



Bilton CofE Junior School
Bilton Infant School
Bawmore Community Infant School



BILTON COMMUNITY FEDERATION ABSCONDING POLICY

This policy has been created taking into account the guidance from Warwickshire County Council and the Department of Education.

POLICY APPROVAL	
Statutory, recommended, or additional policy	ADDITIONAL
Policy review cycle	BIENNIAL
Policy reviewed by	E Newton (Executive Headteacher)
Policy review date	January 2024
Date of next review	January 2026
Date approved by Governing Body	01/02/2024

Introduction

It is our aim that our policies and procedures reflect our vision and values as a federation.

Vision: 'Empowering children to make a positive impact on the world.'

Values: Care, Honesty, Respect, Co-operation, Forgiveness and Resilience

Our federation of schools (Bilton CofE Junior School / Bawnmore Community Infant School / Bilton Infant Schools) have as one of our priorities the aim to develop a fully inclusive, equitable and safe provision for all. In line with that this policy aims to support the inclusion and safety of all children in our care.

We actively work to provide a secure, safe school where children want to come to enjoy learning with others as part of the caring Bilton Community Federation. We acknowledge 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.

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.

Definitions

To abscond is to 'leave without permission'.

Types of Absconding:

Internal Absconding	External Absconding
Where a pupil leaves a lesson without permission but remains on the school site (Leaving the room without permission)	Where a pupil leaves the school site without permission. (Absconding from school grounds)
Where a pupil leaves the care of the responsible person without permission but remains on the school site (Leaving the building but is on the school grounds)	Where a pupil leaves an offsite provision without permission, e.g., curriculum swimming, alternative education provision, etc. (Absconding off-site)
	Where a pupil leaves the designated transport provided for them without permission (Absconding from transport)

Control measures and procedures to prevent absconding

Site security

- Each site has a secure perimeter and gates, which can be locked if necessary. Gates / doors should be closed outside of your stated drop off and pick up times.
- School gates are closed during the school day.

See school's site-specific appendix C for further details

Risk Assessments

- Risk assessments are completed for any children believed to pose a risk of external absconding, these will be created by school with the support of staff and parents/carers.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The SLT are responsible for all decisions made when a child absconds from school.
- The person in charge of the pupil is responsible for caring for a pupil (until they leave the premises).
- Where a pupil has a named teaching assistant or 1:1 support working with them, they are responsible for seeking support from the SLT in the 1st instance.
- Parents / carers of pupils are responsible for supporting the work of the school. They are responsible for encouraging their children to keep to all school procedures and policies.
- School will inform parents/carer if their child has absconded of site. Parents/carers are asked to actively engage with the school during and after the incident.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Each incident will be recorded, monitored and in order for good practice to be built upon and lessons learned can be acted upon. Individual risk assessments for pupils will be amended if necessary following an incident.

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

- Responsible adult / adult in charge to inform SLT, and main office.
- Staff in charge of the pupil at the time should aim to keep the pupil in sight. They should follow them, at a safe distance and try to de-escalate the situation by encouraging them to stay on site.
- Any staff who leave school grounds should attempt to take a mobile phone in order to keep in contact with school.
- If by leaving the school the child is known to be putting themselves in imminent danger, adults must exercise their duty of care and stop the child, physically if necessary as per the Physical Handling policy.
- The office / SLT 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 within 5 minutes from this point.
- 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 SLT will lead a conversation with the child 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 or telephone call with parents/carers will be arranged and the incident, actions and next steps will be discussed.
- An agreement will be written, giving details of the incident and agreed actions.

Where a pupil, who had been present at registration, is then found to be absent from school without authorisation, the following procedures should be followed.

- Responsible adult informs SLT, and main office.
- SLT to organise a search of buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to within 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.
- If the child is not found once the school site has been fully checked, the school admin team will be directed to phone the police.
- The school SLT will 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 a mobile phone to remain in contact with the school.
- Once a pupil has been found, then the SLT will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.
- A meeting or telephone call with parents/carers will be arranged and this policy discussed. An agreement will be written, giving details of the incident and agreed actions.

Appendix A:

Agreement following a pupil absconding from school

To be completed by the attending adult. Then checked and signed by a member of the Senior Leadership Team

SLT: please attach to appendix B and C

Name of person completing the form:		
Child:		
Date & Time of incident	Lesson	Setting (what area of the school): i.e. classroom, playground
Trigger: What happened just before the incident?		
Details of incident:		
Action to be taken by the school:		

Signed:

Role:

Date:

Appendix B

Parental Agreement

To be completed by the parent or carer

Name of person completing the form:
Child:
I have read the record of the absconding incident (Appendix A). I wish to make the following comments relating to the incident:
I understand that the following actions have been agreed in order to help my child be happy and safe in school. I understand that my child needs to follow the school rules and not leave the school grounds without permission. I understand that there are agreed actions for all parties involved. For my part, I will support this agreement by:

I understand that it is always unacceptable for my child to leave the school site without permission and a repeated action of this nature may result in the school following exclusion procedures.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix C: Site Specific Arrangements

Bilton Junior School

- An individual risk assessment is written for any pupil who shows signs of attempting to abscond.
- Playground wooden gate and green side pedestrian gate must be locked at all times, supervision at the gate if unlocked for any reason.
- Kitchen gates closed and locked at all times, except when kitchen deliveries are made, when an adult will supervise the gate.
- The drive gates must be closed and bolted at all times – these are not locked during the day.
- Rugby High School gates locked at all times.

Bilton Infant School

Internally:

- Pupils operate within year group zones with thumb turn locks on exit doors; a release button is used to release doors; pupils are taught not to use these release buttons (except ICE)
- Where there is a pupil with a known risk of absconding, these doors may be locked in case the pupil tries to use the green button
- A risk assessment is written for any pupil with a known tendency to attempt to abscond

Externally:

- Perimeter gates are secured after all families have left the site at the start and end of the day.
- Gate to the drive and pedestrian pathway have signs to encourage users to keep them closed during the school day.
- Staff check any internal gates are closed when children are outside e.g. Reception wooden gate; KS1 gate outside staffroom
- All classes have Walkie Talkies and can notify the office immediately of any concerns or escalating incidents.
- An additional Walkie Talkie is available for anyone with a pupil known to be at risk of absconding.

Bawnmore Community Infant School

Internally:

- Pupils operate within year group zones with thumb turn locks and Yale locks on exit doors.
- Where there is a pupil with a known risk of absconding, these doors will be locked using the Yale lock as well.
- An individual risk assessment is written for any pupil who shows signs of attempting to abscond.
- Classroom external doors operate with thumb turn locks.
- Pupils are taught never to use door locks.

Externally:

- Perimeter gates are secured after all families have left the site at the start and end of the day.
- Gate to the drive and pedestrian pathway have signs to encourage users to keep them closed during the school day.
- Staff check any external gates are closed when children are outside.