

University of Warwick Holiday Scheme

MISSING CHILD POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Purpose	The University of Warwick Holiday Scheme is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children in our care. Procedures are in place to minimise the risk of a child becoming lost or separated from their group and to ensure that staff respond quickly, calmly and appropriately should this occur.
Review Frequency	Annually or if an incident occurs the policy must be reviewed immediately
Date approved	September 2026
Date of next review	September 2027

The named staff members (at least 2) responsible for the upkeep of the policy are:

Jo Warren, Nursery manager

Rachael Snell, Holiday Scheme Coordinator

Preventative Measures

To reduce the risk of a child becoming lost, the Holiday Scheme will:

- Maintain an accurate register of children attending each day and record their arrival and collection.
- Ensure children are appropriately supervised throughout the day.
- Carry out regular headcounts, particularly when children move between locations or participate in activities away from the main Holiday Scheme venue.
- Ensure children understand that they must tell a member of staff before leaving their group or activity area, including when going to the toilet.
- Complete appropriate risk assessments for activities, trips and off-site visits.
- Ensure staff know which children they are responsible for when leaving the Holiday Scheme venue.

- Ensure appropriate procedures are followed when children are collected and children are only released to authorised persons.
- **Give every child an emergency sticker at the beginning of each day displaying two Holiday Scheme telephone numbers. Children will be instructed that, if they become separated from their group, they should approach a suitable responsible adult and ask them to telephone one of the numbers on their sticker.**

If a Child is Missing from the Holiday Scheme Venue

If a child cannot be located, staff will:

1. **Immediately inform a Holiday Scheme Manager or the Holiday Scheme Coordinator.**
2. Confirm the identity of the missing child and establish **where and when they were last seen.**
3. Ensure all remaining children are safe and appropriately supervised.
4. Check the register and carry out a headcount.
5. Carry out an immediate and thorough search of the Holiday Scheme venue and surrounding area. This will be done by one member of the team while the others take care of the rest of the children in the group.
6. Check toilets, activity areas and other locations the child may reasonably have visited.
7. Contact the **University Community Safety Team on 02476 52 2222** for assistance in searching the wider University campus if the child is not located promptly. A description of the child, including age, name and what they are wearing will be given to the Safety Team to support their search.
8. Contact the **police** if necessary and provide relevant information about the child.
9. Contact the child's **parent/carers** and explain the situation and the actions being taken.

If a Child Becomes Lost During a Trip, Walk or Off-Site Activity

A risk assessment will be completed before off-site activities, and staff will carry out regular headcounts.

If a child cannot be located, staff will:

1. Immediately identify which child is missing and notify the member of staff leading the group.
2. Ensure all other children remain **safe and appropriately supervised.**
3. Carry out an immediate search of the surrounding area.
4. Contact the **Holiday Scheme Manager/Coordinator** and provide details of the situation and location.
10. Seek assistance from the **University Community Safety Team on 02476 52 2222** when on the University campus and contact the police where necessary. A description of the

child, including age, name and what they are wearing will be given to the Safety Team to support their search.

5. Contact the child's parent/carer and keep them informed of the situation.
6. Continue to ensure the safety and supervision of the remaining children while the incident is managed.

The child's **emergency sticker**, displaying two Holiday Scheme telephone numbers, provides an additional safeguard should the child become separated from their group.

When the Child is Found

Once the child has been located:

- The child's immediate **safety and wellbeing will be checked and reassurance provided.**
- The Holiday Scheme Manager/Coordinator will be informed immediately.
- The child's parent/carer will be informed, even if the child was located quickly.
- The circumstances surrounding the incident will be recorded.
- An investigation will be undertaken to establish how the incident occurred.
- Relevant risk assessments and procedures will be reviewed and additional control measures introduced where necessary to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence.

Staff Responsibilities

All Holiday Scheme staff are responsible for remaining vigilant, maintaining appropriate supervision and following this procedure immediately if they believe a child is missing. **A missing child must always be treated seriously and acted upon without delay.**