



## Absconding Policy

For the purpose of this policy guidance, the term 'absconding' is used to cover incidents of pupils or young people leaving an educational setting unaccompanied and without prior knowledge.

### **Principles and purpose:**

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 Unique Support for Unique People at all times during agreed activities. The safety strategies will be dependent on children and young people's ages and vulnerability of specific individuals.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. Children who go missing are potentially at risk of harm, and a significant number, because of their circumstances, may face the risk of sexual, criminal or economic exploitation. Staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. (Keeping Children Safe in Education document & Working Together to Safeguard Children) This guidance sets out the procedures for maintaining safety and dealing with the unlikely event of a child going missing promptly and efficiently. It is our responsibility to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of children whilst in our care. Some students may be extremely

vulnerable in terms of lack of understanding of their own safety, and the significance of rules relating to absconding.

Unique Support for Unique People (US4UP) will have a robust risk assessment when taking children out for an educational activity. Where the risk to an individual may be high, the assessment will reflect their needs and how to address these in a positive way.

It is the responsibility of US4UP to ensure that security and safety procedures are followed to maintain the safest possible environment for the young person and the individual strategies for support within the Risk Assessments.

### **Effective supervision**

- Effective supervision is dependent on a number of factors including:
  - Age of the pupils
  - Ability of the pupils
  - Number of the pupils
  - Activities being undertaken
  - Pupil behaviour
  - Specific identified risks

If a pupil is not located within a reasonable timeframe (5 minutes), US4UP must contact police using 999 and advise that a pupil is missing, providing a full description, including the clothes they were wearing when last seen. Parents/carers will be contacted and inform them of the situation.

A full and detailed report of the incident must be completed; this should include date, times, significant decisions made, actions taken, i.e. police contact, parents informed external agencies, venue etc.

### **Where a child is seen leaving the premises without authorisation the following procedures should be followed:**

Unique Support for Unique People will follow the pupil or young person and try to persuade them to come back.

At all times we remain aware that active pursuit may encourage the young person to leave or panic placing themselves in further danger e.g. risk of running into a busy road.

US4UP will follow the pupil at a safe distance keeping them in sight where possible.

Parents/ carers will be contacted and educational support will be informed.

If a pupil or young person has left the immediate vicinity and is no longer in sight then US4UP will make the decision on the next actions to be taken. They will take account of the pupil's/ young person's vulnerability, behaviour styles, the weather conditions, the time of day, what they are wearing etc.

If a pupil is not located within a reasonable timeframe (5 minutes), the police must be contacted using 999 and advise that a pupil is missing, providing a full description, including the clothes they were wearing when last seen.

If the pupil or young person returns of their own volition then US4UP will inform parents/carers, police and any other significant agencies involved.

The Child will immediately be taken home and the activity terminated.

A full and detailed report of the incident must be completed; this should include date, times, significant decisions made, actions taken, venue i.e. police contact, parents informed external agencies etc.

**Policy to be reviewed January 2027**