

## Missing or Lost Child Procedure

### Introduction

The safety and security of the children attending groups and events at St Giles' and St George's is critical and we strive to maintain a safe and secure environment.

Risk Assessments address control of entry and exit to groups and events. In general, children are checked against a register when they arrive and leave and doors are monitored where appropriate. At events where parents/carers are responsible for looking after their children, this is made clear.

In the unlikely event of a child going missing, the following procedure will be followed.

#### 1 Establish search team

The person who discovers the child is missing informs the group leader, event leader or a member of the clergy or staff team.

This leader co-ordinates the search for the missing child using the following steps.

1. Remind search team members to make sure mobile phones are switched on [and exchange numbers if appropriate]
2. Ensure someone is immediately placed by each exit door so that the child, if still in the building, cannot leave without being seen
3. Nominate someone to search the outside area
4. Nominate someone to search inside the building
5. Nominate someone to look after the remaining children
6. Call on wider team members [and other parents and children if appropriate] to assist with the search
7. Friends of the missing child may have insights into where they might be

#### 2 If the child is located in under 5 minutes

1. The person locating the child will comfort them and inform the leader that they have been found.
2. The leader will inform the child's parents of the incident straight away if the child is distressed, or upon collection
3. The leader will inform a member of the senior staff team (Children and Families' Leader) who will raise the incident at the next staff team meeting
4. The leader will ensure the incident is recorded and note any actions required or changes to risk assessments needed

#### 3 If the child is not located in under 5 minutes

1. The leader will phone the police and report the child missing. They will give the following information:
  - a. the name of the child
  - b. a detailed description of the child
  - c. contact details for the next of kin (gained from parent/carer or registration form)

- d. details of the last time the child was seen and any incident that may have precipitated the child leaving
2. The leader will inform the parents/carers of the child and continue to support them. If the parents/carers cannot be located quickly, an announcement will be made by the service or event leader for them to make themselves known.
3. The team will continue to search for the child until they are found or the Police do not require them to do so

#### **4 When the child has been found**

1. The child will be brought back to the group or event if happy to do so, otherwise a team member will stay with them and another team member will join them until a parent/carer/police arrive.
2. If a Police Officer finds or is with the child, a team member, well known to the child will go and support the child and offer comfort
3. When possible and without causing distress to the child, the team member will try and ascertain why and how the child left
4. The leader will work with the parent of the child who was missing to provide support

#### **5 Learning and support**

1. The leader will inform the Incumbent and the Children and Families' Leader that day and work with a member of the senior staff team to write a report and review it at the next senior staff team meeting
2. Risk Assessments will be reviewed in the light of learnings from this report
3. The leader and search team members will have a debrief session from senior staff, any member of the team distressed by the incident will be given support
4. Leaders and volunteers will be aware that children may be distressed by the incident and will support them, working with their parents/carers.
5. Communication to stakeholders will be considered following the incident to provide reassurance

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Approved by Parish Health & Safety Committee and Safeguarding Officer  
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