

YMCA Geelong Procedure –

Missing or Unaccounted Participant Procedure

Procedure Number	Date Approved	Date Last Amended	Status
YG 206-O	31/03/2025	31/03/2025	Current

1. PURPOSE

YMCA seeks to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all participants being cared for in our programs and services. We aim to achieve this by ensuring clear communication and cooperation between the service, parents and school if applicable. In the circumstance where a participant appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for, the following procedure outlines clear steps to be taken to ensure that the participant is located as soon as possible.

2. SCOPE

This Procedure applies to The Young Men’s Christian Association of Geelong Inc and related entities and Geelong and District YMCA Youth Services. For the purposes of this document we refer to these entities as the YMCA.

The scope of this Procedure applies to all Board members, Sub Committee members, staff and volunteers.

The scope of this procedure applies to all YMCA Children’s Programs that operate under the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. This includes Before and After School Care Services, School Holiday Programs, Camping and Sport and Recreation programs.

3. PROCEDURE – YMCA REQUIREMENTS

- Specific sector requirements are detailed below.
- At any stage if you believe a participant is in immediate danger; call 000 straight away.

PROCEDURE – CAMPING SECTOR REQUIREMENTS

Missing or unaccounted camper onsite:

Should a YMCA staff member identify or be made aware that a camper is missing or unaccounted for while onsite, the following process is to be followed;

- Conduct a head count to ensure that the camper is actually missing.
- Establish when and where last seen, by whom and wearing what? This information should be recorded.
- Alert 2nd YMCA Staff member of the missing camper and request assistance, if no staff member available, engage a group leader to assist.
- Alert the Camp Duty Manager or office staff that you have a missing camper and may require assistance of Emergency Services, and event timelines should be recorded from this point forward.
- Undertake a full search of the site, including bunk rooms, activity areas (including common off site locations e.g. beach, bike track), driveway and out on to the road, and check in after 15 minutes.

- If Camper is thought to have likely absconded, 2 YMCA staff should use a site vehicle to check the roads around camp and potential locations e.g. bus stop, local roads.
- After 15 minutes of searching, if the camper is not located call 000; at any stage if you believe a participant is in immediate danger; call 000 straight away.
- Group Leader should contact the school or organisation.
- Group continues with some form of programming, maybe adjusted as required.
- Camp site Duty Manager to escalate incident as per YMCA Incident Management protocol.
- Wait for the police to arrive and follow their instructions/guidance.

Following the incident;

- Document the incident via YMCA's Incident Report Form, including witness statements and other relevant information.
- Log the incident on INCIDENT REPORT SYSTEM

Missing or unaccounted camper offsite:

Should a YMCA staff member identify or be made aware that a camper is missing or unaccounted for while offsite, the following process is to be followed;

- Conduct a head count to ensure that the camper is actually missing.
- Conduct a brief search of the immediate area initially.
- Establish when and where last seen, by whom and wearing what? This information should be recorded.
- Alert 2nd YMCA Staff member of the missing camper and request assistance, if no staff member available, engage a group leader to assist.
- Alert the Camp Duty Manager or office staff that you have a missing camper and may require assistance of Emergency Services, and event timelines should be recorded from this point forward.
- Ensure the remaining group are well supervised by the teacher / group leader.
- If more than one instructor is present, the more senior instructor should assume responsibility, whilst the other instructor assists in the search. The search should be undertaken in pairs wherever possible.
- Undertake a full search of the offsite area, including car park and in cars, public toilets, bushy or shrub areas, other trails, bodies of water and check in after 15 minutes.
- Camp site's Duty Manager should coordinate a search of the campsite in case they have returned including bunk rooms, activity areas, driveway and out on to the road, and check in after 15 minutes.
- If Camper is thought to have likely absconded, 2 YMCA staff should use a site vehicle to check the roads around camp and potential locations e.g. bus stop.
- After 15 minutes of searching from initial report of missing camper call 000; at any stage if you believe a participant is in immediate danger; call 000 straight away.
- Camp site Duty Manager to escalate incident as per YMCA Incident Management protocol.
- A YMCA staff member and a Group Leader should remain behind with a vehicle and phone, where the camper was last seen, while the rest of the group returns to camp and continues with an alternative program.
- Group Leader should contact the school or organisation.

- Wait for the police to arrive and follow their instructions/guidance.

