

ABSCONDING POLICY

This policy is applicable to all students, staff, and parents of The Wellington Academy

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Responsible position:	Approved by:
Deputy Head	Headteacher/LGB
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RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Policy Name
Behaviour of Learning and Principles Policy
Health & Safety Policy
Anti-Bullying Policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
National Minimum Standards for Boarding

REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision Description
August 2011	1.0	Written in line with current legislation
June 2013	2.0	Reviewed – details remain accurate
September 2014	3.0	Reviewed and updated for MAT purposes
December 2014	4.0	Reviewed and updated for Boarding purposes.
June 2018	5.0	Reviewed and updated
Nov 2020	6.0	Reviewed and updated
October 2022	7.0	Reviewed and updated

INTRODUCTION

The Wellington Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of students and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The Wellington Academy strives to provide a secure and safe environment where students will want to come and enjoy learning with others. It is always our expectation that students will choose to comply with policies and procedures whilst on academy premises or under the direct supervision of staff whilst on educational visits. There are occasions however where students choose to abscond from an academy site or the supervision of staff whilst on an educational visit.

TO ABSCOND IS TO LEAVE WITHOUT PERMISSION.

Staff should always bear in mind that students who have chosen to abscond may be upset and as such, they may not be thinking rationally. It is important that the response of staff is to remain calm, maintain visual contact and work to re-engage the student and return them safely to the academy. At no point should staff run after a student, nor should they ask other students to assist in pursuing the absconding student. Active pursuit may encourage the student to leave the immediate vicinity of the academy and may also cause the student to panic and possibly put themselves at risk. If however a student is deemed to be a high risk to themselves and/or other people then staff should adhere to the use of the restraint policy with reference to holding the student. This does not mean that staff should run after a student in order to hold them.

In all instances of absconding a senior member of staff should be informed.

The date and time of the incident should be recorded on a copy of the incident form shown as Appendix A, recorded on SIMS and recorded as a safeguarding concern by the staff member dealing with the student.

When visual contact with a student is lost then the parents/carers should be telephoned and informed. A record of this call including time and any agreements should be recorded in the student file. Parents/carers and the absconding student will be asked to complete and sign the forms shown as Appendix B and C. A copy will be retained in the student file.

In circumstances where there are concerns for a student who has absconded and the parents or carer cannot be contacted, then the police should be contacted, and the necessary details passed on. If the student is a boarder, the Director of Boarding must be informed.

7. Boarding student

Students must sign out with a member of staff in order to leave the boarding house, if they do not, they will be considered to have absconded. On return the boarder must sign in. If for any reason the boarder is going to be late returning to the boarding house, they should call the duty member of staff and advise them of their proposed return time.

- a. If a student is missing from the Boarding House, inform the Duty Senior Staff immediately. Staff should conduct a low-key search of rooms and grounds and report their findings to the Duty Senior Staff. Attempts will be made via staff and students to establish any information which may help in finding the missing student. Staff will make a telephone call to the mobile phone of the boarder to find out where they are.
- b. If the student has not been found the Duty Senior Staff will complete the incident form shown in Appendix A and details are recorded in the Absconding Log and ensure the appropriate people informed.

- Police
 - Parents/Carers
 - Social Worker
where appropriate
 - Ofsted in the case of a student missing overnight
- c. When possible, the student will be collected by a member of staff from absconding.
 - d. When a student is returned or returns by themselves, they should be de-briefed by the Director of Boarding concerning their whereabouts and then immediately returned to the appropriate place. The student will complete the form shown in Appendix C. The Duty Senior Staff will then ensure all the above people are informed of the return.
 - e. If a student returns, the time of the return should be noted on the incident form (Appendix A) and parents/carers informed. In instances where the police have been called, they should be informed by telephone of the students return.

