

The DfE states: **If the missing child is 5 years old or under, contact the police immediately.**

If a child for whom your club has responsibility does go missing, the following guidelines have been devised to clarify actions that should be taken.

This guidance (based in information from the Child Protection in Sport Unit) should be followed at normal club sessions and any away from home events. Their flowchart is on the next page.

- Ensure the other children in your care are looked after appropriately while you organise a search for the child concerned.
- Organise remaining responsible adults to conduct a search of the immediate surrounding area – request that they report back in a short time, depending on the size of the area to be searched.
- If the child has not been found, inform the child’s parents if they are present, or nominate an appropriate person to telephone them and advise them of the concern. Reassure them you are doing all you can to locate their child.
- Search the area in which the child has gone missing including changing rooms, toilets, public and private areas and the venue grounds.
- This nominated person should also be making a note of the events, including detailing a physical description of the child including approx. height, build, hair and eye colour as well as clothing he/she was wearing and where he/she was last seen, as this will be required by the police. If the search is unsuccessful you should then report the concern to 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 be guided by them in any further actions to take.
- At any stage the child is located ensure that you inform all adults involved including the parents, searchers and police if you have involved them
- Make sure that any other children at the Club are safe and being supervised appropriately throughout the search. Do not allow other children to join in the search.
- Refer the concern as soon as possible to your club Welfare Officer who will inform the Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer.

**** The Department for Education advise as follows**

You should discuss with the parents or carer whether it is appropriate to contact the police. In most cases, parents and carers know the child best and will be able to assess whether their child is likely to return of their own accord or whether there are significant concerns for their safety.

The parents or carer are responsible for contacting the police. You can contact the police on their behalf if they agree.

If you or the parents contact the police, wait for them to arrive and follow their instructions. The DSL or senior staff member must continue to search while waiting for the police to arrive. If the parents do not want to contact the police, only contact them if you consider the parent’s decision to be unreasonable and the child is at significant risk of harm.

Flowchart

