



St. Michael's School

Policy on pupils absconding

June 2026

Introduction and Rationale

From time to time, pupils for different reasons may run away from the supervision of staff. This is a serious situation for the school where there is a duty of care for the pupil. The Board of Management recognises that absconding may arise for a range of reasons, including anxiety, distress, sensory overload, communication difficulties or behavioural /emotional need. Parents/guardians are asked to work in partnership with the school to support the pupil and reduce risk.

- Every effort will be made to ensure that pupils do not leave the supervision of staff;
- If a pupil does run despite staff efforts, staff will make every effort to encourage the pupil to return;
- Should any issues arise, and where necessary, appropriate agencies, including the Gardai and parents/ guardians will be contacted;
- Where a pupil is known to be at risk of absconding, an individual support plan/risk assessment may be developed in consultation with parents/guardians and relevant staff.

A pupil will be considered to be in danger

- If he/she is significantly distressed when leaving the school premises
- If he/she is away from the school grounds, e.g. on a school trip;
- If the pupil is considered to be unable to cope without an adult;
- If another pupil is pursuing the pupil who runs.

When a pupil runs

- The Principal /Deputy Principal will be informed;
- The class teacher / subject teacher will be informed;
- Parents will be contacted by telephone if the pupil leaves the grounds of the school or direct supervision of school staff;
- If the pupil does not return within a reasonable timeframe, or where there is an immediate concern for the pupil's safety, Gardaí will be contacted and parents/guardians will be informed of this. In some circumstances, where an agreed individual plan is in place and parents/guardians have confirmed this is appropriate, the school may follow that plan before contacting Gardaí, provided there is no immediate or serious safety concern.
- Parents /guardians and Gardai will be informed if and when the pupil returns;
- The School Principal has been nominated by the Board to act on its behalf when dealing with such matters. The Board of Management will be informed of repeated incidents of this nature and will respond accordingly. Support plans will be put in place in this instance.

- Where incidents are repeated, the Board of Management will be informed and appropriate support, risk management and disciplinary procedures, where relevant, will be considered.

Policy/Framework Links

- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Health, Safety and Welfare Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- NCSE RELATE Framework
- Connect RP-Restrictive Practice
- Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisi Situations
- Critical Incident Management Plan
- Autism Good Practice Guidelines for Schools, Department of Education
- Bi Cinealta Policy
- Substance Abuse Policy
- Administration of Medication Policy
- Data Protection Policy (GDPR)
- Acceptable Use Policy for Pupils
- SPHE/RSE Policy and Wellbeing Statement

Review / Ratification / Communication

This policy was updated at a Board of Management meeting on 24th June 2026.

A copy of this policy will be placed in all Policy Folders throughout the school and will be available on Aladdin and on our school website (www.stmichaelsholyangels.com). A hard copy is also available from the office upon request.

Signed:



Chairperson, Board of Management

Date:

24th June 2026