

ABSCONDING AND GOING MISSING PROCEDURE - PATHWAYS

Last Review:	June 2019
Next Review:	June 2022
Policy Owner:	Deputy Principal
Approved:	Board July 2019

DEFINITION

Students with autistic spectrum disorder can exhibit unpredictable behaviours if they are suffering anxiety. One of the behaviours presented can be running away and trying to leave the college environment. If staff are concerned that a student is missing or absconding, the following procedures will occur.

AIMS

Loreto College provides a safe and secure environment from which students will not feel the need to want to run away. A thorough risk assessment is completed for each Pathways student, personalised to their needs. Each risk assessment specifically scales the risk of absconding for each student and this information is made available to staff in the department.

Students on the Pathways Course who require additional support are supervised during the movement from one building to another to an appropriate level, unless there is an agreement with them that they are allowed to move independently. At break times and lunchtimes those students who require additional support are supervised closely with particular reference to keeping them within the college environment. At lunchtimes a staff member from the Pathways Department is positioned on the main gate to ensure that Pathways students who are not permitted to leave the site remain on the campus.

If a staff member notices that a student is missing from a lesson, without prior notice then ESA support will be asked to ascertain their whereabouts. If the student is not found after a thorough search of the premises then a senior member of staff will be informed. A decision will be made based on the information on the individual student involved and any agreement that has been made with parents regarding absconding.

GUIDANCE

If a student is missing from a lesson, a member of staff will go and look for them. If that member of staff cannot find the student within 15 minutes then the following steps should be taken:

Assistance will be requested from other members of staff to support the search for the missing student. The Head of Department and the Head of Student Services must be notified (notification must take place up to a maximum of 15 minutes after the last staff contact with the student). If there are relevant safeguarding concerns surrounding the student, the 15-minute rule does not apply and the Head of Student Services should be contacted immediately. If the Head of Student Services is not available then the Principal, a member of SMT or a Head of Hall must be notified immediately. If the student is unable

to be found as the ongoing search of the premises continues the Head of Student Services or relevant member of staff will then decide at which point to contact the police. Contact will usually be made within 30 minutes of the student going missing.

If it is determined possible that the student may have absconded from the college campus the ongoing search will be coordinated to cover the local area. The senior member of staff will call the police and parents will be informed. While the police are being called, members of staff will search the local area, they will investigate the land and roads around the immediate college area. All students have a photograph on MyLoreto which can be handed to staff involved in the search and the police. There is also an Individual Learning Plan for each student, outlining their behaviour and language ability which may be useful to staff involved.

- The staff searching will carry the student's photograph printed from 'MyLoreto'. These will be used to gain help from members of the public who may have seen, or may see the student. Staff searching outside the college will carry mobile phones to keep in touch with the college. In college, the phones will be staffed by a designated member of staff at all times until the student is found.
- When the police arrive, the senior member of staff will provide the police copies with the student's details and photograph, and any other relevant information related to the student at the time they went missing/absconded.
- Parents will be updated regarding the procedure being followed and the results of any search at regular intervals.

When the student is found, there will be a thorough investigation of how the student left college premises.

In the event of a student absconding or going missing for any reason, there will be a full review of this procedure and of the student's individual risk assessment and behaviour support plan. This information will be shared with staff and parents.

Should there be any weaknesses identified in the system of students' safeguarding, they will be remedied effectively.