



# Lost / Missing / Not Collected Child Procedure

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| Status             | Approved | Date Approved       | October 2024 |
| Period of Approval | 2 Years  | Review Date         | October 2026 |

## 1. PURPOSE OF THE PROCEDURE

1.1 This procedure has been prepared to clarify how North Wales Science (NWS) will manage and deal with incidences of lost, missing or not collected children.

## 2. SCOPE OF THE PROCEDURE

2.1 NWS will ensure that its premises and any hired premises are safe and secure before its activities take place.

2.2 This procedure applies when NWS is responsible for the location of the activity or has loco parentis responsibility for the children and young people taking part.

2.3 When NWS staff are not responsible for the location or the welfare of the children, for example when visiting a school, they shall adhere to and assist with the procedure in place in that setting.

2.4 Examples of instances where staff might use this procedure include:

- a) When a teacher visiting Xplore! science centre notices one of their pupils is missing;
- b) When a child in Xplore! science centre cannot locate their parent/family;
- c) When Xplore! Nature Holiday Club leaders does a head-count and someone is unaccounted for;
- d) When a participant is not collected on time from Xplore! Nature Holiday Club.

## 3. LOST CHILDREN

3.1 A lost child is defined as a child or young person who is found separated from the rest of their group (family or school). They might be found by a member of staff, or a member of staff might be alerted to them by another group.

3.2 Procedure:

- Act quickly to avoid unnecessary delay or distress
- Do not alarm the child if they are unaware that they have become separated but reassure any child who is upset that it is going to be OK
- Look around to see if anyone is looking for a child
- Do not take the child away from where you found them – there's a good chance someone will come back for them
- Alert other members of staff that you have a lost child, however, do not give out their personal details via unsecure communication channels i.e. radios
- Ask the child to describe who is looking after them and see if they know their phone number
- If other members of staff cannot locate their adult and more than 10 minutes has passed, contact the correct authorities.

#### 4. MISSING CHILDREN

4.1 A missing child is defined as a child or young person who has become separated from the rest of their group (family or school). Their group will look to NWS staff to help locate the child.

##### 4.2 Procedure:

- As soon as a child is noticed missing, all staff/adults with their group should be alerted and senior NWS staff should be informed
- Senior members of staff will secure the area and carry out a thorough search of the area
- A headcount and register will be taken to ensure everyone else is accounted for and remaining participants should be kept calm and in one place
- Retrace steps to the child's last known location and anywhere they are known to go, including favourite areas and toilets etc.
- Check for breaches of security and view any security footage
- Contact the parents, police, and other relevant authorities if the child remains missing
- Keep records of all actions taken, including timeframe of the incident

4.3 Care Inspectorate Wales will be informed with 14 days following the event of a child going missing.

#### 5. NOT COLLECTED CHILD PROCEDURE

5.1 Children and young people who are not picked up by their authorised adults from a holiday club are described as a not collected child.

##### 5.2 Procedure:

- Only adults authorised through the registration form or by advanced written consent from a parent will be allowed to collect a child.
- If a parent / authorised individual lets the person in charge know they are running up to 30 minutes late, two members of staff are to remain at the collection point with the child until the parent arrives. Repeat offenders will be charged a late collection fee and provision of the service revoked as a last resort.
- If the person collecting does not let the person in charge know they are running late, or states they will be more than 30 minutes, the person in charge should contact others listed as emergency contact details for the child so see if they can collect.
- After all reasonable attempts have been made to have the child collected by a parent / authorised individual / emergency contact, then social services will be contacted and/or the police informed so they can take responsibility for the child.
- At all times keep the child calm, and meet their wellbeing needs of food, water, warmth, and shelter as necessary.

#### 6. INVESTIGATIONS

- 6.1 If the procedure for a lost, missing or not collected child is implemented, then full notes must be taken by the staff member(s) involved and passed to the senior leadership team for review.
- 6.2 An investigation of how the incident was handled will be carried out by the senior leadership team to reduce the risk of a repeat incident, improve the procedure, and inform further staff training.
- 6.3 Care Inspectorate Wales are to be informed within 14 days of the incident and of the outcome of the following investigation in due course.