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| **BILBROUGH COUNTRY CLASSROOM****POLICY: Children who abscond** |

We actively work to provide a secure, safe environment, a provision 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 setting but these procedures are in place to ensure we are ready to deal with this eventuality should it occur.

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.

At our provision, we mainly have a ratio of one to one. All doors are alarmed so we know when someone has used any of the doors.

**Should a student arrive at Bilbrough Country Classroom, but is found to be absent from the provision without authorisation the procedure is as follows:**

1. Staff member to inform the Headteacher.
2. Headteacher to organise a search of the building and known places that the student may have gone to.
3. If the student is not found then all available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the provision and the grounds.
4. Office to phone the police when the school a thorough search has been done if the student is not found.
5. Office to contact parents/carers and the commissioning school/LA to inform them of the situation. Every attempt to make contact with parents to be recorded.
6. The search will be extended beyond the provisions building and grounds if the student is not found on the premises.
7. Any staff who leave the provision will take a mobile phone.
8. Once the student has been found, parents/carers and the commissioning school/LA will be contacted.
9. A written report will be made
10. Upon their return to the provision, and when the student is calm, they will meet with the Headteacher 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 actions.

**Pupils who abscond from school but remain on the grounds of the provision.**

In these circumstances, staff will not pursue a student or force them back into the building.

Staff will use their judgement, knowledge of the student and assessment of the students safety in deciding what to do.

The demeanour of the student will need to be taken into account. If the student is upset or angry, care should be taken in approaching them.

In all cases, staff should not place themselves in situations of potential danger of injury.

**Students who return to school after absconding**

Students who abscond will do so as a result of a specific incident which may have taken place at school, at home, at Bilbrough Country Classroom or on the way to the provision.

For those who return to the provision either by their own choice, with parental support or following intervention by a member of staff, thought should be given to their welfare. They are likely to be in need of support, understanding and perhaps some time apart from their peers.

Where a student attempts or is seen to be leaving the premises without authorisation, the following procedure will be followed:

1. A member of staff will alert the headteacher.
2. A member of staff who knows the student well and has a good relationship with them, will will try to persuade the student to stay on the premises.
3. As active pursuit may encourage a student to leave the site and may also cause panic; possibly putting themselves at risk by running onto a busy road, staff will not chase but will try to keep the student in sight at a distance.
4. The head teacher may request additional staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone to keep in contact.
5. The office will contact the student’s parents/carers. The call or attempted calls will be recorded.
6. The office / staff member will call the police to log the incident and make a log of the call.
7. The commissioning school / LA will be informed of the current situation.
8. If the searching staff member loses sight of the student, they must contact the office giving details of their location and the clothes that the student is wearing.
9. If the student has left the immediate vicinity of the grounds and is no longer visible then the lead staff member will make a decision as to how to take matters further.
10. If the student returns of their own volition, parents/carers, the police and the commissioning school/LA will be informed.
11. Upon their return, and when the student is calm, they will meet with the headteacher 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 actions.

**Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers of students are responsible for supporting the work of The Bilbrough Country Classroom and encouraging their children to keep to all procedures and policies.

Once The Bilbrough Country Classroom has informed the parents that their child has absconded, parents and carers are responsible for actively supporting the provision with subsequent procedures and actions. This could include coming in to help secure the safety of their child as well as meeting with the head teacher in order to agree subsequent actions.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Each incident will be monitored and evaluated. Individual risk assessments for students may be appropriate

Signed: R Davison

 R Davison, Proprietor

Dated: 1st September 2023

Review Date: September 2024