**HEPBURN Primary School**

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**Established 1864 No. 767**

**Student Running Away From School Policy**

**Rational:**

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

**Implementation:**

* take immediate steps to establish whether the student 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 Victoria Police if there is a reasonable concern for the safety of the student or others
* notify the parent, guardian or carer of the student  as soon as reasonably possible
* report the incident to the Department’s Security Services Unit  on (03) 9589-6266, as soon as practicable.

If a staff member reasonably suspects that a student has left the school grounds or a school-approved activity, such as an excursion or camp, without authorisation, they should immediately notify a member of the Principal so that all reasonable steps can be taken to discharge the duty of care owed to that student. 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 or railway lines
* whether the student has a disability that may affect their ability to appreciate the risk associated with their behaviour and actions
* the age of the student
* the student’s prior behaviour or previously exhibited vulnerabilities, difficulties or troubles
* the student’s mental state immediately prior to leaving the school grounds or the school approved activity i.e. whether they were highly distressed, whether they were drug or alcohol affected, whether they had indicated an intention to hurt themselves or others
* the time that has elapsed since the student has left the school grounds or school approved activity
* whether other students who are under the care and supervision of the school staff can be appropriately supervised whilst appropriate action is taken to manage the student 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 Victoria Police to advise them of the missing student and the particular age, disability, vulnerabilities, or mental state of the individual student
* contacting the parent, guardian or carer of the student to advise them that the student 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 student, particularly if there is information available as to the student’s potential whereabouts
* following the student and maintaining visual contact until the student returns to school or school-approved activity, or is in the company of the police or their parent, guardian or carer
* making contact with the student and encouraging them to return to the school grounds or the school approved activity, go to a safe place, stop the behaviour that is putting them at risk, or remain in the company of a suitable and responsible adult
* restraining the student in appropriate circumstances and in accordance with the Restraint of Student policy, see: [Restraint of Student](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/restraint.aspx). For example, where the student is about to step in front of a car or otherwise harm themselves.

After an incident in which a student 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)
* report the incident to the Department’s Security Services Unit
* document the incident and the staff response to the incident
* consider whether it is appropriate to conduct a Student Support Group meeting
* consider whether it is appropriate to develop a Behaviour Support Plan.

Regulation 15 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 provides that:

“A member of staff of a Government school may take any reasonable action that is immediately required to restrain a student of the school from acts or behaviour dangerous to the member of staff, the student, or any other person.”

Policy reviewed and ratified by School Council on March 28th 2017