



AVONMOUTH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL Policy for Absconding Pupils

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a child abscond from school.

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.

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

- Class teacher must first check the toilets, the first aider and the Learning Mentor. If the child is not in any of these places, they must inform the Headteacher or Senior Leader immediately.
- Head Teacher or member of SLT organises a thorough search of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds with available staff.
- While this search is ongoing, the bursar must phone 999 and inform the police that a child is missing (see Appendix 2 for details of likely questions from the police).
- School office to contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation as soon as this is possible.
- Staff will not extend their search beyond the school perimeter as this could put them and the absconding child at risk (an absconding child might run into a road).
- Once a pupil has been found then the Headteacher or Senior Leader will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future. Sanctions may be applied to the pupil, and this could include a fixed term exclusion from school.
- Headteacher or Senior Leader will brief police and parents.
- A written report will be filed on the incident.
- BCC Health and Safety will be notified using reporting forms 1 and 2.
- A member of the Governing Body will be informed.
- The Local Authority will be informed.

Where a pupil attempts or is seen to be leaving the school premises without authorisation the following procedures should be followed:

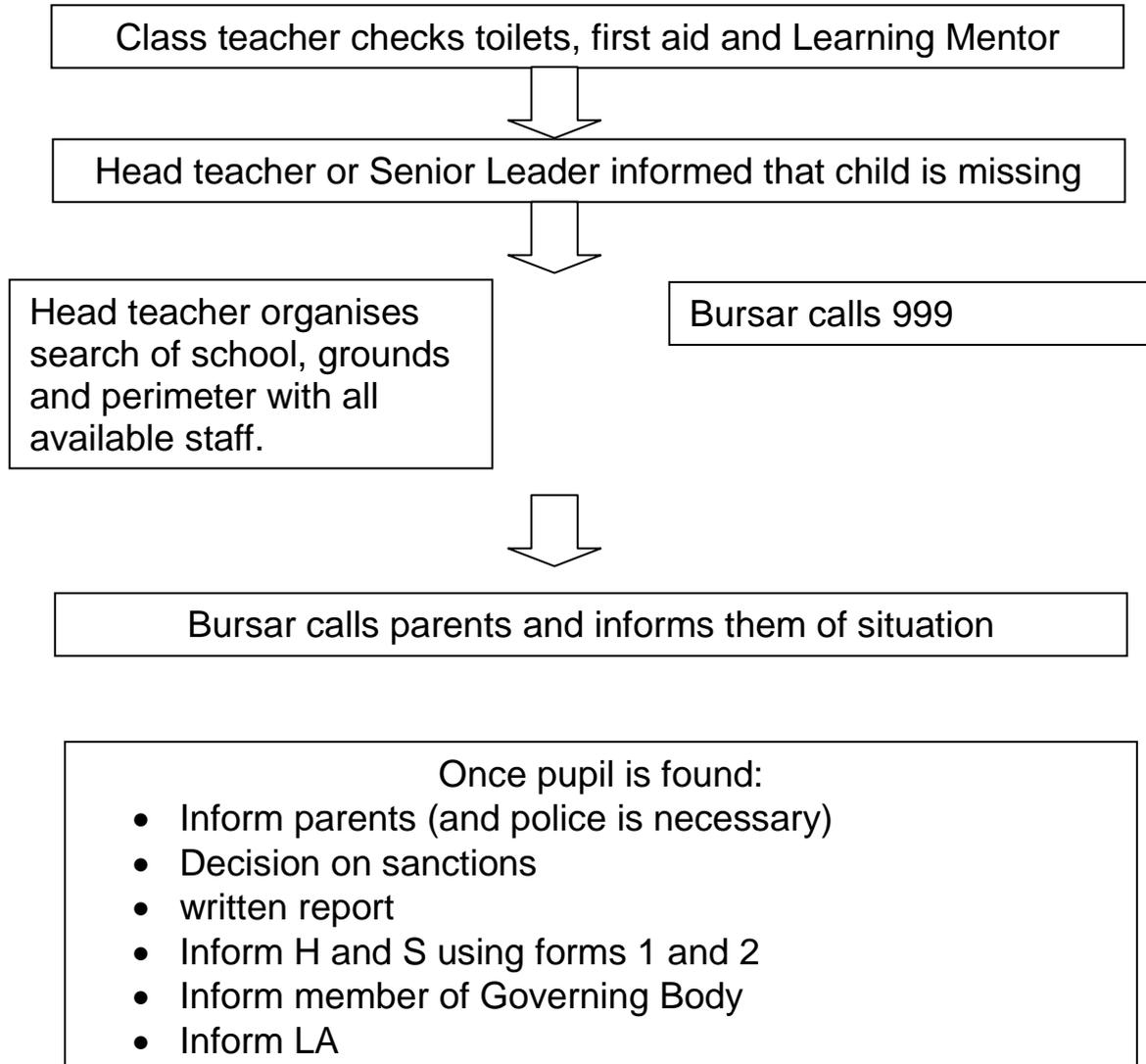
- Staff must follow the pupil to the perimeter fence or gate and must try to persuade the pupil to stay in the school. At this point the Headteacher or Senior Leader must be informed.
- If a pupil is deemed to be a high risk to himself or other people then staff should adhere to the procedures for physical intervention, if appropriate and the member of staff is adequately trained.
- At all times staff must be aware that active pursuit may encourage the pupil to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and may also cause the pupil to panic, possibly putting him or herself at risk by running onto a busy road, for example.
 - If the pupil leaves the vicinity of the school grounds, the police will be contacted by dialling 999 (see Appendix 2 for details of likely questions from the police).
 - Parents/carers will be contacted as soon as possible.
 - If the pupil returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.
 - Upon his or her return to school, and when the pupil is calm, the pupil must be seen by the Head teacher or Senior Leader 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. Sanctions may include the use of a fixed term exclusion from school.
- Headteacher or Senior Leader will brief police and parents.
- A written report will be filed on the incident.
- BCC Health and Safety will be notified using reporting forms 1 and 2.
- A member of the Governing Body will be informed.
- The Local Authority will be informed.

