



Absconding Policy

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Vision and Values

Our school vision is to provide an outstanding, nurturing, learning environment, where all our pupils can achieve their full potential and progress to lead happy and fulfilling lives.

Our mission is to provide each and every pupil with the best possible education, delivered in an environment that is supportive, caring and safe.

“Getting it right for every pupil”

At Stone Bay we focus on Evolving Excellence in all that we do, working towards making our school the best it can be for pupils, staff and families. We are creating lasting Trust with all our stakeholders, Empowering each other to learn and grow. By adhering to policies and clear processes we ensure Fairness and transparency in our decision making and actions, whilst ensuring we are Collaborating with others and always looking for ways to help each other to deliver excellence for our pupils.

Rights Respecting Schools

The Unicef UK Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) is based on principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation. The RRSA seeks to put the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of a school's ethos and culture to improve well-being and develop every child's talents and abilities to their full potential. A Rights Respecting School is a community where children's rights are learned, taught, practised, respected, protected and promoted.

Stone Bay has been awarded the Silver Award by UNICEF. This is awarded to UK schools that show good progress towards embedding children's rights in the school's policy, practice and ethos, as outlined in the RRSA Strands and Outcomes

Staff wellbeing

The Leadership Team and the Governing Board of Stone Bay School are committed to promoting positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and to providing suitable support for all staff. Taking action to prevent ill health and promote good health makes good educational and business sense, as sickness absence carries high costs both in monetary terms and in terms of the impact upon performance, teaching and learning, morale and productivity, which may disrupt or compromise pupil progress.

All members of staff are entitled to be treated fairly and professionally at all times. The Governing Board of Stone Bay School takes very seriously its duty of care as an employer to all members of staff and a number of policies and procedures have been made in relation to this duty.

Absconding Protocol

KSENT Protocol for Managing Pupils Absconding from the School Site

All pupils attending Kent Special Schools are more vulnerable than those in mainstream schools due to their Special Educational Needs. They may lack basic road safety awareness or an awareness of the dangers of engaging with strangers. Many of our pupils attend schools that are several miles from home and they may be unfamiliar with the area surrounding the school they attend.

All pupils are expected to remain onsite unless they are taking part in a supervised, planned offsite activity. All offsite trips are appropriately risk-assessed and follow individual school policies. Pupils are made aware of the school boundaries and there are clear expectations that pupils must not go offsite without permission. Most schools have clear boundaries consisting of fencing/walls and gates. However, our schools are not “high security institutions” and many pupils are able to leave the site if they choose to do so. There are several reasons why pupils might leave the site, including going to the local shop, smoking, peer pressure to “run off,” anxiety about something at school and avoidance of school.

In KsENT Schools, our priority is always the safety of pupils and staff. All schools will follow the basic procedures outlined below:

Principles

- The SLT are responsible for all students and therefore will assume responsibility for procedures to be followed in the event of an absconding pupil.
- All staff involved in any incident will be aware of the specific needs and behaviours of the student
- All students likely to engage in this behaviour will have a specific risk assessment.
- The student’s welfare and safety will be the primary concern during any incident.
- The school will manage the communication of information to parents and other professionals depending upon the dynamic risk assessment by the SLT.
- If a child has been missing for a significant period, the Local Authority will be informed. However, if a child is missing and it is past the usual “home time,” the LA will be informed straightaway.

At Stone Bay

- The Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher or the Residential Manager must be alerted as soon as a child is reported as missing (no longer than 2 minutes after alert raised within the team). The class teacher/ class lead / Flat leader is responsible for this action.
- The Headteacher/Deputy / Residential Manager will coordinate a response. This will include assigning responsibility for phoning the police and parents. Police will be contacted on 999 and will be informed:
 - When/where the pupil was last seen
 - What the pupil was wearing
 - Known absconsion history
 - Particular vulnerabilities
 - Specific care arrangements (if appropriate)
- The office team will quickly inform all staff to be on alert as the said child is missing. All information about the child's whereabouts will be reported back to the office who will disseminate updated information to Headteacher/Deputy/Residential Manager
- School staff will work together to quickly search the building and school grounds to confirm that pupil has left the site.
- The administrative team should immediately go to each gate and check that the child cannot be spotted beside the school. They must take a mobile phone with them in order to remain in contact with the headteacher/deputy.
- One member of the business team must stay on the main switchboard at reception.
- Staff who are not working directly with pupils, e.g. premises, housekeeping, AHTs and those on non-contact duties, should search the area outside of the school by foot and/or car. Searches should occur, where possible, in pairs. The Headteacher/Deputy will instruct each staff member on the areas they are to search in order to ensure the whole of the immediate surroundings are covered.
- Staff who have gone to search the area should ensure they have left a mobile phone number with the office in order that they can keep in regular contact. (school phones are available from the office). At no point should staff use their mobile phones whilst operating their cars unless they have a hands free device. Should the driver need to contact the school, or need to answer a call, they should pull over in a safe place and switch off the engine before using the phone.
- Once a pupil is confirmed as missing and staff are off site searching, the school office / residential manager will begin its own log, detailing all times and events coordinating communication with leadership and search team so all parties are kept up to date.

- Administrative staff must access the CCTV footage immediately in an attempt to spot the child leaving the building on camera which could give some indication of the pupil's direction of travel. They will then inform headteacher.
- A dynamic risk assessment will be carried out, taking into account the age, vulnerability and general ability of the child, as well as the likely reason for the absconding and where they may have gone by the class lead and headteacher (etc).
- Parents/carers and, if appropriate other agencies i.e. Social Services will be informed and updated regularly, by the senior leadership team.
- The decision as to when or whether to inform the Police (999) and life guard service will depend on the individual pupil and situation, in most cases we would call the police without hesitation. This would usually be within 3 minutes but no more than 5 minutes of losing sight of the pupil. The school office would make this call.
- The headteacher / Deputy Headteacher / Residential Manager will coordinate the response and decide on the most appropriate action. This may involve sending members of staff to search for pupils in an allocated area.
- The decision as to how to engage with pupils who are in sight will depend on the individual risk assessment and the most effective way of mitigating further risks. Stone Bay's staff know their pupils well and will make the judgement according to each situation.
- If the pupil is reported as being spotted/found and or returned to school by staff, parents, general public or the police the office team must inform the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher / Residential Manager straight away.
- If the Police have been called, they will also be told when the pupil is found.
- The school will decide on the follow-up action according to the individual situation. The school may decide to impose a sanction or they may feel that a supportive approach is the best option. Parents and carers will be encouraged to be part of this process.
- If a member of the public reports a child as possibly missing the office receptionist must take this message as a serious concern and act swiftly to disseminate all factual information to the leadership team.
- If a pupil goes missing on site it is the responsibility of the class teacher / residential flat leader to inform the SLT and office team asap (no more than 2 minutes after the pupil was reported missing)
- If a child in residential provision is not found then leadership will also follow the KSCMP - Children Missing From Home and Care Procedures
<https://drive.google.com/drive/search?q=policy%20missing%20child>