



Lost Child Policy

Procedure for Memorial and Covenham Grounds

The following will cover Cobham RFC Mini and Youth age groups, Lacrosse and Tennis

The following is the procedure to be followed in the event of a lost child within the mini or youth age groups of U5 to U18 during training, fixtures or festivals at either site and Lacrosse and Tennis when playing /training at either site. It is vital that the person discovering a child is missing knows what to do. What action is taken depends on who discovers the child is missing.

Given the age of children in the mini section, it is recognised that parents are ultimately responsible for their children during training sessions and fixtures and it is required that parents or a designated guardian be at the club at all times that their child is participating in club activities. This is to minimise the risk of a child going missing but is also required in the situation of an injury or sudden illness.

It is also recognised that in any of the age groups families often have more than one child attending the club or siblings of players who are not of playing age, which can distract parents and lead to children going missing. There are also times such as during Festivals when distractions can also lead to a child wandering from their parent's side. It is therefore necessary for the club to maintain a policy of dealing with the situation of a lost child so that the problem can be resolved quickly and efficiently.

It must be made clear to all parents and Guardians that the children are ultimately their responsibility and that whilst Cobham RFC take every step to reduce the risk of a child going missing, those responsible adults must safeguard the children in their care and be responsible for them.

In the event of a child being reported as missing, the following procedure is to be followed. This applies in the situation where a player or a young spectator is reported as being lost:

At the Memorial Grounds:

- A loud hailer is located on a hook behind and to the left of the main upstairs bar and the batteries are regularly checked and changed as required by the Cobham RFC staff.
- As soon as a child is noted to be missing, the parent or guardian must report this as soon as possible to the Manager or Coach of their age group, who will assume responsibility for managing the lost child incident and who is then designated as **the Coordinator**.
- The coordinator must request the full name of the child, name of the parent or guardian, the age (or age group) of the child, along with a description of clothes worn and colour of hair, when and where last seen and by whom. It is advisable for one of the parents to remain at the main meeting point and with someone who can calm them as they will be feeling very anxious.
- Once made aware of the situation the Coordinator must use the loud hailer to announce that a child has been lost. This announcement should be made on both sides of the club driveway clearly and audibly for all to hear.
- On hearing the lost child announcement the grounds are to be **"locked down"** to prevent anyone or any vehicle from leaving the grounds or entering. During lock down only adults who may be

conducting a search on foot outside the grounds should be permitted to exit the grounds and obviously must not be accompanied by a child.

To effect the lock down:

1. The manager or a coach of the Cobham age group playing on pitch 3 nearest the entrance from Fairmile Lane should designate two of their parents to man the entrance from Fairmile Lane and are to prevent anyone from leaving /entering the grounds.
 2. The manager or coach of the age group playing on pitch 2 nearest the entrance from Munro House are to designate a parent to immediately close and man the gate at the entrance from Munro House and to prevent anyone from leaving/entering the grounds the grounds. Any cars seen leaving via Munro House must have their numbers taken. The information may prove vital to the police if they are called.
- While the lock down is being put in place we need to “quarantine” or stop the movement of all young children. This will be effected by:
 1. All players in the U5 to U10 age groups are to be brought together in their age groups and made to sit down for a full register check of the players.
 2. A register is to be maintained and kept available by each age group at all times for this purpose
 3. Young spectators are to stay with their parents and to keep close and still.
 4. Those in the bar areas upstairs and down must remain there
 5. The loud hailer will be used to call directly to the child to come forward to the wooden stairs in the front of the club house immediately in front of the down stairs bar.
 - The co-ordinator must return to and remain easily visible at the control area which is located on the wooden stairs immediately outside the down stairs bar area and to keep note of the time from when the first announcement was made.
 - The Coordinator with the support of age group coaches and managers will co-ordinate parents into search teams to cover the area immediately around their respective pitches – this includes going into the hedges and areas around the perimeter. The age group closest to the club house will cover the club house and areas behind the buildings including ladies and men’s changing rooms, lift, BBQ and storage areas. If the child is found the adult finding the child must immediately return with the child to the designated control point on the wooden stairs.
 - At least three adults from each of the “lockdown” age groups are to be designated as a search party by the manager or coach of those age groups to cover the outside road areas on Fairmile Lane and Munro House driveway onto Portsmouth Road respectively. This search is to be conducted on foot and should include the road verges, bushes and associated areas. Once completed the search team are to report back to the designated control area.
 - If the child is found the individual is to speak calmly, introduce themselves and explain that they must be taken back to the ground and their parent/guardian. The child may be distraught. If the child will not accompany the individual, the individual must stay with the child until they are able to request someone to make contact with the parent/s at the ground. There must not be any force made to remove the child.
 - Once the child is found and returned to the parent/guardian it is the responsibility of the Coordinator to make an announcement of this fact again on both sides of the drive way.
 - If the child is not found after 15 minutes from first loud hailer announcement the police will be called by dialling the emergency number. While waiting for the police and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue.

