

**Mountain Adventure Camps
Separated Child Policy
2013/2014**

1. Introduction

1.1 Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times. Every attempt is made through carrying out the collection procedure and the exit/entrance procedure to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

2. Procedures - Accommodation

2.1 As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing staff alert the Senior Manager supervising the accommodation, usually this will be the Summer Camp Director.

2.1.1 The time of alert must be noted.

2.2 The Senior Manager and available staff will carry out a thorough search of the building and immediate premises.

2.3 Doors are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.

2.4 The Senior Manager talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.

2.5 The Senior Manager talks to the other children individually to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.

2.6 Ensure the safety of the other children, with regard to supervision and security whilst the search is taking place.

2.7 CCTV camera footage will be checked for sightings of the child.

2.8 The local area, including village center will be searched, in a structured and controlled manner.

2.9 If the child cannot be found within fifteen minutes of searching, then the tourist information office, lift pass office and local businesses are informed.

2.10 Continue the search, widening the area.

2.11 If the child cannot be found within thirty minutes of the alarm being raised, then parents and the police must be informed.

2.12 Continue the search, until the police arrive.

3. Procedures – Whilst on activity/off main premises

3.1 As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing staff alert the Senior Manager supervising the activity. This will be the Operations Director, Summer Camp Director or Outdoor Activities Consultant.

3.2 The Senior Manager and available staff will carry out a thorough search of the building being used (such as changing rooms) and immediate premises.

3.3 Premises exits are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.

- 3.4 The Senior Manager talks to the Mountain Adventure Camps staff on activity and 3rd party staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- 3.5 The Senior Manager talks to the other children individually to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- 3.6 Ensure the safety of the other children, with regard to supervision and security whilst the search is taking place.
- 3.7 Any available CCTV camera footage will be checked for sightings of the child.
- 3.8 The local area will be searched, in a structured and controlled manner.
- 3.9 If the child cannot be found within fifteen minutes of searching, then any local businesses are informed.
- 3.10 Continue the search, widening the area.
- 3.11 If the child cannot be found within thirty minutes of the alarm being raised, then parents and the police must be informed.
- 3.12 Continue the search, until the police arrive.

4. Investigation

- 4.1 Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- 4.2 The senior manager together with the Operations Director speaks with the parent(s).
- 4.3 The senior manager and Operations Director carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the setting.
- 4.4 The key person/Manager writes an incident report detailing:
 - 4.4.1 The date and time of the report.
 - 4.4.2 What staff/children were in the accommodation or on activity and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
 - 4.4.3 When the child was last seen in the session.
 - 4.4.4 What has taken place in the session since the child went missing.
 - 4.4.5 The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- 4.5 A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- 4.6 If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. If deemed necessary by the police, the UK Children's Social Care may be contacted and involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- 4.7 The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements; UK local authorities and UK Health and Safety Officer's may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- 4.8 The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people

- 4.9 Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- 4.10 The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- 4.11 Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Senior managers need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- 4.12 The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the senior manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom should be the Operations Director. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
- 4.13 The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.
- 4.14 In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counseling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The Operations Director and Summer Camp Director will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- 4.15 Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.