Following the incident;

- Document the incident via YMCA's Incident Report Form, including witness statements and other relevant information.
- Log the incident on INCIDENT REPORT SYSTEM

PROCEDURE – CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS SECTOR REQUIREMENTS

Missing child – all services:

If a child is identified as missing from a service, Educators will:

- Conduct a head count and roll call immediately.
- Ask the other children of their knowledge of where the child might be.
- Ensure all other children are supervised.
- Establish when and where last seen, by whom and wearing what? This information should be recorded.
- Commence a thorough search of the immediate area, including likely hiding places.
- If the child cannot be found, contact the parent/guardian to inform them of the situation and find out any further information.
- After 15 minutes of searching from initial report of missing child call 000 to notify the police; at any stage if you believe the child is in immediate danger; call 000 straight away.
- Whilst this notification is occurring, all available Educators will continue to search the immediate and surrounding areas, whilst ensuring that the remaining children are safe and kept calm.
- Contact the Centre Manager and CEO to inform them of the situation.
- Wait for the police to arrive and follow their instructions/guidance.
- Continue to contact the parent/guardian keeping them informed of the situation.

Following the incident;

- Document the incident via YMCA's Incident Report Form, including witness statements and other relevant information.
- Report incident through ACECQA NQA IT System within 24 hours of the occurrence
- Log the incident on INCIDENT REPORT SYSTEM

Missing or unaccounted children at After School Care –

Should a child not be present and/or waiting in the designated collection area when expected, the Educator's will:

- Conduct a head count and roll call immediately.
- Ask the other children of their knowledge of where the child might be.
- Ensure all other children are supervised.
- Approach the school office and ask for information regarding the child's attendance at school that day.
- If the child was absent, call the parents/guardians to confirm this and remind them of the need to notify the service if their child is absent.
- If the child had attended the school day check with the class room teacher if they are aware of the parent or anyone else collecting the child and request they assist in the search of the school grounds.

If the child attended school and is expected to attend the service, then Educators will:

- Ask the other children of their knowledge of where the child might be.
- Call the parents/guardians immediately to see if they have been collected from school or another arrangement has been made. If no answer, leave a voice mail informing of the situation and ask for a call back as soon as possible.
- If no answer, call authorised contacts on the child's enrolment to see if they have any further information.
- Inform the school office that the child is missing.
- Ask the office to put an announcement over the PA requesting the child to go to the office.
- Ask them to find out if the teacher is aware of the parent/guardian or anyone else collecting the child and to assist in the search of the school area.
- Ensure all other children are supervised during this time.
- If the child cannot be found contact the parents/guardians again as soon as possible. They may be able to offer suggestions to where the search should be directed.
- If the parent/guardian are not available, Educators will continue to call until contact is made. If contact cannot be made, then authorised contacts will be called to seek further details.

If the child remains missing, Educators will:

- After 15 minutes of searching from initial report of missing child call 000 to notify the police; at any stage if you believe a participant is in immediate danger; call 000 straight away.
- Contact the Centre Manager and Area Manager to inform them of the situation.
- Wait for the police to arrive and follow their instructions/guidance.
- Take the other children back to the service.
- Continue to contact parent/guardian keeping them informed.
- Continue to keep in contact with the school.

Following the incident;

- Document the incident via YMCA's Incident Report Form, including witness statements and other relevant information.
- Report incident through ACECQA NQA IT System within 24 hours of the occurrence.
- Log the incident on INCIDENT REPORT SYSTEM

Missing child on routine outings or excursions:

Whilst on a routine outing or excursion if a child appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for, Educators will:

- Conduct a head count and roll call in smaller groups and as a whole group immediately.
- Ensure all other children are assembled in one safe area and are adequately supervised.
- Ask the other children of their knowledge of where the child might be.
- Establish when and where they were last seen, by whom and wearing what? This information should be recorded.
- Approach the staff at the excursion venue (if applicable) and ask them to make an announcement regarding the child.
- Educators should look for the missing child around the excursion venue and surrounds.