8. A record of return time and telephone call to home and the police to be recorded on the incident form.

ABSCONDING WHILST OFF SITE ON EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND TRIPS

1. In the event that a student chooses to abscond the trip leader must follow absconding procedures as shown above, directing staff to maintain visual contact with the student if possible and informing the academy office immediately.
2. Office staff will inform the student's parents/carers and record details as communicated by the trip leader on the incident form. A record of the telephone call to parents/carers must also be included on the form.
3. Emergency procedures as set out in the risk assessment must be followed.

INFORMATION WHEN CALLING THE OFFICE

Exact details:

- The precise location
- Who was the absconding student with?
- When was the student last recorded as being seen?
- How did the student abscond?
- What time did the student abscond?

IF ASKING THE OFFICE TO INFORM THE POLICE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS REQUIRED:

- Height and build of the student
- Colour of the student's hair
- Details of what the student was wearing including any distinguishing accessories i.e., bags, sunglasses

In the event that the student returns to the group then the academy office must be informed immediately, and details recorded on the incident form. Calls home must be made, and details recorded on the incident form and the senior staff member on duty informed.

Parents and carers of students are responsible for supporting the work of the Trust. Once the academy has informed a parent/carer that their child has absconded, parents and carers are responsible for actively supporting the Trust with subsequent procedures and actions. This could include coming into the academy to help secure the safety of the child/young person as well as meeting with senior staff to agree subsequent actions.

GENERAL GUIDANCE NOTES FOR STAFF:

- Should the student concerned have gone missing because of abuse at Academy, then the Deputy Headteacher/ Headteacher or nominated safeguarding member of staff must be informed immediately for consideration under Child Protection Procedures. Appropriate action should be taken to ensure the protection of the child concerned and fellow students.
- All staff are made aware of and do not exceed the measures they may properly take to prevent a child leaving under current legislation and government guidelines.
- Where a worrying pattern of absences is recorded, a review of the student is initiated and of the relevant core practice of the Trust.
- When a student is at risk of absconding if not supervised, preventive measures should be in place. Any preventative measures decided upon will be included in his/her Care Plan which may involve the Attendance Officer or outside agencies. This is expected to include Physical Intervention (in accordance with agreed guidance on Physical Intervention) and arrangements for therapeutic or behavioural approaches to change the student's behaviour. A meeting will be convened with parents/carers and all significant agencies involved, to discuss and agree upon the most appropriate action to be taken.

APPENDIX A

INCIDENT FORM - ABSCONDING

Agreement following a student absconding from an academy (to be completed by a Deputy Headteacher/ Headteacher/ Director of Boarding and attached to appendix B and C)

Student Name:

Academy:

Date:

Record of incident

An agreement has been reached following this absconding incident. Actions have been agreed in order to help this student feel happy and safe in the academy.

The academy will support this agreement by:

1.

2.

Signed

Position

Appendix B: Parental Agreement
(To be completed by the parent or carer)

I have read the record of the absconding incident (Appendix A). I wish to make the following comments relating to the incident (optional):

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

I understand that the following actions have been agreed in order to help my child be happy and safe in the academy.

I know that my child needs to keep to the Trust rules and not leave the academy grounds without permission.

I understand that there are agreed actions for all parties involved (see below).

For my part, I will support this agreement by:

Parent/carers

1.

2.

Signed: (Parent/carers)

Date:

Appendix C: Pupil Agreement

(to be completed by the student or by an adult on behalf of the student)

I have read or listened to the record of the absconding incident (Appendix A).

I wish to make the following comment about the incident (optional):

I understand that it is always unacceptable for me to leave the academy site without permission and a repeated action of this nature might result in the school following exclusion/ sanction procedures.

I understand that the following actions have been agreed in order to help me to be happy and safe in the academy.

1.

2.

I know I need to keep to the academy rules and not leave the academy grounds without permission.

I understand that there are actions too for the academy and my parents/carers (listed below).

I will support this agreement by:

1

2.

Signed:

(Student)

Date: