

# SOUTH BROCKWELLS — FARM SCHOOL —



## Absconding Policy

[education@southbrockwellsfarm.com](mailto:education@southbrockwellsfarm.com)



**EXPLORE**

**INSPIRE**

**RESET**

**DEVELOP**

### 1. Aims

South Brockwells Farm School (SBFS) is an East Sussex approved Alternative Provision, where we offer a distinctive farm-based learning opportunity for vulnerable children and young people who are struggling or currently unable to access mainstream/specialist education and/or are at risk of social or academic exclusion.

SBFS is committed to providing a supportive and therapeutic learning environment for all students. We believe that one size does not fit all, and offering a child an opportunity to learn outside of the classroom will help develop, reset and broaden their prospects.

### 2. Overview

This policy is in place to ensure that every action possible is taken to secure the quick and safe return of a child who may go missing or abscond from Farm School.

We actively work to provide a safe environment as an alternative provision where children want to come to enjoy learning in our Farm School environment. Whilst it is highly unlikely that a student will try to abscond from Farm School, this policy is in place to ensure we are ready to deal with this eventuality should it occur.

This policy provides guidance for responding to instances of student absconding in a timely and appropriate manner, with a focus on safeguarding the well-being of the student and fostering collaboration with parents/carers to address underlying issues.

### 3. Definition of Absconding

Absconding is defined as to 'leave without permission'.

### 4. Relevant policy, procedure & guidance

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 students. This duty of care requires that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that students are safe and remain within the care of the alternative provision/school at all times throughout the school day and during activities.

- Once a student has been registered as present, Farm School is "in loco parentis".
- Should a student abscond, the school, technically, remains "in loco parentis".

## **5. Reporting Absconding**

Any instance of a student absconding from SBFS must be reported immediately to the Director of Education and all Senior Activity Leaders responsible for student welfare and safeguarding.

Staff members who witness or become aware of a student absconding must document the incident, including relevant details such as the time, location, and circumstances surrounding the absconding.

## **6. Contacting Parents/Carers/Professional Network**

Upon confirming that a student has absconded, The Director of Education (or Senior Activity Leader in their absence) will make immediate efforts to contact the student's parents/carers/social worker to inform them of the situation. Parents/carers will be provided with details of the incident, advised of our actions and request their support.

## **7. Search and Safety Measures**

In a case where the student's whereabouts is unknown, available Farm School staff will initiate a search of the immediate area, entrances and exits to the farm and surrounding areas to locate the missing student.

Farm School staff members will also assess any potential risks to the student's safety and take appropriate measures to ensure his/her well-being, including contacting emergency services if the student has not been located within 15 minutes.

## **8. Recording and Documentation**

- Every instance of a student absconding will be recorded on a 'Welfare Concern' form, including details of the incident, actions taken, and outcomes.
- Documentation related to absconding incidents will be kept confidential and securely stored in accordance with data protection regulations.
- The Director of Education will share the report with the professional network on the day of the incident.

## **9. Follow-Up Actions**

- Following the resolution of an absconding incident, the Director of Education will conduct a thorough review to identify any underlying factors contributing to the student's behaviour and explore appropriate interventions or support measures.
- The Director of Education will call a meeting with the student, parent/carer and professional network to review the incident and, where appropriate, agree actions and support measures using appendices A, B and C before the student returns to SBFS.

## 10. Parental Involvement and Support

- SBFS will work collaboratively with parents/carers and professional networks to support the student to be successful at Farm School.
- Parents/carers will be encouraged to engage with, and participate in, discussions aimed at promoting their child's attendance and well-being, and understand that if a further absconding incident were to occur, the placement could be terminated.

## 11. Policy Review and Revision

- This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant legislation and best practices.
- Any necessary revisions or updates to the policy will be communicated to all stakeholders and implemented accordingly.
- SBFS is committed to promoting a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

## 12. Policy status and review

<b>Written by:</b>	Director of Education
<b>Owner:</b>	Director of Education
<b>Status:</b>	V1 = 20/12/2023 Submitted to Board of Directors, SBF School.
<b>Approval date:</b>	V1= 23/02/2024
<b>Date reviewed:</b>	
<b>Next review date:</b>	February 2025

## Appendix A

### Agreement following a pupil absconding from Farm School

(To be completed by the Director of Education or Senior Activity Leader and attached to Appendices B and C)

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Record of incident:-

An agreement has been reached following this absconding incident. Actions have been agreed in order to help this pupil feel happy and safe at Farm School (Appendices A, B and C).

Farm School will support this agreement by:-

1.

2.

Signed: ..... (Director of Education)

Date: .....

## Appendix B

### Parental Agreement

(To be completed by the parent or carer)

Student:.....

Date: .....

I have read the record of the absconding incident.

I wish to make the following comments relating to the incident (optional):-

- I understand that it is always unacceptable for my child to leave the Farm School site without permission and a repeated action of this nature could result in the termination of placement.
- I understand that the following actions have been agreed in order to help my child be happy and safe at Farm School.
- I know my child needs to adhere to Farm School rules and expectations, and not leave the Farm School grounds without permission.
- I understand that there are agreed actions for all parties involved.

For my part, I will support this agreement by:-

- 1.
- 2.

Parent/Carer: ..... (Print name)

Signed: .....

Date: .....

## Appendix C

### Student Agreement

(To be completed by the student or by an adult on behalf of the student)

Student: .....

Date: .....

I have read or listened to the record of the absconding incident.

I wish to make the following comment about the incident (optional) :-

- I understand that it is always unacceptable for me to leave the Farm School site without permission and a repeated action of this nature could result in my placement being terminated.
- I understand that the following actions have been agreed in order to help me to be happy and safe at Farm School.

- I know I need to keep to the Farm School rules and expectations, and not leave the Farm School grounds without permission.
- I understand that there are actions too for SBFS and my parents/carers.

I will support this agreement by:-

1.

2.

Student:..... (Print name)

Signed: .....

Date: .....