



CHEERSPORT
I R E L A N D

MISSING OR FOUND CHILD POLICY

1. Introduction

Cheer Sport Ireland (CSI) is committed to ensuring the safety and protection of all children. Situations involving a missing or found child require immediate, coordinated action. This policy outlines the required procedures to safeguard children during CSI activities and events.

2. Purpose

This policy ensures all CSI staff, volunteers, coaches, and event personnel understand what actions to take if a child is reported missing or if a child is found without appropriate supervision.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all CSI clubs, coaches, volunteers, event staff, athletes, parents, contractors, and spectators at any CSI-sanctioned activity.

4. Guiding Principles

- Children's safety is always the priority.
- Missing child situations require immediate response.
- All staff must stay calm, organized, and follow procedures.
- Children found without supervision must be safeguarded until reunited with their responsible adult.
- Communication must be prompt, accurate, and confidential.

5. Prevention Measures

- Clubs must maintain accurate attendance and sign-in/out records.
- Young children should never be left waiting alone after training.
- Event venues must clearly define safe zones and exit points.
- Children must be briefed on meeting points and rules.
- Ratios and supervision procedures must always be followed.

6. When a Child is Reported Missing – Immediate Actions

- Stop all activities if required and begin the missing-child protocol.
- Stay calm and reassure other children.
- Confirm with supervising adults the last known location/time.
- Search nearby areas calmly and systematically.
- Assign staff to check exits, bathrooms, seating areas, and public spaces.
- Do not send children to search.
- One adult must remain at the original location in case the child returns.

7. Escalation – If the Child is Not Found Within 5 Minutes

- Inform the Event Welfare Team or Club DLP immediately.

- Alert venue security if applicable.
- Lockdown exit points where possible without causing panic.
- Make a discreet announcement to staff (not public speakers).
- Search high-risk areas (toilets, exits, stairwells, car parks).

8. Escalation – If the Child is Not Found Within 10 Minutes

- Call An Garda Síochána immediately.
- Provide the child's name, age, clothing description, last known location, and any medical needs.
- Inform parents/guardians immediately with sensitivity and clarity.
- Continue coordinated search until Gardaí arrive.

9. When a Child is Found

- Reassure the child and ensure they are safe.
- Do not reprimand or blame the child.
- Notify search teams immediately.
- Return the child to their parent/guardian or responsible adult.
- Assess the child's physical and emotional condition.
- Record the incident and actions taken.

10. Procedure for a Found Child (No Adult Present)

- Stay with the child in a visible, safe area.
- Ask simple, non-leading questions (name, club, coach).
- Do not remove the child from the venue unless for safety.
- Contact Event Welfare Team or Club DLP immediately.
- Use discreet internal communication to locate the responsible adult.

11. Communication Protocols

- Announcements must be discreet and never broadcast publicly.
- Information shared must be factual and minimal.
- Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.
- Only designated personnel may communicate external updates.

12. Roles & Responsibilities

- Coaches: Maintain headcounts and respond immediately to missing child alerts.
- Volunteers: Assist in safe searches and monitor exit points.

- Club DLP: Coordinate safeguarding response and documentation.
- Event Welfare Team: Lead missing-child protocol during events.
- CSI Staff: Support coordination and liaise with venue management.

13. Special Considerations for Children with Additional Needs

- Children with disabilities may require tailored response plans.
- Supervisors must be aware of specific vulnerabilities.
- Additional supervision may be required for high-risk individuals.

14. After the Incident – Follow-Up Procedures

- Complete a Missing/Found Child Report Form.
- Review supervision practices to prevent recurrence.
- Hold a debrief with staff and welfare officers.
- Offer support to the child and family if needed.
- Report serious incidents to the National DLP.

15. Record Keeping

- All records must be factual, signed, dated, and stored securely.
- Reports must be retained according to the CSI Record Retention Policy.

16. Non-Compliance

- Failure to follow this policy may result in disciplinary action.
- Clubs may face sanctions for repeated or serious supervision failures.

17. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required.

18. Approval

This Missing or Found Child Policy was approved by the Board of Cheer Sport Ireland on:
11/07/2026

Signed:

FIONA COLLUMB, President/Chairperson

JOAN HEAPES, National Children's Officer