Ratified by Governors on _____

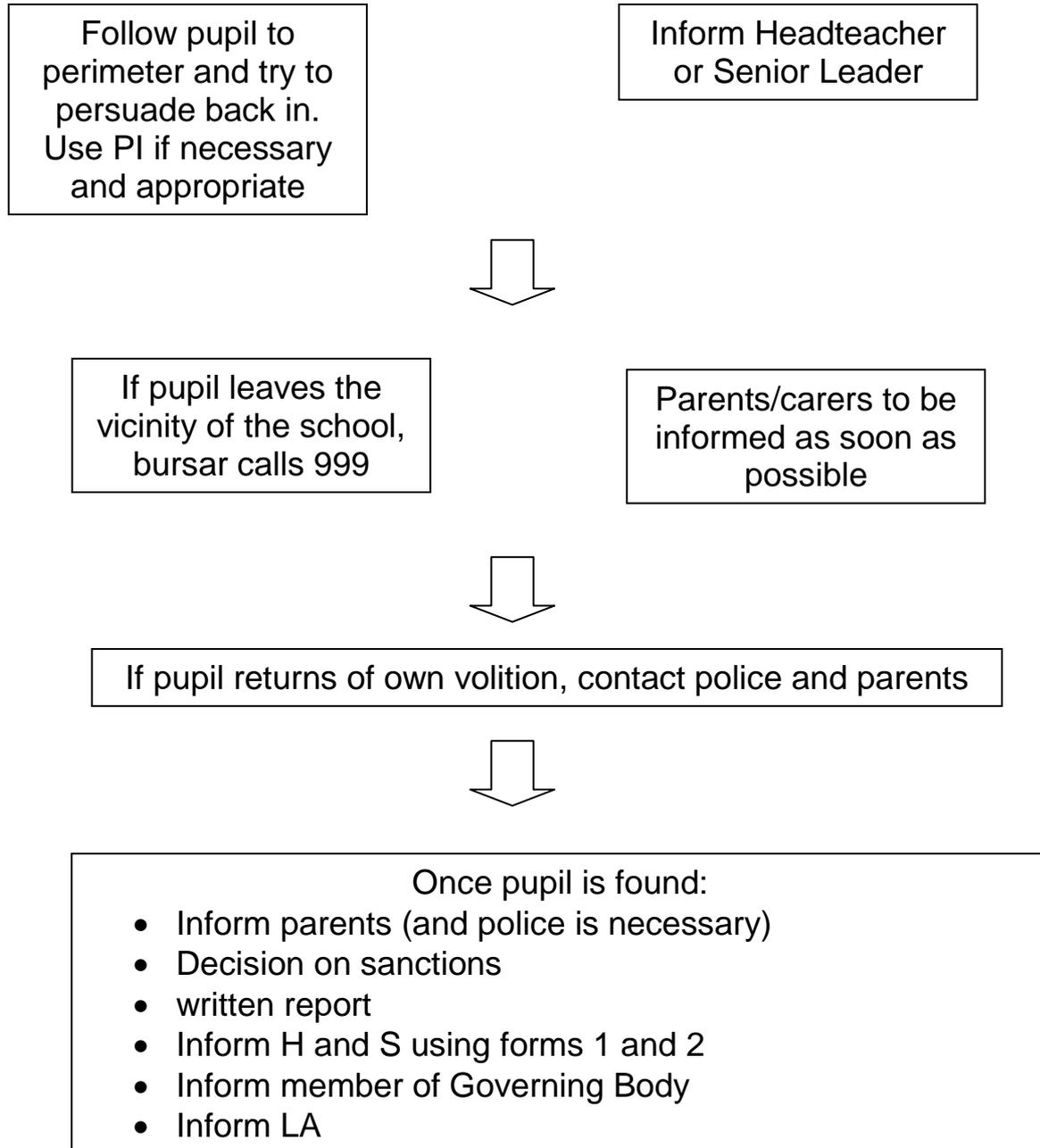
Signed _____

Date for review _____

Appendix 1a
Flowchart of Actions for Absconding Pupil
(where pupil was not seen leaving)



Appendix 1b
Flowchart of Actions for Absconding Pupil
(where pupil was seen leaving)



Appendix 2
Questions the police may ask

The standard missing person questions are set out below. Of course, other questions may be asked depending on an individual situation.

How old is the missing person?

Any medical or mental conditions we need to be aware of?

Do you think the person has left voluntarily?

Description of person – this will include date of birth, home address, telephone number and demeanour.

Is clothing appropriate for current weather conditions?

When was the person last seen?

Who was the person seen with?

Did the person leave in a vehicle/ on foot/ bike, etc.?

What direction was the person going?

Do you know where they might go?

Do you know why he/she has gone missing?

Has he/she been missing before? If yes, where were they found?

Did he/she take any personal items (medication, money, clothing)?

Did he/she take any weapons? If so, what type?

Do you believe he/she may try to harm themselves or other?

Who has legal custody?

Did he/she leave any notes, letters or threats?

In the case of a child going missing, details of parents/carers names and addresses will be asked.