



Absconding Policy

Policy Owner: Lets Make Change

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Approved by: Joseph Fitzpatrick

Version	Date	Author/Reviewed By	Summary of Changes	Approved By	Review Date
1.0	20/05/26	Joseph Fitzpatrick	Initial policy created	Joseph Fitzpatrick	May 2027

Let's Make Change (LMC)

Absconding Policy

1. Policy Statement

Lets Make Change (LMC) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners.

Whilst every reasonable effort is made to maintain appropriate supervision, LMC recognises that there may be occasions where a learner leaves a session, venue or activity without permission or cannot be located.

This policy outlines the procedures staff must follow to ensure learners are located as quickly and safely as possible while fulfilling safeguarding responsibilities.

The safety and welfare of the learner will always be the primary consideration.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect learners who leave supervision without permission.
- Provide staff with clear emergency procedures.
- Ensure appropriate communication with parents, carers and commissioners.
- Minimise safeguarding risks.
- Support consistent responses across all LMC services.
- Meet safeguarding and duty of care responsibilities.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Tutors
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Community-based provision
- Educational visits
- One-to-one tutoring
- Group sessions
- Outreach activities

It applies whenever a learner is under the supervision of LMC.

4. Definition of Absconding

For the purposes of this policy, absconding refers to:

A learner leaving the agreed place of supervision or educational activity without permission or where their whereabouts become unknown whilst under the responsibility of LMC.

Examples include:

- Leaving a tutoring session.
- Running from staff.
- Leaving a community venue.
- Walking away during an educational visit.
- Refusing to remain in supervision.
- Disappearing from an agreed meeting location.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Director

Responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate procedures are in place.
- Reviewing incidents.
- Monitoring compliance.
- Liaising with commissioners where appropriate.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Responsible for:

- Providing safeguarding advice.
- Supporting staff during incidents.
- Liaising with external agencies.
- Maintaining safeguarding records.
- Reviewing incidents and lessons learned.

Tutors and Staff

Responsible for:

- Maintaining appropriate supervision.

- Completing risk assessments.
- Following this procedure immediately.
- Reporting incidents.
- Maintaining accurate records.

6. Prevention

LMC aims to reduce the likelihood of absconding by:

- Completing learner risk assessments.
- Understanding known triggers.
- Establishing positive relationships.
- Clearly explaining session expectations.
- Using appropriate venues.
- Maintaining suitable staffing arrangements.
- Sharing relevant information between professionals.

Where a learner has a history of absconding, additional control measures may be implemented.

7. Procedure if a Learner Absconds

If a learner leaves without permission:

Step 1

Remain calm.

Do not panic or shout after the learner.

Assess immediate risks.

Step 2

If safe to do so:

- Observe the learner.
- Follow at a safe distance.
- Continue encouraging the learner to stop.

Staff must never place themselves or others at unnecessary risk.

Step 3

Contact:

- Learning Manager
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Director (where appropriate)

Immediately.

Step 4

Attempt to contact:

- Parent or carer.
- Emergency contacts where appropriate.

Step 5

Where appropriate:

Call Police (999 or 101 depending on risk).

Police should be contacted immediately where:

- The learner is vulnerable.
- The learner is at risk of harm.
- The learner has entered traffic.
- The learner is missing for a significant period.
- The learner's whereabouts are unknown.

8. Searching for a Learner

Staff should only undertake searches where it is safe to do so.

Searches should focus on:

- Immediate surrounding areas.
- Known safe locations.
- Places identified within risk assessments.

Staff must not:

- Enter unsafe locations.
- Separate unnecessarily.
- Delay contacting emergency services where risk is high.

9. Communication

The following should be informed as appropriate:

- Parent or carer.
- Referring school.
- Local Authority.
- Commissioner.
- Police.
- Social Worker.
- Emergency contacts.

Communication should be factual, timely and recorded.

10. Returning Learners

When a learner is located:

Staff should:

- Ensure immediate safety.
- Assess for injuries.
- Offer reassurance.
- Avoid confrontation.
- Return the learner safely where appropriate.

Parents and relevant professionals should be informed promptly.

11. Recording the Incident

Every absconding incident must be recorded.

Records should include:

- Date.
- Time.
- Location.
- Staff involved.
- Events leading up to the incident.
- Actions taken.
- Agencies contacted.
- Time learner was located.
- Outcome.

Records should be completed as soon as practicable.

12. Post-Incident Review

Following any incident, LMC will undertake a review.

The review will consider:

- What happened.
- Why it happened.
- Whether procedures were followed.
- Lessons learned.
- Whether risk assessments require updating.
- Additional support required.

Where necessary:

- Individual Risk Assessments.
- Behaviour Support Plans.
- Individual Healthcare Plans.

may all be reviewed.

13. Learners at Increased Risk

Additional planning will be undertaken for learners who have:

- Previous absconding history.
- Mental health needs.
- Autism.
- ADHD.
- Learning disabilities.
- Trauma.
- Criminal exploitation risks.
- Child Sexual Exploitation risks.
- Child Criminal Exploitation risks.

Enhanced supervision may be required.

14. Educational Visits and Community Activities

Prior to off-site activities, staff will:

- Complete risk assessments.
- Consider absconding risks.
- Agree meeting points.
- Explain expectations.
- Carry emergency contact details.
- Carry mobile phones.

Additional staffing may be considered where appropriate.

15. Training

All relevant staff will receive training covering:

- Safeguarding.
- Managing challenging behaviour.
- Dynamic risk assessment.
- Missing learner procedures.
- Recording incidents.
- Emergency communication.

Refresher training will be provided periodically.

16. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour, Relationships and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Administration of Medication and Medical Conditions Policy

17. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually.
- Following any significant absconding incident.
- Following changes to legislation or guidance.
- Following recommendations arising from safeguarding reviews.

Incident trends will be monitored to improve practice and reduce future risk.