

Horse Sport Ireland

Missing Child Policy - Equestrian Sports

Guidelines for missing child at an Equestrian Sports Event:

If a child goes missing during an event, the following procedure will apply:

1. Report the incident to the Event Director/Show Secretary and/or Designated Safety Officer.
2. Ensure that all other children continue to be supervised appropriately (if applicable), while a search for the child concerned is carried out.
3. Organise the remaining available responsible adults to conduct a search of the surrounding area, allocating each individual/team to a specific area.

NB: Never send other underage people to assist in the search for a missing child.

4. Request all those searching to report back within a short, specified time. Ensure those involved in the search have a contact phone number for the search co-ordinator, i.e. the Event Director/Show Secretary or Designated Safety Officer. Reports from individual/teams in their specific area should go directly to the search co-ordinator who can update other parties in the search.
5. Where applicable, ask the Event Director/Show Secretary or Designated Safety Officer to announce over the PA system for the child to come to a designated safe area, e.g. Judges Box. **Try and avoid announcing directly that a child is missing over a PA system.**
6. If the child cannot be found after an initial search of the immediate surroundings, contact the child's parents/guardians (*if they are not already aware*) to advise them of the concern and reassure them that everything is being done to locate the child.
7. **Record/have available the following information:**
 - The circumstances in which the child has gone missing and where he/she was last seen;
 - Prepare a detailed physical description of the child, to include their hair and eye colour, approximate height and build and clothing he/she was wearing;

This information will be required by the Gardaí and other searchers.

8. If the search is ongoing 20 minutes after the initial report of a missing child, the Event Director/Show Secretary or Designated Safety Officer must report the concern to the local Gardaí/PSNI. The person notifying the Gardaí/PSNI should follow guidance if further action is recommended and maintain close contact with the Gardaí/PSNI.
9. Ensure that you inform all adults involved including the parents, searchers and Gardaí/PSNI when the child is located.

NB: Prior to any equestrian event, the Event Director/Show Secretary should ensure they have the contact details for the nearest Garda/PSNI Station, have designated a Safe Area (e.g. Judges Box) for a missing child to report to, for the purposes of this policy.