ABSCONDING POLICY 2025–2026

Organisation: Manchester Top Team Youth Project (MTTYP) – Alternative Provision

Reviewed: 1 September 2025 | **Next Review:** 1 September 2026

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Daryl-Anne Baguley – 07523 983890

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): George Smith – 07728 793456

1. Purpose & Policy Statement

MTTYP takes the safety and security of all young people extremely seriously. Absconding occurs when a student leaves a designated session, building, or off-site mentoring location without permission, or fails to remain within the safe line of sight/supervision of staff.

Because MTTYP works with vulnerable post-16 and alternative provision learners, absconding is treated primarily as a **safeguarding issue** rather than solely a disciplinary matter.

2. Preventive Measures & Individual Risk Assessments

To minimise the risk of absconding:

- Every student undergoes an initial risk assessment prior to starting provision, identifying history of missing episodes, triggers, and vulnerability indicators.
- Off-site 1:1 and group sessions maintain low student-to-staff ratios.
- Clear attendance expectations are agreed upon during student induction.
- Mentors maintain proactive dynamic risk monitoring, identifying early signs of distress, frustration, or disengagement before a student attempts to leave.

3. Time-Stamped Response & Escalation Protocol

When a student leaves a session or off-site location without authorization, staff must strictly follow this time-stamped escalation pathway:

0–15 Minutes: Immediate Line-of-Sight Tracking & De-Escalation
├── Maintain visual contact from a safe distance (if safe to do so)
└── Attempt verbal contact and de-escalation without physical chasing

15–30 Minutes: Internal & Carer Escalation
├── Notify DSL Daryl-Anne Baguley (07523 983890) / DDSL George Smith (07728 793456)
├── Contact parents/carers and commissioning school/social worker
└── Initiate local area search based on known student routes

30 Minutes (or Immediate for High-Risk): Police Escalation
├── Call Police (999 or 101) to report a Missing Child/Young Person
└── Submit full details: description, last known direction, and risk profile

3.1 Phase 1: 0 to 15 Minutes (Line-of-Sight Tracking)

- Staff members maintain visual contact from a safe distance, provided doing so does not compromise the safety of other students or staff.
- Staff attempt gentle verbal re-engagement and de-escalation, offering space or a quiet location to resolve distress.
- Staff must **not** corner, physically block, or chase the student at speed, as this may increase the risk of running into traffic or hazardous areas.

3.2 Phase 2: 15 to 30 Minutes (Safeguarding & Carer Notification)

- If the student moves out of line of sight or refuses to return after 15 minutes, staff immediately inform **DSL Daryl-Anne Baguley** or **DDSL George Smith**.
- The DSL/DDSL contacts the student's **parents/carers** and the **commissioning school / social worker** to inform them of the situation.
- Available staff execute a targeted check of the immediate local area, transport hubs, or known safe spots.

3.3 Phase 3: 30 Minutes or Immediate High-Risk Threshold (Police Escalation)

- If the student remains missing after **30 minutes**, or **IMMEDIATELY** if the young person is subject to high risk (e.g., known child sexual/criminal exploitation, suicide/self-harm risk, extreme vulnerability, or severe weather conditions), the DSL/staff must contact the **Police via 999** (or 101 depending on immediate risk level).
- Information provided to the Police must include:
    - Pupil name, age, physical description, and clothing worn.
    - Time and exact location last seen, plus direction of travel.
    - Relevant risk factors (e.g., EHCP, medical needs, exploitation flags, mental health status).
    - Contact details for parents/carers and DSL.

4. Post-Incident Actions & Documentation

1. **Welfare Check & De-Brief:** Upon return or location of the young person, an immediate welfare check is conducted. First aid or medical attention is provided if necessary.
2. **Return-to-Provision Conversation:** A supportive, non-confrontational discussion is held with a trusted mentor to explore the triggers that led to absconding.
3. **Written Incident Reporting:** A full **Absconding & Missing Incident Log** must be completed and submitted to the DSL within **24 hours**.
4. **Risk Assessment Review:** The DSL/DDSL reviews the student's individual risk assessment and liaises with the commissioning school/social care team to update safety plans.