

Ebrington Primary & Nursery School



Runaway Pupil Policy

January 2020

To be reviewed January 2022

**Unless there is a significant change in school
practice or policy.**

Signed _____ (Chair of Governors) Date _____

Pupil Running Away from School

Purpose of this policy

To ensure that schools take appropriate action in relation to managing a student who runs away from school or a school approved activity.

Reasonable steps to prevent a pupil running

School has a duty of care to all pupils in school. To help prevent the circumstances that may arise where a pupil runs from school and attempts to leave the school grounds, a number of procedures are in place:

- School classroom pod doors are locked down from 9:10am. (this also restricts access to school)
- External pedestrian gates are locked down between 9:10 and 9:30am. These are opened again for Nursery and Primary parent pick up at 1:30pm
- Playground gates are kept closed in the both the primary school and nursery school areas to prevent a child from running from this area.
- CCTV coverage of the site is kept regularly serviced

Policy

School must:

- take immediate steps to establish whether the pupil 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 PSNI if there is a reasonable concern for the safety of the pupil or others
- notify the parent, guardian or carer of the pupil as soon as reasonably possible

If a staff member reasonably suspects that a pupil has left the school grounds or a school-approved activity, such as a school trip or outdoor sporting activity, 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 pupil. 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:

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

- whether the pupil has a disability that may affect their ability to appreciate the risk associated with their behaviour and actions
- the age of the pupil
- the pupil's prior behaviour or previously exhibited vulnerabilities, difficulties or troubles
- the pupil's mental state immediately prior to leaving the school grounds or the school approved activity i.e. whether they were highly distressed or whether they had indicated an intention to hurt themselves or others
- the time that has elapsed since the pupil has left the school grounds or school approved activity
- whether other pupils who are under the care and supervision of the school staff can be appropriately supervised whilst appropriate action is taken to manage the pupil 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 the PSNI to advise them of the missing pupil and the particular age, disability, vulnerabilities, or mental state of the individual
- contacting the parent, guardian or carer of the pupil to advise them that the pupil 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 pupil, particularly if there is information available as to their potential whereabouts
- following the pupil and maintaining visual contact until they return to school or school-approved activity, or is in the company of the PSNI or their parent, guardian or carer

After an incident in which a pupil 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)
- Document the incident and the staff response to the incident
- Consider whether it is appropriate to develop a Risk Management Plan.