



Rationale/Purpose

To ensure that Altona Meadows Primary School takes appropriate action in relation to managing a student who absconds from school and leaves school grounds.

Aim:

- To take immediate steps to establish whether the student has left the school grounds or a school approved activity
- To take all reasonable steps to discharge the duty of care that is owed to the student
- To notify Victoria Police if there is a reasonable concern for the safety of the student or others
- To notify the parent, guardian or carer of the student as soon as reasonably possible
- To report the incident to the Department 's Incident Support and Operations Centre on 1800 126 126 as soon as practicable

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 the Principal so that all reasonable steps can be taken to discharge the duty of care owed to the student. The reasonable steps to be taken will vary and depend on the individual circumstances of the case and the individual student.

Implementation:

In determination what reasonable steps to take, relevant considerations include the following:

- 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 school approved activity; where they highly distressed?
- 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:

- Contacting 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 they 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
- Identifying hotspots from known information that supports authorities in attempting to locate the student
- Making contact with the student and encouraging them to return to school grounds or school approved activity
- Restraining the student in appropriate circumstances and in accordance with the Restraint Policy. 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 Departments Incident Support and Operations Centre
- 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 will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

June 2021