If the child is not immediately located the responsible person will:

- Contact the parent/guardian to inform them of the situation and find out any further information. If parent/guardian cannot be contacted straight away, try calling the authorised contacts on the child's enrolment form.
- After 15 minutes of searching from initial report of missing child call 000 to notify the police; at any stage if you believe a participant is in immediate danger; call 000 straight away.
- Whilst this notification is occurring, all available Educators will continue to search the immediate and surrounding areas, whilst ensuring that the remaining children are safe and kept calm.
- Wait for the police to arrive and follow their instructions/guidance.
- Contact the Centre Manager and Area Manager to inform them of the situation.
- Continue to contact parent/guardian keeping them informed.
- Take the other children back to the service.

Following the incident;

- Document the incident via YMCA's Incident Report Form, including witness statements and other relevant information.
- Report incident through ACECQA NQA IT System within 24 hours of the occurrence
- Log the incident on INCIDENT REPORT SYSTEM

Child absconds from service:**If a child absconds from a service, Educators will:**

- An Educator should follow the child at a safe distance and attempt to persuade the child to return to the program if the ratios permit. Attempt to keep the child as calm and as safe as possible.
- The Educator should have a mobile phone with them and keep in contact with the service.
- The Responsible Person will allocate further Educators to help with retrieving the child to bring back to the service, if ratios permit.
- The child's parent/guardian should be contacted to inform them of the situation. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, then the police should be called immediately. Educators should give the police concise information regarding the location and circumstances surrounding the absconded child.
- Wait for the police to arrive and follow their instructions/guidance.
- Contact the Centre Manager and Area Manager to inform them of the situation.
- Continue to contact parent/guardian keeping them informed.
- Ensure the remaining children are safe and kept calm.

Following the incident;

- Document the incident via YMCA's Incident Report Form, including witness statements and other relevant information.
- Report incident through ACECQA NQA IT System within 24 hours of the occurrence.
- Log the incident on INCIDENT REPORT SYSTEM
- If a child is continually leaving the service, this behaviour may result in suspension from the service for a period of time in consultation with the family as per the Children's Programs Behaviour Guidance Procedure.

PROCEDURE – RECREATION SECTOR REQUIREMENTS**Missing child:**

On becoming aware that a Child is missing, the Swim Teacher/ Gymnastics Coach/ Birthday Party Leader is to communicate with the Supervisor/Duty Manager immediately. Adequate supervision must be maintained at all times.

- Supervisor to check attendance sheet /computer to determine if scanned in.
- Ask the other children of their knowledge of where the child might be.
- Contact the Carer to determine age, description, clothing etc of missing Child.
- Commence a thorough search of the immediate area, including likely hiding places.
- After 15 minutes of searching from initial report of missing child call 000 to notify the police; at any stage if you believe a child is in immediate danger; call 000 straight away.
- Whilst this notification is occurring, all available Staff will continue to search the immediate and surrounding areas, including carparks etc, whilst maintaining adequate supervision.
- Contact the Centre Manager and Area Manager to inform them of the situation.
- Wait for the police to arrive and follow their instructions / guidance.
- Continue to update the Carer of the current situation.

Following the incident;

- Document the incident via YMCA's Incident Report Form, including any other relevant information.
- Log the incident on INCIDENT REPORT SYSTEM
- Conduct debrief with Staff

Recreation notification workflow;

Gymnastics Coach/Birthday Party Leader Sports Coach > Supervisor/Duty Manager > Centre Manager > CEO

**If categorised as a Critical Incident, follow the Critical Incident Management process*

**Consider obtaining Legal Professional Privilege*

**Consider offering Employee Assistance Program to Staff*

PROCEDURE – YOUTH SERVICES SECTOR REQUIREMENTS

Missing or unaccounted for participant Young Adult Programs:

Should a YMCA volunteer or staff member identify or be made aware that a participant is missing or unaccounted for while on a young adult program, the following process is to be followed;

- Conduct a head count to ensure that the participant is actually missing.
- YMCA Leaders to check with participant's roommates/peers as to whether they know where they are.
- Establish when and where last seen, by whom and wearing what? This information should be recorded.
- Alert Program Coordinator, or if needed send someone else to notify Program Coordinator.
- Alert relevant Program Leaders that you have a missing participant and may require assistance of Emergency Services.
- Undertake a search of the main venue area the group is using (e.g. Rooms, bathrooms, halls, break out spaces, etc.)
- Call the missing participant's mobile phone.
- If unsuccessful, alert the Youth Service Manager on call and the venue staff at this point (they can coordinate the search with more insight)
- Undertake a full search of the site with venue staff, and check in every 15 minutes (leaders to undertake search in pairs, and ensure each pair is carrying at least one mobile phone)
- If unsuccessful, continue searching venue and surrounding roads, calling the participant's mobile phone every 5 minutes.
- If no response after 30 minutes call 000 and, call back Youth Services manager, and participant's emergency contact; At any stage if you believe a participant is in immediate danger; call 000 straight away.
- Group continues program

