



# Absconding from School Policy 2018

## **PURPOSE**

To explain to River Gum Primary School parents, carers, staff and students the processes and procedures in place to support students who abscond from school.

## **SCOPE**

This policy applies to:

- all staff, including casual relief staff, PST and volunteers.
- all students who are enrolled at River Gum Primary School and their parents and carers.

## **POLICY**

### **School Statement**

To ensure that River Gum Primary School takes appropriate action in relation to managing a student who runs away from school or a school approved activity.

### **Absconding**

Absconding is when a student runs away from school or a school approved activity without permission from the teacher in charge.

### **Implementation**

If a staff member reasonably suspects that a student has left the school grounds or a school-approved activity, such as an excursion or camp, without authorisation, they should immediately notify a member of the leadership team so that all reasonable steps can be taken to discharge the duty of care owed to that student.

River Gum Primary will:

- take immediate steps to establish whether the student has left the school grounds or a school approved activity
- take all reasonable steps to discharge the duty of care that is owed to the student
- notify the Victoria Police if there is a reasonable concern for the safety of the student or others
- notify the parent, guardian or carer of the student as soon as reasonably possible
- report the incident to the Department's Security Services Unit on (03) 9589-6266, as soon as practicable.

The reasonable steps to be taken will vary and depend on the individual circumstances of the case and the individual student. In determining what reasonable steps to take, relevant considerations include the following and a decision will **be made by a member of the leadership team (or appropriate delegate)**:

- the location of the school or the school approved activity and its proximity to external dangers such as busy roads or railway lines

- whether the student has a disability that may affect their ability to appreciate the risk associated with their behaviour and actions
- the age of the student
- the student's prior behaviour or previously exhibited vulnerabilities, difficulties or troubles
- the student's mental state immediately prior to leaving the school grounds or the school approved activity i.e. whether they were highly distressed, whether they were drug or alcohol affected, whether they had indicated an intention to hurt themselves or others
- the time that has elapsed since the student has left the school grounds or school approved activity
- whether other students who are under the care and supervision of the school staff can be appropriately supervised whilst appropriate action is taken to manage the student who has run away from school or the school approved activity.

Depending on the individual circumstances of the case, the reasonable steps to be taken may include one or more of the following, a decision will **be made by a member of the leadership team(or appropriate delegate)**:

- contacting the Victoria Police to advise them of the missing student and the particular age, disability, vulnerabilities, or mental state of the individual student
- contacting the parent, guardian or carer of the student to advise them that the student has left the school grounds or school-approved activity and to obtain any additional information and assistance that may assist in locating the student
- searching for the student, particularly if there is information available as to the student's potential whereabouts
- following the student and maintaining visual contact until the student returns to school or school-approved activity, or is in the company of the police or their parent, guardian or carer
- making contact with the student and encouraging them to return to the school grounds or the school approved activity, go to a safe place, stop the behaviour that is putting them at risk, or remain in the company of a suitable and responsible adult
- restraining the student in appropriate circumstances and in accordance with the Restraint of Student policy, see: [Restraint of Student](#). For example, where the student is about to step in front of a car or otherwise harm themselves.

After an incident in which a student has run away from the school grounds or school-approved activity, school staff should take the following steps:

- Report the incident to the parent, guardian or carer (if this has not already been done)
- Report the incident to the Department's Security Services Unit
- Document the incident and the staff response to the incident
- Consider whether it is appropriate to conduct a Student Support Group meeting
- Consider whether it is appropriate to develop a Behaviour Support Plan.

### **EVALUATION**

This policy is to be reviewed annually by School Council to confirm/enhance internal control procedures.

## REFERENCES

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/runningaway.aspx>
- Child Safe Standards Policy 2018
- Duty of Care

## REVIEW CYCLE

PREPARED BY	<b>FIONA BROWN</b>
REVIEWED IN	<b>APRIL 2018</b>
REVIEWED BY STAFF	<b>MAY 2018</b>
REVIEWED BY C.C	<b>N/A</b>
REVIEWED & RATIFIED BY SCHOOL COUNCIL	<b>JUNE 2018</b>
NEXT REVIEW DATE	<b>JUNE 2020</b>