

Missing Child Policy

Guidelines to follow when a child is missing at training or sports event

If a child goes missing during training or at an event, the following procedure will apply:

- 1.** Report the incident to club officials and coaches present, and if at an event the Event Director and/or Designated Safety Officer.
- 2.** Ensure that all other children continue to be supervised appropriately (if applicable), while a search for the child concerned is carried out.
- 3.** Organise the remaining available responsible adults to conduct a search of the surrounding area allocating each individual to a specific area.
- 4.** Request all those searching report back within a short, specified time, dependent on the size of the area being searched.

If the child cannot be found after an initial search of the immediate surroundings, contact the child's parents to advise them of the concern and reassure them that everything is being done to locate the child.

Record (in on an incident form) the circumstances in which the child has gone missing and where he/she was last seen and prepare a detailed physical description of the child, to include their hair and eye colour, approximate height and build and clothing he/she was wearing, as this will be required by the Gardaí and other searchers.

Report the concern to the Gardaí if the search is unsuccessful and no later than 20 minutes after the initial missing person report if the search is ongoing. Follow Gardaí guidance if further action is recommended and maintain close contact with the Gardaí.

Ensure that you inform all adults involved including the parents, searchers and Gardaí when the child is located.

Guidelines to follow if a child is found at a sports event

If a lost child is found during an event, the following procedure will apply:

- 1.** Report the incident to the Event Director and/or Designated Safety Officer
- 2.** Children under the age of 16 years will be kept in a Safe Area until collected by a parent, guardian or a member of an Garda Síochána. Children will be supervised at all times by two responsible adults who have been Garda vetted by Athletics Ireland.
- 3.** Children over the age of 16 years will be free to leave or remain at the Safe Area if they wish after a Found Child form has been completed.
- 4.** A responsible adult is one over the age of 18 years who the lost child or vulnerable person is comfortable with, and who demonstrates responsibility for the person/child and is not considered to pose an obvious threat to the person/child.
- 5.** A Found Child form will be completed for each child including those over 16 who chose not to remain in the Safe Area.
- 6.** Proof of identity may be requested by the Safe Area steward if they consider it necessary.
- 7.** Children not collected by the end of the event will be passed over to the protection of the Gardaí.

Stewards should not escort a child or vulnerable person away from the scene alone. There should always be two stewards or a steward and another responsible adult with a child. At all times, the comfort and wellbeing of the child must be of paramount concern. If a child or vulnerable person appears unwilling to go with the other member of their group, consider contacting the Gardaí for further advice.