



Broadford Secondary College

Students Absconding or Going Missing from School

Policy and Procedures

Broadford Secondary College actively promotes the safety and wellbeing of all students. All staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment in accordance with their legal obligations, including Child Safe Standards.

Date Implemented	October 2023
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Approved By	Principal / School Council
Approval Authority (signature & date)	
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Responsible for review	Principal Class
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References	DET Advisory Library



Help for non-English speakers.

If you need help understanding the information in this policy, please contact the College on 03 5784 1200

PURPOSE

To explain to the school community Broadford Secondary College's policy requirements and expectations relating to students absconding or going missing while they are in the school's duty of care.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. All students at Broadford Secondary College
2. All staff who come into contact with students.

POLICY

Guidelines

Broadford Secondary College staff must take prompt and suitable actions when a student(s) absconds or goes missing.

In determining the appropriate measures, all schools should consider the following factors:

- The school's proximity or the activity to potential risks like busy roads or hazardous areas.
- The student's age, vulnerabilities (such as disabilities, medical conditions, or safety/behaviour plans), and mental state before departing the school grounds or the activity, including factors like distress or substance use.

- Ensuring the supervision of student(s) while taking steps to ensure the missing student's safety.

Based on the specific circumstances of each case, the reasonable actions may encompass one or more of the following:

1. Engaging with the student(s) to encourage their return to school or the approved activity, guiding them towards a secure location, ceasing risky behaviour, or being accompanied by a responsible adult.
2. Maintaining visual observation of the student(s) until they return, are in the company of the police, or are reunited with their parent or guardian.
3. Conducting searches where the student(s) may be located, especially if there are indications of their potential whereabouts.
4. Communicating with the student's parent or guardian to share information and seek assistance locating the student(s).
5. Contacting Victoria Police to inform them about the missing student's situation, emphasising any unique factors such as age, disabilities, vulnerabilities, or mental state.

Following the incident, upon the student's return to school, office staff, coordinators, and sub-school leaders should:

- Have the initial staff member document the incident on COMPASS.
- Inform the parent or guardian about the outcome of the incident and any associated consequences.

If there's reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect, the staff member must speak to the coordinator about completing the PROTECT protocol.

Absconding procedure:

This procedure must be followed when a student is suspected of leaving the school grounds without permission or cannot be located during the school day.

Step 1: Immediate Actions

1. Attempt to verify the student's last known location. If they are not found, or this cannot happen, notify the General Office immediately.
2. Always ensure you or another staff member remains with any students still in your care.

Step 2: Conduct an Internal Search

3. Office staff will make an announcement for the student to attend the general office.
4. If they do not arrive within 5 minutes, the general office staff will check:
 - a. School toilets, locker areas, and buildings
 - b. School boundaries and car parks
 - c. Nearby locations (e.g. oval, front of school)
 - d. Contact Wellbeing/Careers
5. If they are not found, the general office will pass this on to a member of the Principal Team.

Step 3: Contact Parents or Carers

6. The principal team will notify the student's listed parent/carer and:
 - a. Inform them that the student is missing
 - b. Confirm whether the student has made contact or arrived home
 - c. Request any information that may assist in locating the student
 - d. Inform parents of a 10-minute timeline before further escalation
7. If no Principal is available, the general office must complete the above step as a delegate.

Step 4: Assess Level of Risk

8. Principal or delegate must consider:
 - a. The student's age and developmental level
 - b. Any history of absconding or high-risk behaviour
 - c. Health, disability, or mental health concerns
 - d. Weather, time of day, and traffic risks
10. If there is a reasonable concern for the student's or others' safety, proceed to Step 5.

Step 5: Notify Police

11. If the student cannot be located and there is a reasonable safety concern, Victoria Police must be contacted immediately by calling 000.
12. Provide police with all known details, including:
 - a. Full name and description
 - b. Last known location
 - c. Potential destination
 - d. Any known risks or medical conditions

Step 6: Report to ISOC

13. As soon as practicable, Principal Class will report the incident to the Incident Support and Operations Centre (ISOC) via Edusafe Plus or 1800 126 126.
14. Provide full details and update ISOC once the student is located.

Step 7: When the Student is Found or Returns

15. Ensure the student is safe and well.
16. Contact parents or carers to confirm the student's return.
17. Document the incident and actions taken on COMPASS, and if they absconded, an Edusafe Plus report.

Step 8: Ongoing Management (if required)

- For students who abscond more than once or present a high risk:
 - Convene a Student Support Group (SSG)
 - Review or develop a Behaviour Support Plan and/or Risk Management Plan
- Engage the student's family and external support services
- Continue to document and review follow-up actions

Escalation

First incident:

- Contact parent/guardian after the initial follow-up to give a courtesy reminder of this policy and explain follow-ups and potential further consequences.
- The incident is to be recorded on COMPASS as a major behaviour.
- Formal conversation with the year-level coordinator regarding further follow-ups and discussion around the school's duty of care.
- Student(s) are given the policy and time to read and sign it to confirm they understand and will not breach it.

Second Incident:

- Inform parent/guardian after the initial follow-up to give another official warning.
- A formal letter outlining the school's duty of care is sent home to act as an official college caution.
- The incident is to be recorded on COMPASS as a major behaviour.

- Potential Referral to the Wellbeing team for counselling for risky/attention-seeking behaviours.
- Student(s) to have a conversation with their sub-school regarding the behaviour and discussion around the rules they must follow concerning the duty of care.

Third Incident:

- Inform parent/guardian via phone call after the initial follow-up to give an official warning where the YLC/Sub-School Leader refers to the signed policy student(s) made on their initial breach, the formal letter that was sent to parent/guardian, any wellbeing referral, and other steps taken to keep the student(s) safe.
- The incident is to be recorded on COMPASS as a major behaviour
- Student(s) to have a conversation with the principal class regarding the behaviour and discussion around the rules they must follow concerning duty of care.
- Possible suspension as an outcome if the student remains non-compliant.

Additional Incident(s):

- Inform parent/guardian via phone call after the initial follow-up to outline the supports offered, such as: the signed policy student(s) made on their initial breach, the formal letter that was sent to parent/guardian, potential wellbeing referral, and other steps taken to keep the student(s) safe.
- The incident report recorded on COMPASS as a major behaviour.
- A meeting offered to parents to discuss the ongoing problem.
- External suspension may be put in place.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- [Child Safe Standards](#)