



Testlands, Green Lane • Southampton, Hampshire  
Phone: 023 8202 6700 • [contactus@testlands.com](mailto:contactus@testlands.com)  
Web: [www.testlands.com](http://www.testlands.com)

## **Absconding Policy**

This is the policy for Testlands which sets out the actions taken if a child absconds from our provision. It is set within the context of the whole provision aims and mission statement:  
Dedicated to making a difference to our children, young people and families.

### **Purpose of the policy**

The purpose of this non-statutory policy is to set out clearly for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a child abscond from our provision. Aim In Testlands' 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 provision but this policy is written to ensure we are ready to deal with this eventuality should it occur. If a child has SEND needs and absconding is likely then they should have a risk assessment.

Definition To abscond is to 'leave without permission'. Under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and in Common Law, provisions and other education settings owe a duty of care towards their child. This duty of care requires that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that child is safe and remain within the care of the provision at all times throughout the provision day and during provision led activities.

Where a child, present at registration, is found to be absent from provision without authorisation the following procedures should be followed:

- Member of staff to inform the Senior Leader or member of lead, and main office.
- Senior Leader or member of lead to organise a search of buildings and known places that the child may have gone to in the provision environment.
- If the child is not found, then all available staff complete a more thorough sweep of the provision and check the perimeter of the grounds.
- Provision office to phone the police when area has been fully checked if the child is not found
- Provision office to contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation.

- Consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the provision perimeter. This decision will be based on staff's knowledge of the child and on the levels of risk, and on what action is in the child's best interests.
- Any staff who leave provision grounds to take mobile phones to contact provision.
- Once a child has been found then the SL will use their professional judgment to outline the response towards the child and the support the child will need in the future.
- A written report will be filed on the incident and added to Incidents Reporting Log (BrigSL Safe).
- Leader to brief police and parents. Where a child attempts or is seen to be leaving the provision premises without authorisation the following procedures should be followed:
  - Member of staff to inform Senior Leader/lead on the day and main office.
  - Staff must follow the child to the provision fence or gate and must try to persuade the child to stay in the provision.
  - If by leaving the provision the child is known to be putting themselves in danger, adults must exercise their duty of care and stop the child, physically if necessary.
  - As active pursuit may encourage a child to leave the site and may also cause the child to panic; possibly putting him or herself at risk by running onto a busy road, staff will not chase but will try to keep a child in sigSL at a distance.
- The lead lead will contact the child's parents/carers
- If the child has left the immediate vicinity of the provision grounds and is no longer visible then the Police must be informed.
- If the child returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.
- Upon his or her return to provision, and when the child is calm, the child must be seen by the SL/Lead on site 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
- A meeting with parents/carers will be arranged.
- A written report will be filed on the incident and recorded on Incidents Reporting Log (BrightSafe).

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Each incident will be monitored and evaluated. Risk management plans for any children believed to pose a risk of absconding will be created by provision with the support of staff and parents/carers.

## **Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers of children are responsible for supporting the work of the provision and encouraging their children to keep to all provision procedures and policies. Once provision 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 into provision to help secure the safety of their child as well as meeting with a Senior Leader in order to agree to subsequent actions. Risk management plans will be shared and signed by parents/carers.

## **Appendix A**

Report should include:

- Absconding child
- Incident Report
- Name of child:
- Date:
- An outline of the incident (Please include time of day, staff involved and how the issue was resolved.)
- What triggers led to this incident occurring?
- What action will be taken to support the child to feel happy and safe in provision?
- Signed by Senior Leader/ lead:
- Signed by Parent:

## **Appendix B**

Parental Agreement (To be completed by the parent or carer)

- I have read the record of the absconding incident (Appendix A).
- I wish to make the following comments relating to the incident (optional):
- I understand that it is always unacceptable for my child to leave the provision site without permission and a repeated action of this nature may result in the provision following exclusion procedures.
- I understand that the following actions have been agreed in order to help my child be happy and safe in provision. I know my child needs to keep to the provision rules and not leave the provision grounds without permission. I understand that there are agreed actions for all parties involved.

- For my part, I will support this agreement by encouraging my child to comply.
- Parent Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent)

**Last reviewed:** August 2024

**Date of next review:** August 2025

Signed by: *B. Stanley*