



Hill Top

Primary Academy

A Member of Leodis Academies Trust



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Trust

**Absconding Policy**

Plan administration	
Version Number	2
Date of issue	September 2026
Date of next review	September 2029
Person responsible for review	Principal
Signed and dated Principal	
Signed and dated and in Govs minutes Chair of Governors	

Hill Top Primary Academy is an inclusive school; we believe that every child has a right to a broad, balanced and effective education regardless of race, gender, age, sexuality or special need. Please refer to our Equal Opportunities Policy for further details of this.

## 1. Purpose of the Policy

Hill Top Primary Academy is committed to ensuring the safety, welfare, and wellbeing of all pupils. This Absconding Policy outlines the procedures and responsibilities to prevent, respond to, and manage incidents where pupils leave the school premises without permission (absconding). The policy aims to:

- Protect pupils from harm and reduce the risk of absconding incidents.
- Provide clear guidance to staff on prevention, response, and reporting.
- Engage parents and carers in partnership to support pupil safety.
- Comply with UK government legislation and best practice guidance relevant to primary schools and academies.
- Reflect the school's vision and values of care, confidence, challenge, creativity, and character.

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

Internal Absconding	External Absconding
Internal absconding - where the pupil leaves the care of the responsible person without permission but remains on the academy site.	External absconding - where a pupil leaves the academy site without permission.
Where a pupil leaves a lesson without permission but remains on the academy site.	Where a pupil leaves an offsite provision without permission.  E.g. curriculum swimming, alternate education provision, etc.
Where a pupil leaves a club without permission but remains on the site.	Where a pupil leaves a defined area or supervision of the responsible adult without permission.  E.g. when undertaking fieldwork or on an educational visit.

Under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and in Common Law, schools and other education settings owe a duty of care towards their pupils. This duty of care requires that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that pupils are safe and remain within the care of the school at all times throughout the school day and during school led activities.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils enrolled at Hill Top Primary Academy during school hours, during school-organised activities off-site, and while travelling to and from school on school transport or authorised transport.

## 3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy complies with and is informed by:

- The Education Act 1996
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current DfE statutory guidance)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- DfE National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (where relevant)
- OFSTED Inspection Framework (2025)
- Relevant safeguarding and child protection legislation and guidance

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1 School Leadership Team (SLT)**

- Ensure the policy is implemented, reviewed, and communicated effectively.
- Provide training and resources for staff on absconding prevention and response.
- Monitor and analyse absconding incidents to inform risk assessments and improvements.
- Liaise with external agencies, including police and local authority, when required.

### **4.2 Staff**

- Understand and follow this policy and related procedures.
- Maintain vigilance to identify and prevent potential absconding risks.
- Respond promptly and appropriately to absconding incidents.
- Record and report all incidents accurately to the SLT.
- Engage with pupils to understand reasons behind absconding behaviour and support reintegration.

### **4.3 Pupils**

- Follow school rules and expectations regarding staying on the premises.
- Inform a trusted adult if they feel the need to leave or feel unsafe.

### **4.4 Parents and Carers**

- Support the school's efforts to keep children safe.
- Provide up-to-date contact information and relevant background information.
- Work collaboratively with the school in managing and preventing absconding incidents.

### **4.5 Wider School Community**

- Visitors, volunteers, and contractors must adhere to school safeguarding and safety policies.
- Report any concerns about pupil whereabouts to school staff immediately.

## **5. Prevention Strategies**

- Conduct thorough risk assessments for pupils identified as at risk of absconding, including those with SEND or safeguarding concerns.
- Maintain secure boundaries and controlled access to school premises.

- Implement effective supervision ratios during lessons, breaks, and off-site activities.
- Foster a positive school environment where pupils feel valued, listened to, and supported.
- Use behaviour management strategies that reduce triggers for absconding.
- Provide clear information to pupils about the dangers and consequences of absconding.
- Engage parents/carers in supporting attendance and addressing underlying issues.

## **6. Procedures for Managing Absconding Incidents**

### **6.1 Immediate Response**

- Staff who become aware of a pupil absconding must alert a senior member of staff immediately.
- Conduct a swift search of the premises and immediate vicinity.
- Attempt to contact the pupil directly if safe to do so.
- Ensure other pupils remain supervised and safe.
- If the pupil cannot be located within 10 minutes or there are concerns for their safety, contact the police and parents/carers without delay.

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### **6.2 Communication**

- Inform the Principal or designated safeguarding lead (DSL) immediately.
- Record full details of the incident, including time, location, staff involved, and actions taken.
- Notify parents/carers as soon as possible, providing clear information and reassurance.

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### **6.3 Post-Incident Support**

- Conduct a debrief with staff and pupil(s) involved to understand causes and prevent recurrence.
- Review and update risk assessments and support plans.
- Provide appropriate pastoral and, if needed, specialist support to the pupil.
- Consider any disciplinary or safeguarding actions in line with school policies.

## **7. Training and Awareness**

- Provide regular training for all staff on absconding risks, prevention, and response procedures.
- Include absconding awareness in safeguarding and behaviour management training.
- Ensure new staff and volunteers receive induction on this policy.

## **8. Monitoring, Reporting, and Review**

- Maintain a log of all absconding incidents, including follow-up actions.
- Regularly analyse trends and report to the governing body.
- Review this policy annually or after any serious incident.
- Update procedures in line with changes in legislation, guidance, or school context.

## **9. Related Policies and Documents**

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- SEND Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

#### **10. Contact Information**

- Designated Safeguarding Lead: Joanne Lancaster, Andrea Salter, Laura Monaghan
- Principal: Joanne Lancaster 01133074750
- Attendance Officer: Joanne Lancaster

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*Hill Top Primary Academy is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all pupils. This Absconding Policy supports our vision to nurture every child's uniqueness in a safe, caring, and stimulating environment.*