

Coogee Minnows

Lost Child Protocol – 2012/13

Purpose

The following protocol should be followed by Age Managers and all Minnows' volunteers if a parent (or responsible adult) reports a child missing during an Age Group session, or if a child is unable to locate their parent (or responsible adult) at the conclusion of an Age Group session.

Overriding Principles

The role of Coogee Minnows is to conduct Age Group sessions in a safe environment and to teach children important surf lifesaving skills that are designated as appropriate to the age of the child by Surf Lifesaving Australia.

It is the role of parents to supervise their children and to accept responsibility for the behaviour of their children at all times while Age Group sessions are conducted. This role is not the responsibility of the Age Manager or any volunteer of Coogee Minnows.

If a parent is unable to supervise their own child for any reason it is the responsibility of that parent to appoint another responsible adult to take responsibility for the supervision of their child and to advise their child of this change. No child will be permitted to participate in Age Group sessions without the supervision of a parent or a nominated responsible adult.

If a child goes missing on the beach the Age Manager (AM) must immediately notify the designated Water Safety Supervisor (WSS) and the Minnows Captain (MC).

Lost Child Reported

1. The AM of the relevant Age Group should be immediately notified, and the AM should then immediately notify the WSS and the MC. (If the AM cannot be located, the WSS and the MC should be immediately notified by an Age Assistant or a member of the Water Safety team.)
2. The WSS and the MC should notify the Patrol Captain and, if necessary, the MC or the WSS may issue a directive to AM's to stop all beach and water activities while a search for the missing child is conducted.
3. The AM of the relevant Age Group should give their full attention to locating the missing child. The search protocol is as follows:
 - Arrange for another volunteer to take charge of the Age Group session.
 - Record all details of the missing child, including name, DOB, location when last sighted, clothing worn, other identifying features, names of friends in Age Group etc.
 - Provide full details to the WSS and, if possible, arrange for the WSS to be briefed directly by the parent (or responsible adult).
 - Request the parent (or responsible adult) to remain in the attendance of the AM (or Age Assistant delegate of the AM) while this search protocol is implemented. Keep the parent (or responsible adult) abreast of all developments as they occur.
 - Check the available Minnows enrolment records to ascertain the identity of the child within the Age Group.

- Conduct a search within the Age Group by stopping all Age Group activities and asking children to sit down at the back of the beach.
 - AM should request assistance from Age Assistants and Water Safety (as appropriate) to confirm the name of each child in the Age Group that is sitting on the beach and to ascertain whether the missing child is within that group.
4. If the child is unable to be located in the nominated Age Group, the AM should immediately update the WSS and the MC, who will update the Patrol Captain and will advise other Age Managers.
 5. The search for the missing child will continue under the direction of the Patrol Captain. The MC and WSS will act as a liaison point and will communicate directions to the AMs and all other Coogee Minnows' volunteers.
 6. Unless the PC directs otherwise, the MC should direct all AM's to immediately stop all Age Group activities and to conduct a search for the missing child within each Age Group.
 7. The search will continue until the missing child is located. The AM or the MC (or a delegate of Minnows) must remain with the parent (or responsible adult) of the missing child at all times and will keep them abreast of progress, including the searches being conducted under the direction of the Patrol Captain.
 8. If the child is located on the beach (and is uninjured), the AM will escort the child to meet the parent (or responsible adult) and will inform the MC. The MC will advise the WSS and the Patrol Captain and will provide confirmation to all AMs that the child has been located and that Age Group sessions can re-commence.
 9. If the child is located in the water, the recovery of the child will be conducted in accordance with the directions issued by the WSS, working under the direction of the Patrol Captain.

Child Unable to Locate Parents

1. The AM (or Age Assistant delegate of the AM) must remain with any child who is unable to locate a parent or responsible adult at the end of the Age Group session.
2. The child should be requested to keep wearing their Age Group cap.
3. The AM (or delegate) should try to obtain details from the child as to the name of the parent of responsible adult who is responsible for them.
 - Ask child the name of parent (or responsible adult)
 - Ask child if siblings are participating in other Minnows Age Groups
 - Ascertain whether child knows a mobile or home phone number for parents
 - Ascertain whether child has a pre-arranged meeting place to meet parents
 - Ask child whether there is another parent that they recognise who may be able to assist with the location of that child's parent (or responsible adult)
4. The AM (or delegate) should escort the child at all times during the search for their parents (or responsible adults) on the beach. If the parents (or responsible adults) are unable to be located, the child should be escorted to the Minnows tent (located near the boat shed) where they should remain in the care of an AM or (or delegate) until their parent (or responsible adult) has been located.