Following the incident;

- Document the incident via YMCA's Incident Report Form, including witness statements and other relevant information.
- Log the incident on INCIDENT REPORT SYSTEM

Missing or unaccounted for participant Child-based Programs:

Should a YMCA volunteer or staff member identify or be made aware that a participant is missing or unaccounted for while on a Child-based program, the following process is to be followed;

- Conduct a head count to ensure that the participant is actually missing.
- Leader to alert Program Coordinator, or if needed send someone else to notify Program Coordinator.
- Establish when and where last seen, by whom and wearing what? This information should be recorded.
- Alert relevant Program Leaders that you have a missing participant and may require assistance of Emergency Services.
- Undertake a search of the main venue area the group is using (e.g. Rooms, bathrooms, halls, break out spaces, etc.)
- If unsuccessful, alert the Youth Services Manager on call and venue staff at this point (they can coordinate the search with more insight).
- Undertake a full search of the site with venue staff, and check in after 15 minutes (leaders to undertake search in pairs, and ensure each pair is carrying at least one mobile phone)
- After 15 minutes of searching call 000 and call back Youth Services manager, and participant's emergency contact; at any stage if you believe a participant is in immediate danger; call 000 straight away.
- Group continues program

Following the incident;

- Document the incident via YMCA's Incident Report Form, including witness statements and other relevant information.
- Log the incident on INCIDENT REPORT SYSTEM

4. LEGISLATIVE AND INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Children's Services Act 1996
- Children's Services Regulations 2009
- Victorian Child Safe Standards
- Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

5. DEFINITIONS

Missing Child	A child whose whereabouts cannot be accounted for
Absconded Child	A child who has, by choice, left the licensed area of the Child Care centre
Responsible Person	<p>A person who meets the minimum requirements outlined in Regulation 117B of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 and who has consented in writing to being placed in day to day charge of the service under this legislation. The designation must be made by the Approved Provider or the Nominated Supervisor and accepted in writing by the Responsible Person via the Person in Day to Day Charge and Responsible Person Consent Form.</p> <p>In accordance with the Victorian Children's Services Act 1996 and Regulations 2009 a Responsible Person is the Licensee, Primary Nominee, Approved Nominee or Accepted Nominee.</p>

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Department/Role	Responsibility
Managers and Supervisors/RP, Educators	<p>Ensuring that the procedure is implemented in their workplace, and that all YMCA personnel, including the Nominated Supervisor and persons in day to day charge (RP), receive relevant policy/procedure induction and training.</p> <p>Ensure all YMCA Personnel understand and can access the procedure, and other related policies and procedures, and comply with them at all times.</p>

Co-ordinators	<p>Is responsible for ensuring suitable resources and support systems to enable compliance with this procedure.</p> <p>Drive the consultation process and provide leadership and advice on the continuous improvement of the procedure.</p>
SLT	Approve the Procedure

7. QUALITY ASSURANCE ACTIVITIES

The Missing or Unaccounted Participant Procedure will be reviewed every three years or as required based on legislative changes.

8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- [Education and Care Services National Law 2010](#)
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#)
- [Children's Services Act 1996](#)
- [Children's Services Regulations 2009](#)
- [Extranet Policy and Procedure Library](#) including;
 - Supervision in Children's Services Policy
 - Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedure
 - Excursion and Routine Outing Policy and Procedure
 - Arrival and Departure in Children's Programs Policy and Procedure

9. APPROVAL AND REVIEW

Meeting Approved: Senior Leadership Team
Meeting Approved Date: 09/06/2021
Procedure Effective Date: 09/06/2021
Procedure Review Date: 31/03/2025
Procedure Owner: Jessica Claridge & Katelyn Hancock
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Amendments

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
V1	25.05.2021	Shona Eland	Document Creation
V2	31.03.2025	Shona Eland	Updated Clause 9 – changed procedure owners