



This review:	August 2023
Next review:	August 2025
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## **Absconding Policy**

[This policy should be read alongside the Statement of Intent](#)

### **1. Purpose and Aims**

Through the operation of this policy we aim to:

- Protect the health and safety of students at SENDAT Schools;
- Ensure that School staff know how to respond if a student goes missing

This policy should be read in conjunction with Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board's "Safeguarding Children Who Run Away or Go Missing from Home or Care 01.11.2018";

Suffolk's "Children who are missing from Education" : <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/Student-attendance-andwelfare/children-missing-from-education/>

and also SENDAT Child Protection and Safeguarding policy

### **2. Responsibilities and Expectations**

The SENDAT Trust delegates appropriate responsibilities for the day-to-day management of the School to the Head Teacher/ Head of School (HoS).

In practice, all members of staff contribute to the safety of students at the schools by providing appropriate supervision in accordance with the directions of the Head Teacher/ HoS and Senior Leadership Team.

Schools are under a general duty to supervise students to the standard of a prudent, careful and responsible parent.

### **3. Statutory Duties**

The schools will operate in line with the Procedures of Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board and will give due regard to statutory guidance documents:



- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023 and any subsequent updates) (KCSIE)
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (February 2015)

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- KCSIE also refers to the non-statutory advice for practitioners: What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (September 2018)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (June 2017) (Children and Social Work Act 2017).
- Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (September 2016) (Prevent). Prevent is supplemented by non-statutory advice and a briefing note:
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-toolkit-for-local-authoritiesand-partner-agencies>

All staff are made aware of these statutory duties, and they are referenced in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy 2018, which is also available online on the school website. Parents/carers may request a hard copy from the or review the policy on the School / Trust website

#### **4. Student leaving the premises**

When a student leaves a class, the adults managing the group will make every effort to support the student's return. Where support is needed, or a change of staff, any adult may help as appropriate. Staff who are on call may be able to support or manage support. See Behaviour and Discipline Policy for more information.

If the child goes out of the school grounds his/her movements will be monitored particularly carefully. If staff have been unable to persuade the child back onto the site, and they become concerned for the student's safety, or their own as a result of the student's behaviours, the police will be informed when most senior staff at school deem it necessary. A student's individual risk assessment (RBA) will give more specific instructions/strategies where needed. Parents will be informed as soon as it is reasonable so to do. (See guidance below)

If a residential student leaves the school site between the hours 15.00 and 09.00, staff will inform the senior member of staff on site who will manage the situation, contact police (if appropriate/necessary), parents or carers and the Head of School / Headteacher.

#### **5. Return to school**

When a child returns to school it is the responsibility of the member of staff coordinating or appropriate staff to discuss the incident with both the child and his/her parents or carers. When students leave the school premises they are often in a very anxious frame of mind. It is therefore important that all the facts are established, and the child is treated in a sensitive and sympathetic manner.

### **Guidance for staff**

*Managing a dynamic situation*

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These guidelines are to help staff manage a situation when a child leaves the school site. These situations are often dynamic, and the guidance is not intended as a strict set of instructions. Staff managing the incident will be anxious, so it is important that, where possible, 2 staff monitor off site and are in contact with school to support decision making processes.

**When a child leaves the school site** it is important that:

- An appropriate adult follows – ideally two adults where possible. Staff should follow at a distance, ensuring they do not give chase, which could cause the child to act dangerously (eg. run in front of a moving vehicle)
- Senior staff are informed as soon as possible
- Staff following take phone or radio to be in contact with the school

**First 10 minutes:**

- Description of student, clothes being worn and items carried given to school office as soon as possible to be relayed to the police where necessary
- Staff with student work towards returning student to site as quickly as possible
- Keep student in sight at all times
- Where possible school to send second staff to support – if not already present
- Staff on school site (usually office staff) to record using Missing from school or residential form: [Link to folder](#)
- If child has own mobile, request number from parents or carers

**Informing parents:**

- Call to parents or carers made to inform that student is off site but accompanied by staff
- Reassure that as soon as student returns to site, they will be contacted.
- If student runs away from staff and they are unable to follow, the police will be informed and told that child is vulnerable

**Informing police:**

- If child is refusing to return to safety and cannot be seen by staff monitoring, senior staff to authorise informing police. This could be after 30 minutes of student not being in sight. sooner if staff have serious concerns or the child's risk assessment requires it  
Circumstances will differ. The most senior member of staff on site would normally contact police.
- Parents or carers to be informed that police have been called
- Staff with student to continue searching and feedback appropriate information to school

When the school contacts the Police about a student missing from school, the following information should be provided:

- The student's name
- The student's age
- The student's home address and telephone number



- The student's height, physical description and any physical characteristics
- Any disability or special educational needs that the student may have
- Any particular vulnerability they may have
- Any medication that the children may be on
- A description of the clothing the student is thought to be wearing
- Any relevant comments made by the student such as "I'm going to run away"
- If the police attend the school, they should be given an up-to-date photograph

## **6. Procedure for Students missing following a journey to school**

- Contact the person transporting the student, for example the taxi driver
- Check whether there were any expected delays or changes to the journey
- Check with other students and ask them if they have any knowledge of the missing student's whereabouts
- Contact parents and proceed as for a missing student

## **7. Procedure for Students missing during a residential school journey/trip off site (out of school hours)**

If a student is goes missing whilst on a school trip the activity leader must:

- Instigate a search of the area immediately
- If appropriate, let the facilities staff know that you are missing a student and request support in finding them.
- As part of the initial search process, the student's peers will be asked if they have any knowledge of the missing student's whereabouts.
- If they saw the child go they should note the direction the child was going in.
- Contact the Senior Member (SM) of staff on duty immediately.
- Following advice from the SM they should contact the police. The SM should inform the Headteacher that the police have been called.
- The activity leader OR the Senior Member must inform the parents/carers of the child immediately (all staff members should take the emergency contact/consent forms with them when off site with children).
- Keep the other children calm and occupied whilst they wait to follow the advice of the CEO/Exec Head / HoS or Police.

The HoS/ CEO or Police will notify the Activity Leader when it is appropriate to leave the

### **Resolution following safe return to school site:**

- Ensure student is calm – appropriate space to ensure dialogue can happen
- Ensure staff have opportunity to record incident and behaviour as soon as possible following the incident. May need time out to reclaim calm.
- Ensure parents and carers have been informed. Plan meeting for later in day where possible as appropriate



- Police informed if they had been called previously
- Student to return to class if ready for learning and able to engage
- If consequences are put in place for student, ensure they are proportionate and fair, eg. catching up on learning, missed time, for example. Discussion about rebuilding trust – from student’s point of view as well as adults. Reach an agreement with child.
- Ensure consequences are followed through and are fair. Once completed the slate will be clean.
- Student RBA updated to record this behaviour and any advice about handling written as appropriate

## 8. Missing Student incident record on CPOMS

The School must keep a full written record of any incident of a missing student including:

- The student's name
- Relevant dates and times (e.g. when it was first noticed that the student was missing)
- The action taken to find the student
- Whether the Police or Social Services were involved
- Outcome or resolution of the incident
- Any reasons given by the student for being missing
- Any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident
- A record of the staff involved.

A full written record of the incident will be kept on the student's file.

## 9. Monitoring

The Trust is aware that a student failing to attend school regularly or being absent without the School’s permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

Students who have been recorded as missing from School are monitored closely and if there is a concern that they are at risk of going missing from education the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be alerted, who will in turn notify the Local Authority CME officer .