



**Umbrella Family and  
Child Centres of Hamilton**

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**5.4 MISSING CHILDREN POLICY**

<b>MANUAL</b>	<b>Child Care Centre Program Policy Manual</b>
<b>SECTION</b>	<b>5- Safety</b>
<b>POLICY</b>	<b>5.4 Missing Children Policy</b>
<b>LAST REVISED</b>	<b>June 19, 2024</b>

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**RATIONALE**

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The safety of children in UFCC programs is our primary concern. Staff members will be diligent in the supervision of children as required under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014. Established transition procedures for off-site activities ensure that both children and staff are aware of expectations and processes and reduce risk.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

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All staff and summer camp staff.

**POLICY**

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- Remain calm at all times in front of the children. Use a calm voice when making calls to UFCC staff, parents and police. If possible, have another staff stay with the children while making calls in a separate area.
- All staff will be required to sign and follow the plan of action for a missing child and to ensure they are always aware of the whereabouts of all children under their care.

**PROCEDURE**

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**Child Missing from Full Day Program**

For any child who has been in the program and is now missing; the following steps **MUST** be taken:

1. Using the walkie-talkie or phone, notify your Supervisor/Program Leader and other staff, that a child is missing and you do not know their whereabouts. The Supervisor or Program Leader will call the parents and the Program Manager and notify them of the current situation.
2. The staff will have 4 minutes to look for the child in and around their centre.
3. If the child is found within 4 minutes, the Supervisor will call their Program Manager and the child's parents to notify them.
4. If you have not found the child within 5 minutes, a phone call to police will be made, notifying them that there is a missing child. The Supervisor or Program Leader will have the Registration Form ready when speaking to the police. A picture of the child will be given to police when they arrive.



5. The Supervisor or Program Leader will then call the parents to notify them that the child is missing and that the police have been called.
6. If at any time the child is found by the staff, the police will be notified immediately. As soon as this has been done, parents will be notified.
7. If the child is still missing, the Supervisor or Program Leader will stay on premise with police, while staff who are available will continue looking for child.
8. All staff will sign and follow the Supervision of Children Policy and ensure they know where the children are at all times.

### **Child Missing from Extended Day Program**

For any child who is expected after school, but does not arrive within the first 5 minutes of the bell ringing to signal school dismissal, begin to initiate these steps:

1. Notify the Supervisor that you require assistance. If the Supervisor is not available, call the Program Leader. The Supervisor or Program Leader may be able to take over looking for the child.
2. Check the hallways of the school or in other program rooms in case the child has reported to the wrong room. (Other children in the program may be able to provide information regarding a child's whereabouts but this should be treated only as another place to look. We cannot take a child's word for this and need to continue looking until we find the child.)
3. Check the bus lines to see if the child went to the bus by accident. If the busses have left, ask the school secretary to call the bus company to inquire if the child went on the bus by accident.
4. If the child was at school and was NOT picked up, ask the school secretary to page the child or inquire with the child's teacher to see if the child's whereabouts are known.
5. Ratios must be maintained during the search; if necessary, take these steps using the walkie-talkies, phone or cell phone.
6. Strive to remain calm in front of the other children and when talking to parents; if possible, have another UFCC staff remain with the children while you make the calls in a separate area.

Note: All of these steps must be taken, but not necessarily in this order. Different staff may be assigned to follow up on different tasks, as they are able, and report back to the main person who is heading up the search. Speed is of the essence in locating any missing child.

### **Calls to Police Department and Parents**

If the child is not located within 10 minutes from the time the school dismissal bell has rung and you have taken the steps above:

1. Call the parents at home or work to notify them that the child has not arrived. Ask if the parent is aware of child's whereabouts.
2. Call the Police Department and advise them that a child is missing; request their assistance in locating the child. Have the child's Registration Form and picture available to share with police.



3. As soon as reasonably possible following the call to the police, the Supervisor or Program Leader in charge must notify the Program Manager.
4. If the parent, Supervisor or Program Manager cannot be reached, notify Head Office immediately at 905-312-9836.

### **Children who Leave the Program Without Permission**

Sometimes children become frustrated or angry and leave the extended day program without permission. Should this occur, immediately follow the steps for locating the missing child:

1. The safety of all the children is paramount and supervision of the group must be maintained. Ask for assistance from co-workers and school staff.
2. Police and the child's parents should be called if the child is not located within the first 5 minutes of leaving the program.
3. If the child is known to have left the school property or is out of the sight line of staff, police and the child's parents should be called immediately.

### **Child Missing at Camp**

If a child or children are missing from the program, the following steps MUST be taken:

1. Using the walkie-talkie or phone, notify the Supervisor and other staff that a child or children are missing and you do not know their whereabouts. The Supervisor will notify the UFCC Program Manager (and Fifty Point Conservation staff, if applicable).
2. The Supervisor will access the child(ren)'s Registration Form and photo in case a police report is required.
3. The staff will have 5 minutes to look for the child(ren) in and around gathering area and vicinity.
4. If the child(ren) are found within 5 minutes, the Supervisor will notify their Program Manager (and Conservation staff, if applicable).
5. If the child has not been found within 5 minutes, the Supervisor will call the police to report a missing child or children. Registration Form and photo will be accessible.
6. During this time, as many staff as possible will continue to look for the child.
7. The Supervisor will call the parents to notify them that their child is missing and that police have been called.
8. The Supervisor will stay on the premises with police while all available staff continue to look for the child.
9. If the child is found by the staff, the police will be notified immediately. As soon as this has been done, parents, the Program Manager will be notified.

### **Child Missing on a Field Trip**

If a child or children are missing from the program, the following steps MUST be taken:



1. Using the walkie-talkie or phone, notify the Supervisor and other staff that a child or children are missing and you do not know their whereabouts. The Supervisor will notify the UFCC Program Manager (and staff employed by the venue, if applicable).
2. The staff will have 5 minutes to look for the child(ren) in and around gathering area and vicinity.
3. If the child(ren) are found within 5 minutes, the Supervisor will notify their Program Manager (and venue staff, if applicable).
4. If the child has not been found within 5 minutes, the Supervisor will call the police to report a missing child or children. The Registration Form and photo will be accessible.
5. During this time, as many staff as possible will continue to look for the child.
6. The Supervisor will call the parents to notify them that their child is missing and that police have been called.
7. The Supervisor will stay on the premises with police while all available staff continue to look for the child.
8. If the child is found by the staff, the police will be notified immediately. As soon as this has been done, parents, the Program Manager (and staff employed by the venue) will be notified.

Note: In *all* cases of a missing child, where the child's whereabouts are unknown and the child is not being supervised by UFCC staff, the Serious Occurrence Policy must be followed.

**Policy Attachments:** N/A