Lost Child Policy

STAY WILD Holiday Club

Policy Date: April 2026

Policy Renewal Due: April 2027

Written By: Leanne Bagott

Approved By: Catherine Smith

Contents

1	Policy Statement	Page 3
2	Aims of this policy	Page 3
3	Responsibilities	Page 4
4	Prevention Measures	Page 4
5	Procedure if a Child Goes Missing (On-Site)	Page 5
6	After the Incident	Page 6
7	Reporting to Ofsted	Page 7
8	Monitoring and Review	Page 7

1. Policy Statement

At Stay Wild Holiday Club, the safety and welfare of every child is paramount. We operate in line with safeguarding requirements set by Ofsted and good practice guidance from The Scout Association Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR).

Whilst all reasonable steps are taken to ensure children are supervised at all times, this policy outlines the procedures to be followed in the unlikely event that a child goes missing, ensuring a prompt, coordinated, and effective response.

2. Aims of this policy

This policy aims to:

- Ensure the **immediate safety and wellbeing** of any child who goes missing.
- Provide a **clear and consistent procedure** for staff to follow.
- Enable a **swift and coordinated response** to locate the child.
- Minimise risk through **effective preventative measures**.
- Ensure appropriate **communication with parents/carers and external agencies**.
- Meet safeguarding and welfare requirements set by **Ofsted** and align with **Scouting POR guidance**.
- Support staff in responding **calmly, confidently, and effectively** in a high-risk situation.

3. Responsibilities

- All staff are responsible for the supervision and safety of children in their care at all times.
- Staff must remain vigilant and conduct regular headcounts.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Senior Staff Member on Duty will take immediate control of any missing child incident.
- All staff must follow instructions from the lead staff member promptly and calmly.

4. Prevention Measures

To minimise the risk of a child going missing, Stay Wild Holiday Club will:

- Maintain accurate **registers** (arrival, departure)
- Carry out **frequent headcounts**, particularly:
    - During transitions
    - Before and after outdoor play
    - On trips and outings
- Ensure **secure premises**:
    - Doors and gates are monitored and controlled or locked.
    - Visitors are supervised and signed in.
- Maintain appropriate **staff-to-child ratios** in line with Ofsted requirements.
- Clearly explain **boundaries and expectations** to children.
- Complete and review **risk assessments** for all activities and outings (aligned with Scouting POR guidance).

Procedure if a Child Goes Missing (On-Site)

Immediate Action (0–5 minutes)

- Inform the **Club Manager immediately**.
- Conduct a **thorough but calm search** of:
    - Indoor areas (including toilets, cupboards, quiet spaces)
    - Outdoor areas and boundaries
- Carry out a **full headcount** and confirm the identity of the missing child.
- Check all **exit points, gates, and sign-out records**.

Escalation (After 5–10 minutes or sooner if high risk)

If the child is not located promptly:

- **Dial 999** and report the child as missing.
- Provide:
    - Child's name, age, and description
    - Clothing worn
    - Time and location last seen
- Contact the **child's parents/carers** without delay.

Ongoing Actions

- Continue searching in **designated pairs or small teams**, ensuring:
    - Remaining children are safely supervised
- Assign a staff member to:
    - Remain at the base location

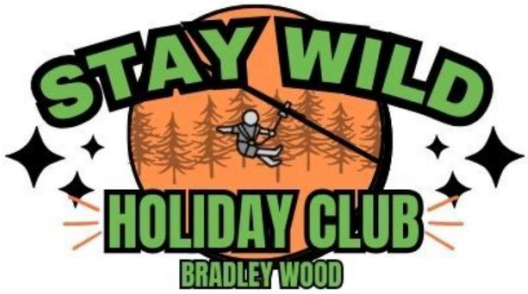
- Record all key information, including:
    - Timeline of events
    - Areas searched
    - Staff involved
    - Any witness information

Staff must remain calm and avoid causing unnecessary alarm to other children.

After the Incident

Once the child is found:

- Reassure the child and check for **injury or distress**.
- Inform:
    - Parents/carers
    - Police (if involved)
- Complete a **detailed written incident report**.
- Conduct a **staff debrief** to review actions taken.
- Review and update:
    - Risk assessments
    - Supervision procedures
- Provide **support** to the child, staff, and family where needed.



Reporting to Ofsted

The incident must be reported to Ofsted if:

- Police or Social Services were involved, or
- The child was missing for a significant period, or
- The incident meets the threshold of a **serious childcare incident**

Contact Details:

- Phone: 0300 123 1231
- Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Timescale:
Notification must be made **as soon as reasonably practicable, and within 14 days.**

Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be **reviewed annually** or following any significant incident.
- All staff will receive **training at induction** and ongoing safeguarding updates.
- Practice drills may be carried out periodically to ensure staff readiness.

Policy Last Reviewed: April 2026
Next Review Due: April 2027
Approved by: Catherine Smith