

Absconding Policy

This is for the specific purposes of incidents when a learner leaves College unaccompanied and without staff knowing or authorising the absence.

PLC has a duty of care and are responsible for the safeguarding, Health and Safety and wellbeing of all the learners in their learning centre and to keep them safe throughout the College day and activities throughout the College timetable and on College led activities away from the learning centre

If young people with SEND go missing from College, they are potentially at risk of harm.

Involve parents and carers and the learners in what to do in the case of absconding or leaving College without permission and jointly develop plans

Include learners and engage them in their own safety, ensure learners know about the risk of absconding or leaving College

Staff Awareness and training

PLC place awareness for matters of safety and safeguarding as high importance.

Staff should be aware of and have access to individual behaviour support plans, risk assessments and other College policies associated with behaviour and safeguarding

Staff should have training on the strategies in place for individuals who are identified as high risk

Know and identify any triggers that may prompt the learner to abscond

Control Measures and Procedures

Security

Keep premises safe and secure wherever possible, reasonable and practicable for example key fob doors should not be propped open

Supervision

Effective supervision based on individual needs (for example if they are one to one)

Specific risks identified for those with history of absconding

On external visits or in the community a head count must be taken regularly and those at high risk of absconding must be one to one when out and about

For Learners

Learners need to be made aware of their responsibility during the induction period and regularly throughout their learning

This should be reinforced throughout their time in College

Information for learners must be clearly displayed and given in a format appropriate to them

Use alternative communication methods to explain (e.g. Makaton, PECS, etc)

Have safety cards with visual coping strategies for them to use

Ensure all learners are aware of who to contact if they feel unsafe or get lost, a person they feel safe to reach out to without fear (see Scarborough model)

Risk Assessment

PLC will identify the learners who are at high risk of absconding and undertake the creation of an individual risk assessment/s

For activities in the community the Evolve Risk Assessment will identify the measures to be taken
When planning any activity where it may be possible for a learner to abscond the activity must be thoroughly risk assessed and documented

Follow and maintain the individual risk assessment and support plan

Learner Absconding Protocol for Staff

Promptly implement the absconding protocol with efficiency when required

- Staff member identifying learner has absconded to immediately inform PLC Manager or their designated deputy (“Manager”)
- Every effort will be made to find the learner by searching in the vicinity of the College or by using the knowledge of the young person and where they may go
- Staff must stay in touch with each other through the mobile phones
- The “manager” will attempt to telephone the learner
- If the learner does not respond the “manager” after 10 minutes they will call the parents or carer of the learner
- Simultaneously and if the learner has not been found after 10 minutes or been in contact the “manager” will call 999 and report to the police.
- Police will be given a full description of the young person and what they are wearing (or anything that may identify them)
- Once the learner has been found a detailed incident with all the timings and relevant agencies involved and lessons learnt report must be logged with the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- PLC Manager must brief the police, any other agencies involved and the parents

Learner leaving College without Permission

- Inform PLC Manager or their designated deputy immediately
- A member of staff should follow them all the while trying to encourage them to return
- If they are a high-risk learner, the behaviour support plan must be implemented
- At all times the staff member in close contact with the learner must be aware of their actions in terms of this might encourage the learners to put themselves in further risk by running for example onto a busy road or railway line
- Staff should follow the learner at a safe distance but keeping them, in sight at all times
- If they lose sight the absconding protocol is immediately invoked
- Ensure the phone contact is maintained with “manager”
- If the learner returns at their own choice a detailed incident with all the timings and relevant agencies involved and lessons learnt report must be logged by the PLC Manager with the Designated Safeguarding Lead

What next?

Once the learner is found safe and well the “Manager” must speak with them calmly and offer reassurance, so they feel supported

They must be made aware of the consequences of their actions but not in a way that may make them anxious or frightened

September 2025

In future what steps they can take if they feel the need to run away again brief all College staff and learn lessons for the future

Scarborough Model

Safe spaces have been identified in the community, some shops and premises have a greet spot on their window identifying them as a safe space.

If a learner gets lost or needs help the staff in the shop or premises have an emergency contact number to call and alert the PLC manager

All learners are made aware of the green dot system and know they can go in and ask to contact PLC

Other areas will have their own Model, please confirm with your local Hub Coordinator.