

Priory Hurworth House School



Absconding Local Procedure

'Inspiring for success'

Hurworth House is unique, we strive to bring inspiration, present endless possibilities and nurture innovation. We recognise and celebrate individuality, developing all aspects of our young people's characters in order to fulfil their ambitions

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Procedure for		Absconding			
Associated Priory policy		Running Away / Missing	Number	ES56 v2	
Associated Regulation/Standards			Number		
Unit		Hurworth House School	Signature (Author)	Claire Blackett	
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Hurworth House Absconding Policy

It is important that the children in our care are safe and staff supervise them at all times.

The staff should actively plan strategies and adopt measures, which reduce the likelihood of the young people running away. The atmosphere in the premises, the young people being involved in planning, being aware of daily routines and the admission procedures all are factors which need to be given particular importance to achieve this aim.

Young People who are at the point of leaving the premises

The staff should always enter into discussions with the young person with the aim to:

- Dissuade them from wanting to leave the premises
- Persuading them to stay

If this fails staff should make decisions on whether they can intervene by using external control.

- Physical diversion
- Physical intervention

Young People who have absconded from the premises

If despite these efforts the young person does abscond then the following procedure should be followed.

It is important to remember that children abscond for a whole variety of reasons, and being absent without leave can be indicative of unhappiness, distress and even abuse. Therefore, each absconding is an individual case and has to be handled in a way which is most beneficial to the child. It is essential that the young person absent without leave is given the opportunity to speak to someone other than their primary carers e.g. an independent listener or social worker.

- Upon suspecting a Young Person has absconded (gone missing off site) staff member will report immediately to the Headteacher.
- Within 15 minutes, a full site search will be undertaken. This should be extensive and include 'hiding holes' and the immediate vicinity off site. It is very important this is done calmly and without fuss. Other Young People may not be used in the on-site search.
- Where possible, staff will be dispatched in a vehicle to check roads locally.
- Site search should be thorough; however after 30 minutes of search the Police should be called.

- The Head Teacher will refer to the individual Young Person 'absconding' sheets to determine the risk factors. A Risk Factor of A or B will require a 999 call immediately. A Risk Factor of C-E will require a call to Durham Constabulary on 101 (non emergency contact number) and contacts identified on young person's absconding sheet.
- On arrival, Police must immediately be given the missing Young Person's absconding sheet together with full details of search carried out so far. (It is very likely that the Police will want to complete a further site search themselves).
- If Young Person is located off-site by staff in a vehicle, and it is unsafe to put the Young Person in the vehicle (YP restraint behaviour), then staff should continue to follow and keep the Young Person in sight. Option at this point are :-
 1. Continue to follow
 2. Continue to follow and try to persuade to return to vehicle
 3. Call Police for support /help in supporting the Young Person to return.

Absent Child/Young Person Detained by Police

- (a) If absent child/young person is found/detained by the Police, then a confidential preliminary discussion will take place between the most appropriate officer at the appropriate place and the young person, the purpose of which will be to ascertain why they went missing.
- (b) If the child/young person indicates that they are being abused, then the duty inspector will inform the duty social worker and child protection procedures will commence.
- (c) If there appears no cause for concern, the young person will be returned to their school/place of residence.

The field social worker of the authority (or duty Social Worker) and the family or appropriate adult should be informed as soon as is practically possible.

Wherever possible a child should be collected by Hurworth House School staff.

When a child returns of his own volition or is found and persuaded to do so by staff, the Police, field social worker (or duty social worker) and the family or appropriate adult must be informed.

The return of the child must be handled with sensitivity. Food, drink and a shower should be offered before the incident is investigated further.

Staff may feel it to be more appropriate if the child returns late at night for the investigation to be done the following morning.

There is no fixed sanction. Any return will depend on the individual and the circumstance.

A record of the incident will be made on an incident report form

The Young Person's field social worker should contact the Young Person as soon as possible to ascertain their feelings, thoughts and reasons regarding the absence and return to Hurworth House School. If possible they should visit at the earliest opportunity. If a visit is not possible the reasons for this will be agreed with the placing authority's social worker and recorded.

HURWORTH HOUSE SCHOOL YOUNG PERSON ABSCONDING SHEET

A –
B –
C –
D –
E –

NAME

–

–

PHOTO

RISK FACTORS : _____

DESCRIPTION : **HAIR** _____

EYES _____

HEIGHT _____

WEIGHT _____

COMPLEXION _____

MARKS/SCARS _____

CONTACTS : **PARENT / CARER** _____

SOCIAL WORKER _____

OTHERS (specify friend/relative etc) _____

CLOTHING :

(Complete at time of call
to Police)

PHONE :

(No. / type etc) _____

MONEY :

(How much ?) _____

CARE FACTORS :

MEDICATION :

MEDICATION TAKEN :

Completed on _____

Must be reviewed termly or amended immediately if significant changes.

Review due _____

Risk Factor of A or B immediate 999 call

Risk Factor of C to E contacts **call Durham Constabulary on 101 (non emergency contact number) and on young person's absconding sheet**