- The Coordinator will be responsible for meeting the police and missing child's parent/carer. The Coordinator along with the manager will coordinate any actions instructed by the police, and do all they can to reassure the parents/carers. The Welfare officer must be informed
- Once the incident is resolved all information will be recorded in the incident book

At the Covenham Grounds:

- A loud hailer is available and can be located in the green lock up, which will be opened for access.
- As soon as a child is noted to be missing, the parent or guardian should report this as soon as possible to the Manager or Coach of their age group who then becomes designated as **the Coordinator**. The Coordinator must request the full name of the child, name of the parent or guardian, the age (or age group) of the child, along with a description of clothes worn and colour of hair, when last seen and by whom. It is advisable for one of the parents to remain at the main meeting point and with someone who can calm them as they will be feeling very anxious.
- Once made aware of the situation the Coordinator must use the loud hailer to announce that a child has been lost and take charge of the situation. This announcement should be made at the end of both pitches 4 and 6 and down both sides, clearly and audibly for all to hear.
- On hearing the lost child announcement the grounds are to be **"locked down"** to prevent anyone from leaving or entering the grounds. During lock down only adults who may be conducting a search on foot outside the perimeter of the grounds should be permitted to exit the grounds and obviously must not be accompanied by a child. To effect the lock down:
- The Coordinator must dispatch a parent to write down all the registration numbers of all seen cars leaving the Fairmile pub and Premier Inn. Note: We have no right to stop these people leaving, but the information may prove vital to the police if they are called.

To effect the lock down:

1. In the first instance the manager or a coach of the age group training/playing nearest to the entrance should designate one of their parents to man the main entrance into Covenham and they are to prevent anyone from leaving the grounds. Ensuring the gate is locked
- While the lock down is being put in place we need to "quarantine" or stop the movement of all players. This will be effected by:
 1. All players in the age groups on the pitches are to be brought together in their age groups and made to stand still
 2. Young spectators are to stay with their parents and be kept close and still.
 3. The loud hailer will be used to call directly to the child to come forward to the wooden seating benches in the middle of the covered area in front of the storage units.
 - The co-ordinator must return to and remain easily visible at the control area which is located in the middle of the covered area in front of the storage units and to keep note of the time from when the first announcement was made.
 - The Coordinator with the support of age group coaches and managers will co-ordinate parents into search teams to cover the area immediately around their respective pitches – this includes going into the hedges and areas around the perimeter and outside the fenced area. A group of parents is to be deployed to check the area outside the pitches to check around the Fairmile Pub, inside the Fairmile Pub, (alerting their management), down the drive and as far as the Portsmouth Road and over to the memorial grounds.

- Any search is to be conducted on foot and should include the road verges, bushes and associated areas. Once completed the search team are to report back to the designated control area.
- If the child is found the individual is to speak calmly, introduce themselves and explain that they must be taken back to the ground and their parent/guardian. The child may be upset. If the child will not accompany the individual, the individual must stay with the child until they are able to request someone to make contact with the parent/s at the ground. There must not be any force made to remove the child.
- Once the child is found and returned to the parent/guardian it is the responsibility of the Coordinator to make an announcement of this fact again on both sides of the drive way.
- If the child is not found after 15 minutes from first loud hailer announcement the police will be called by dialling the emergency number. While waiting for the police and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue.
- The Coordinator will be responsible for meeting the police and missing child's parent/carer. The Coordinator along with the manager will coordinate any actions instructed by the police, and do all they can to reassure the parents/carers. The Welfare officer must be informed
- Once the incident is resolved all information will be recorded in the incident book

When the child is found

It is recognised that during the time a child is missing, however briefly, all involved including parents and others suffer great fear, guilt and distress. It is not always easy to control all these emotions when the child is found. It is important to remember:

- That the child also might have been afraid and distressed and might now be in need of comfort.
- Remain calm and reassure the child.
- Ensure the child is not hurt.
- Acknowledge that it may not have been the child's fault.
- That the incident provides a good opportunity to talk to all the children to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the premises, and why.

A drill of the procedures for the situation for a lost child is to be conducted at least once in every season. The lost child procedures are to be circulated to all parents, coaches and managers at the beginning of the season. A register is to be kept of all lost child events and all such incidents are to be reported to the Chairman of the Minis as well as the Clubs Child Welfare Officer.

Dino Adams
Welfare Officer
Oct 2012