

Bowden House School

Abducting Policy & RMFHC Procedures

Under Section 3 of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, schools owe a duty of care towards their students. This duty of care requires that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that students are safe and remain in the care of the school, including the residential areas or when participating in external activities away from the school.

Bowden House School also complies with Standard 12.8 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools which requires that **'Staff working within the school know and implement the school's policy and where relevant, the local authority's policy in relation to children going missing and their role in implementing that policy. Staff actively search for children who are missing, including working with the Police, where appropriate'**. (NMS for Residential Special Schools, 01 April 2015).

This Policy also complies with the DfE 'Statutory Guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care' (January 2014).

The specific needs of our students makes it inevitable that occasionally they will absent themselves from the school building or the school site. It is accepted that some students will absent themselves for a short period of time and then return to the school site with their whereabouts known. There will also be occasions when students might leave the school site and be seen to 'test the boundaries'. This would be considered as normal teenage behaviour and not necessarily a situation of risk. However, the school's duty of care extends to the role of acting in 'loco parentis' and all staff should ensure that the students are aware of the risks they pose when they leave the school site or on an activity, without staff supervision.

In the event of a student or students reported as missing from school, the first indication is likely to be their absence from class, an activity, mealtime or their bedroom.

The first action for any member of staff who suspects a student(s) as missing, is to enquire with other students and colleagues as to the possible whereabouts of the missing student(s). They should inform the senior member of staff on duty who will then:

- undertake a thorough search of the school buildings and its grounds;
- check strategic points in the local area or places where the student might be known;
- contact any known associates in the area;
- check locations such as Seaford railway station, to ask if the missing student(s) have been sighted and ask them to contact the school if anyone is seen
- contact the student(s) on their mobile telephone, if applicable

If the above action results in the missing student(s) not being located, the 'on call' person should be informed. A decision will then be taken

regarding contacting the Police and reporting them as missing. At this point, one of the Heads of Care or another member of the Senior

Leadership Team (SLT) should refer to the protocols set out in the local RMFHC and those of the placing authorities and follow the required procedures. Care should be taken to ensure that in the case of a child in Local Authority care or "Looked After" that contact with the appropriate persons is made. This could be parents/carers/those who have Parental Responsibility and the student's Social Worker.

As a general rule, the younger the student, the shorter the delay. All students at Bowden House School have Special Educational Needs and are therefore considered vulnerable or at potential risk.

When the Police are contacted, they will ask for:

- the personal details of the student(s);
- a brief description, including clothes worn;
- details of the last time; place and by whom the student(s) was seen
- a recent photograph (if available)
- family address(s)
- known associates and addresses frequented
- any previous history of absconding and where found
- name and address of the student's GP and dentist
- the circumstances under which the student is missing
- any factors which increase the risk to the student
- school address
- contact details of parents/carers/Social Worker (where appropriate)
- name of staff member who has completed the search of the school site and surrounding areas.

The Police will then arrange for an officer to visit the school to collect further information following which the school's 'Missing Persons' form will be completed.

Following contact with the Police, the Head of Care or another member of the SLT, will endeavour to contact the parents/carers and or Social Worker, to inform them of the situation.

If the missing student(s) returns, the Police/parents/carers and if necessary, Social Worker, should be informed immediately. The student(s) should be seen by a member(s) of staff and a discussion held as to the reason for their absence.

When the student(s) has returned, it is the usual procedure for the Police to visit the school to undertake a Safe & Well check. A member of staff should be available at this interview. As with the reporting of a student missing from the school site or on an external activity, when the student returns or is returned, the local and placing authorities RMFHC protocols should be followed.

Throughout this process, the school's 'Missing Persons' form should be updated. Any issues relating to Safeguarding and Child Protection will be referred to the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board.

All staff at Bowden House School will encourage students to remain at all times within the supportive environment of the whole school site.

Bowden House Missing Persons Notification Procedure

Bowden House School follows the local (East Sussex) RMFHC protocols in the event a student from the school goes missing. In addition, the school complies with any other requirements detailed within the RMFHC protocols of the students placing authority. In all cases of students absconding, the staff follow the Bowden House School absconding procedures.

Tower Hamlets

1. Follow the East Sussex procedure

Thurrock – Essex

1. Follow the East Sussex procedure

Barking and Dagenham

1. Follow the East Sussex procedure

Bracknell Forest

1. Follow the East Sussex procedure

Hackney

1. Follow the East Sussex procedure

Out of Hours numbers

The following out of hours numbers should only be used if you are unable to contact Parents/Carers/Social Workers.

Tower Hamlets -	0207 364 4079
Barking and Dagenham -	0208 594 8356
Hackney -	07508 697 883
Thurrock -	01375 372 468
Bracknell forest -	01344786543
East Sussex -	01273335906

Updated September 2017

Absconding Log

This log should be completed in conjunction with the Student's 'posted' missing – collation of information form.

Student's name	Date/time of incident	Time issue resolved	Comments

Students 'posted' missing – collation of information

Sheet to be handed to the person responsible for managing incident until resolution

<u>Name of student</u>	<u>Name of others</u>	<u>Staff member</u>	<u>Time</u>
Antecedents			
Decision to post student missing	By whom:		Time:
Police informed	By whom:	To whom:	Time
RMFHC protocols followed	Which LA (s)?		Time
Missing persons form completed			
Parents/carers informed			
Social Services informed			
Others (Specify)			
On going information		Incident Number:	

When a student is known to be safe, all parties to be informed of his whereabouts

	By whom	To whom	Time
Police informed			
Parents informed			
Social Services informed			
Others (Specify)			
Resolution (including any possible Safeguarding and Child Protection issues)			

School: Bowden House

Policy: Absconding Policy &
RMFHC Procedures

Agreed: Spring Term 2015
Reviewed: July 2015

Responsibility: Governing Body

Review Date: Summer Term 2017

Signed by: _____
Chair of Governors

Date: _____