

Craigavon Senior High School

Policy on Pupils Absconding from School

(updated September 2018)

1.0 Rationale and Aims

In Craigavon Senior High School, we strive to provide a safe and secure environment where pupils enjoy learning. The aim of the policy is to provide clear guidance on the procedures to follow if a child goes missing during the school day.

1.1 Definition of Absconding

This is when a pupil deliberately leaves the school buildings or grounds without permission. This may happen during the school day or when a Looked After Child fails to report for their taxi at the end of the school day. This also applies when a pupil deliberately leaves a Link course at Southern Regional College or deliberately leaves their work placement.

1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

1. The Principal (or in the absence of the Principal, a member of staff designated by the Principal) will be informed when a pupil absconds from school. This member of staff will take responsibility for ensuring the correct procedures are followed. Designated staff include Dr Kirkwood, Mrs Brown, Mrs O'Neill, Mrs Megaw, Mrs Caldwell, Mrs Cherry and Mrs McNeill.
2. Classroom teachers are responsible for monitoring pupil attendance throughout the day and reporting any unexplained absence to a member of SLT.
3. Parents and carers are responsible for supporting the work of the school. They should encourage their child to follow all school procedures and policies.

4. Once the school has informed the parents or carers that their child has left school without permission, the parents and carers have a responsibility to actively support the school with the subsequent procedures and actions.

1.3 Procedures to follow if a child goes missing from school, a Link Course at Southern Regional College or Work Placement.

1.3.1 Absconding from school

The following actions will be taken to monitor pupil attendance and to respond when it is suspected a pupil has left the school premises without permission;

1. Classroom teachers will monitor pupil attendance throughout the day using Lesson Monitor. If a pupil is missing from class without a valid reason e.g. medical appointment, the teacher will report the pupil missing to the school office. This should be done by sending a pupil to the office with a note or through phone contact. Notification by email will not suffice. If the pupil subsequently reports to class, the office will be informed.
2. If it is reported to a member of staff that a pupil has left school without permission, or they observe a pupil absconding, they will report it to the school office.
3. In the first instance the office staff will check the 'signing out book'. If the pupil has not 'signed out' the office staff will inform the Principal or a designated member of staff.
4. If a Looked After Child (LAC) fails to report for their taxi, at the end of the school day, the Principal or a designated member of staff will be informed.
5. The Principal or designated member of staff will investigate.
6. If the pupil appears to be missing but there is no evidence that they have left the premises, a quick search of the premises will be carried out. **This should not exceed fifteen minutes.**
7. If the pupil cannot be located a member of staff will contact the pupil's parents or carers and inform them. The police will be notified if a parent or carer cannot be contacted.

8. In the case of a LAC child absconding, the school will notify the appropriate adult or organisation. This may include Social Services, a Children's Home, Foster Carer or a parent. The police will always be informed when a LAC absconds.
9. Staff will not follow the pupil or leave the school to look for the pupil.
10. Once the child leaves the school premises staff are not to engage in conversation because the pupil might be in a distressed state and unable to act in a controlled manner.
11. If the pupil returns to school, the parents/carers and (if necessary) the police will be informed.
12. Notes will be taken and retained of the actions taken.
13. Depending on the circumstances, the school may carry out a risk assessment if a pupil absconds. If a child absconds for a second time in the same academic year, a range of measures will be put in place in collaboration with the child's parents/carers. This may also involve other agencies e.g. Social Services, Education Welfare Service and Behaviour Support Team. A Risk Assessment will be conducted, and a Risk Management Plan will be written and implemented.
14. Persistent absconding may lead to suspension from school.

1.3.2 Absconding from Southern Regional College (SRC) (Occupational Studies Courses)

1. The school will inform the SRC School Co-Ordinator of a pupil who is at risk from absconding. This information will be shared with relevant SRC staff.
2. SRC lecturers will take a register at the beginning of their class using SRC procedures. They will monitor pupil attendance throughout the lesson. If a pupil is missing from class without a valid reason e.g. a medical appointment, the lecturer will report this to the SRC School Co-Ordinator or their Line Manager (this will be by a direct conversation or telephone call. An email is not sufficient).
3. The lecturer should also ask a teaching assistant (SRC or CSHS staff), if present, to conduct a search of the premises/ grounds.

4. The SRC School Co-ordinator or Line manager should contact the school to report the pupil missing. If present, a CSHS teaching assistant should also contact the school to report the pupil missing.
5. If the pupil returns to class, the lecturer will inform the SRC School Co-ordinator or their line manager. In turn they will inform the school.
6. The school will follow the procedures as outlined in section 1.3.1 above.

1.3.3 Absconding from Work Experience

1. The school will inform an employer if a pupil is at risk from absconding.
2. The employer will monitor pupil attendance throughout the day. If a pupil absconds the employer will contact the school as soon as possible.
3. The school will follow the procedures as outlined in section 1.3.1 above.

Policy presented to Board of Governors on xxxxxxxx

Policy adopted by the Board of Governors on xxxxxxxx

Policy shared with staff on xxxxxxxxxx

Policy will be reviewed on xxxxxxxxxx