

# Absconding Policy

## Meir Heath Academy



**Approved by:** Mrs M Southern / Mr J Spencer

**Date:** September 2023

**Last reviewed on:** September 2023

**Next review due by:** September 2026

**Aim:** 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.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

a) The Principal (or a nominated member of staff in her absence) is responsible for all decisions made when a child absconds from school.

b) The class teacher or the teaching assistant (if working independently with the pupil) is responsible for caring for the child (until the child leaves the premises). They are responsible for seeking additional help immediately should a child abscond.

c) 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.

d) Once school has informed the parents that their child has absconded, parents and carers are responsible for actively supporting the school with the subsequent procedures and actions. This could include coming to school to help secure the safety of the child after he / she has absconded as well as meeting with the head teacher in order to agree subsequent actions.

### **Procedures**

If a pupil is suspected of leaving the school site without permission, in an emotional state:

1. The member of staff will alert the Principal or (in the head's absence) a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

2. If there is no doubt that the pupil has absconded, the school will contact the pupil's parent to inform them and call the police. Staff will not chase or follow the pupil as this could lead to the pupil wandering further afield, acting impetuously or causing a traffic accident.

3. If the child is within an easy distance of the school, staff are not to engage in conversation as the child might be in a distressed state and unable to act in a controlled manner. This would mean there is still the potential for traffic accidents.

4. If the child appears to be missing but there is no evidence that he / she has left the site, a quick but thorough search of the site should be conducted before the parents / police are informed.

5. If the pupil returns of his / her own volition, parents and (if necessary) the police will be informed.

6. If possible the pupil who has absconded should be brought back to school the same day. The parent, child and principal will then discuss the issues and any consequences. This policy will be discussed. An agreement will be written, giving details of the incident and agreed actions.

Mrs M Southern

Principal