

MISSING CHILD POLICY

A child going missing can be extremely traumatic – for adults and children. However, if everyone is aware of some simple pre-defined guidelines, panic levels can be minimised, and more critically, the missing child can, hopefully, be found in an organised and efficient way.

Hopefully no child will ever go missing from a Club team/ event. If they do, remember most children are found within a few minutes of their disappearance.

To avoid worrying situations occurring the Club will regularly remind all parents, carers and children of the need to sign children in to training sessions and not to drop children at the Club or other venues for training or matches without either signing in or reporting to the coach/team manager.

If a child, for whom the club has responsibility, goes missing, the following guidelines have been devised to clarify the actions to take:

- Ensure other children in your care are looked after appropriately while you organise a search for the child concerned
- Inform the child's parents, if they are present at the event, or nominate an appropriate person to telephone them and advise of the concern. Reassure them you are doing all you can to locate their child. Remember the child may contact the parents directly so this action is very important
- Organise all available responsible adults by areas to be searched. It is best to take a short time to organise the search properly so that all places are searched fully
- Send searchers immediately to any exits to the venue to ensure the child has not left, and to any obvious potential danger spots such as main roads, lakes or rivers

- Search the area in which the child has gone missing including changing rooms, toilets, public and private areas and the club's grounds
- Request all those searching to report back to a nominated adult at a specific point
- This nominated person should remain at this reference point and make a note of events, including a detailed physical description of the child. This should include approximate height, build, hair and eye colour as well as the clothing the child was wearing and where and when they were last seen. All this will be required by the police. If the search is unsuccessful you should then contact the police
- A report should go to the police no later than 20 minutes after the child's disappearance is noted, even if the search is not complete
- If the police recommend further action before they get involved, follow their guidance
- If the police act upon the concern, always be guided by them in any further actions to take.
- At any stage when the child is located, ensure you inform all adults involved including the parents, searchers and the police if, by then, they are involved

All missing child incidents **MUST BE** notified at the very earliest opportunity to the Club Welfare Officer, who must immediately notify the County Welfare Officer, and they must then notify the ECB Safeguarding Team.