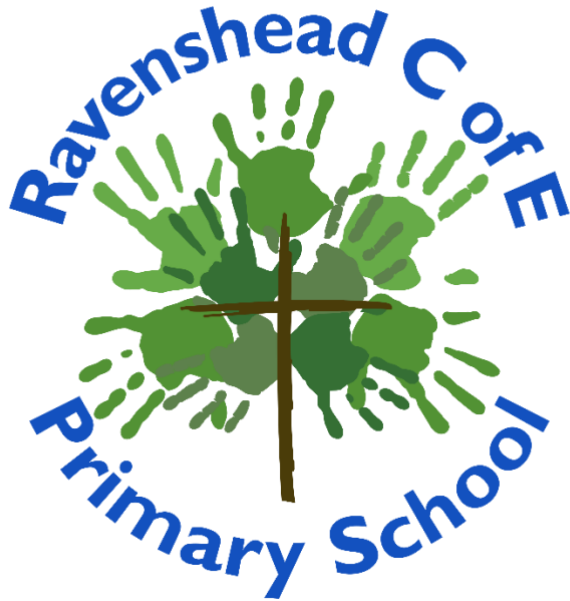




# **Children who Abscond from School Policy**

**Date Prepared:** October, 2025.

**Date to be reviewed:** September, 2026.

## **Our School Vision**

Our school vision is based on the theme of '*Taking Care*'. We strive to encourage our children, staff and wider community to 'take care' of one another through the core Christian Values of:

*Kindness, Hope, Courage* and *Respect*.

Our vision is inspired by the words in Corinthians:

**"Let love and kindness be the motivation behind all that you do."**

(1 Corinthians 16.14)

Ravenshead C of E Primary School is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. In biblical tradition, children in particular are seen to hold a special place in the priorities of God. Furthermore, we hold to the foundational belief that all people are created in God's image and are intrinsically valuable. Everyone should be treated as fundamentally precious, irrespective of behaviour, achievements or potential.

Therefore, we aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents/carers and staff are treated fairly and with respect and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities. The school's biblical foundation provides a model of Christian community described as the 'body of Christ', in which everyone has a part to play, and everyone without exception has God-given gifts which are to be used for the benefit of others.

## **Purpose of the policy.**

The purpose of this non-statutory policy is to set out clearly for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a child abscond from school.

## **Aim**

At Ravenshead C of E Primary, we actively work to provide a secure, safe environment and a school where children want to come to enjoy learning with others as part of a caring community. We recognise that it is highly unlikely that a child will try to abscond from our school but this policy is written to ensure we are ready to deal with this eventuality should it occur. If a child has SEND needs and absconding, it is likely then that they should have a risk assessment (Safety Passport).

## **Definition**

To abscond is to 'leave without permission'.

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.

**Where a pupil present at registration is found to be absent from the class/area where they are supposed to be without authorization, the following procedures should be followed:**

1. Member of staff to inform Head Teacher or member of SLT, and Main Reception.
2. Head Teacher or member of SLT to organise a search of buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to in the school environment.
3. If the pupil is not found, then all available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.

4. School office to phone the police when area has been fully checked if the child is not found.
5. School office to contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation.
6. Consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the school perimeter. This decision will be based on staff's knowledge of the child and on the levels of risk, and on what action is in the child's best interests.
7. Any staff who leave school grounds are to take a mobile phone to contact school.
8. Once a pupil has been found then the Headteacher will use her professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.
9. A written report will be filed on the incident and added to CPOMS (electronic safeguarding system).
10. A member of the senior leadership team will brief the police and parents.

**Where a pupil attempts or is seen to be leaving the school premises without authorization, the following procedures should be followed:**

1. Member of staff to inform Head Teacher or member of the senior leadership team and the main office. Staff must follow the child to the school fence or gate and must try to persuade the child to stay in the school (use of distraction such as stop, drop and read, or busy box).
2. If by leaving the school the child is known to be putting themselves in immediate danger, adults must exercise their duty of care and stop the child, physically if necessary.
3. As active pursuit may encourage a child to leave the site and may also cause the child to panic (possibly putting him or herself at risk by running onto a busy road), staff will not chase but will try to keep a child in sight at a distance.
4. The senior leadership team lead will contact the child's parents/carers.
5. If the child has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and is no longer visible, then the Police must be informed.
6. If the child returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.
7. Upon his or her return to school and when the child is calm, the child must be seen by the Headteacher or senior member of staff so that the reasons for absconding may be discussed in detail. At this point a decision will be made as to the appropriateness of further action.
8. A meeting with parents/carers will be arranged.
9. A risk assessment (Safety Passport) must be completed.
10. A written report will be filed on the incident and recorded on CPOMS (see Appendix A).

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Each incident will be monitored and evaluated. Risk management plans for any children believed to pose a risk of absconding will be created by school with the support of staff and parents/carers.

## **Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers of pupils are responsible for supporting the work of the school and encouraging their children to keep to all school procedures and policies. Once school has informed the parents that their child has absconded, parents and carers are responsible for actively supporting the school with subsequent procedures and actions. This could include coming into school to help secure the safety of their child as well as meeting with a Senior Leader in order to agree subsequent actions. Parents/carers may also be asked to accompany their child on off-site visits and trips. Parents/carers will be asked to sign a Parental Agreement form (Appendix 2) explaining that they will work with and support the school.

Risk management plans (Safety Passports) will be shared with and signed by parents/carers.

## **Appendix A**

### **Report should include**

Absconding Pupil Incident

Report Name of pupil:

Date:

An outline of the incident (Please include time of day, staff involved and how the issue was resolved.)

What triggers led to this incident occurring?

What action will be taken to support the pupil to feel happy and safe in school?

Signed by Headteacher/ SLT:

Signed by Parent/Carer:

**Appendix B.**

Parental/Carer Agreement (To be completed by the parent or carer)

I have read the record of the absconding incident (Appendix A).

I wish to make the following comments relating to the incident (optional):

I understand that it is always unacceptable for my child to leave the school site without permission and a repeated action of this nature might result in the school following exclusion procedures.

I understand that the following actions have been agreed in order to help my child be happy and safe in school.

I know my child needs to keep to the school rules and not leave the school grounds without permission.

I understand that there are agreed actions for all parties involved. For my part, I will support this agreement by encouraging my child to comply.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Carer)

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_