions will be made prioritising the need of each individual pupil.



Contacting the Police

It is necessary to have relevant information pertaining to the child available to the police. Parental information will be provided along with any risks and vulnerabilities around the child. For offsite activities and learning, a designated person should have this information in a folder along with the offsite visit risk assessment.

Any available staff should assist the police in the search for the child.

Informing Parents

The parents or carers are to be informed at the earliest practical opportunity.

In the case of Children in Care, the child's social worker must be informed as they hold parental responsibility.

A record of this communication should be made on CPOMS at an appropriate time.

Following up Absconding

Following an instance of absconding, class teachers should update the pupil's risk assessment to ensure it accurately reflects both the risk and appropriate actions to reduce this risk.

There should also be consideration of school routines and any practical factors than may need addressing. Any resulting changes in routines and/or procedures should be communicated to all staff.

Pupils will be spoken to by the school who will liaise with parents/carers to ensure appropriate learning takes place.