

# **ABSCONDING POLICY**

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**Authority: Director, Connect2Education Ltd**

The purpose of this document is to set out the procedures to all stakeholders should a child leave tuition (either outreach or from centre) without permission.

**Aim:**

Connect2Education provides a secure, safe education environment for pupils and staff who attend the Stokesley Centre. With regard to outreach tuition: we want students to actively engage with their tutors and enjoy learning in a safe environment suitable for education purposes; this may be a public venue such as a library or a children's centre approved by the school.

We recognise that in some instances a student may decide to abscond from their place of designated education provision whilst working with a tutor. Should this happen, the procedures detailed below will ensure that we deal with such an event safely.

**Covid 19 Proviso:**

We continue to follow government guidelines. Whilst Covid 19 restrictions are presently lifted, we will continue to adhere to government directives.

**Definition:** To abscond is to 'leave without permission'.

This could mean a child leaves a school building, yet remains on school grounds, or leaves the tuition centre at Stokesley, or a Library/other approved venue.

If in school, Connect2Education staff will inform a teacher, Head Teacher, or a member of SLT straight away.

- If in a library, or other approved venue the tutor should alert staff in the venue and immediately contact the Head of Teaching and Learning at Connect2Education Ltd. The Head of Teaching and Learning will contact the carer/parent. The Head of Teaching and Learning may also contact the safeguarding lead in the school where the student/child is on roll.
- The tutor should remain in the venue, until the time their session would have finished in case the student/young person returns.
- Tutors will follow the risk assessment for the child they are tutoring. Unless specified, if the pupil/young person is not found within fifteen minutes from the time the student/young person absconded, the police will be called by Connect2Education management and the school notified.
- In any event of a pupil absconding from the centre at Stokesley, Connect2Education will (in addition to looking for the student/young person) follow the above points and call the school office, phone parents/carers and police.
- Every attempt to contact parents/carers and police should be recorded.
- Any staff who leave the a venue or the Centre at Stokesley to look for a student/young person should take a mobile phone with them and not put themselves or the child in danger at any point.
- Once the child/young person has been found, the member(s) of staff will use their professional judgement to make a decision about how best to support the child or young person.
- Active pursuit of the pupil should not be considered. This may make the pupil panic possibly putting himself / herself into immediate danger. Staff will instead try to follow, keeping the pupil in sight and at a safe distance.

**Definition Cont.**

- Where a child does not return within fifteen minutes to the original tuition point but is reported safe by a parent/carer within those fifteen minutes, the information will be logged with a safeguarding lead at the child's school and on the Individual Education Record including person spoken to and time of log.
- Upon his/her return to tuition (whether in school, in the tuition centre or an approved venue) and when calm enough to do so, the pupil will meet with a member of staff so that the absconding can be understood; a support plan for the individual pupil may need to be considered. In this case, the school may decide to update the risk assessment for the child or young person. Individual schools and academies will decide upon appropriate sanctions under their own policy.

**Pupils Who Abscond but remain in the near locality within sight of the tutor:**

In these circumstances, a pupil will not be pursued by staff or forced back into the building. Staff will remain at a safe distance, keeping the child in sight. Interventions should be attempted by staff only if the pupil is a danger to themselves or others.

**Use of reasonable force:**

'Reasonable' means using no more force than is needed: all members of Connect2Education Staff have a legal power to use reasonable force (Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006).

Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others from damaging property or from causing disorder.

The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

This policy acknowledges that Connect2Education Ltd staff have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and young people with special educational needs.