

Procedure for lost & found children or vulnerable adults

October 2023

Dealing with a LOST child or vulnerable adult

NB: if the lost child belongs to a party who have arranged their visit via Schools and Family Learning, that Department should be contacted on...

1. If a person approaches a member of staff or volunteer to report a lost child or vulnerable adult that member of staff or volunteer should immediately alert a VEM or Security to report the matter. However, the person receiving the report must consider whether members of the public can overhear their conversation. If the person receiving the report is able to leave their post, they should take the reporting person to an area where the conversation cannot be overheard. If the person receiving the report cannot leave their post, they should radio for a colleague to join them urgently and ask the colleague to take the person making the report to an area where the conversation cannot be overheard.
2. Full details and a description of lost/missing child or vulnerable adult must be obtained from the person reporting. This is to include age, height, build, and ethnic origin, their clothing and circumstances of their loss including where they were last seen and with whom.
3. The VEM and Security staff member should alert other staff members as appropriate, for example, the Virger or Minister on duty, and should work together to take charge of the incident and ensure that the details of the loss and where last seen and description are circulated to all staff via the radio. The message should be prefaced with advice that the dialogue should be confidential if possible. The VEM Security staff member must liaise with the Security Control Room and ensure that all security staff, particularly at the entrance/exits points, are aware of the incident and are looking out for the child or vulnerable person and have checked CCTV.
4. All members of staff should be actively looking for the lost child or vulnerable person. VE staff must not leave their position to do this. If the child or vulnerable person is not seen within 10 minutes the VEM should initiate a systematic sweep of the Cathedral including the galleries and Crypt.
5. If a missing child or vulnerable adult has not been found within a short period of time (normally around 10 minutes but this period will be adjusted depending on the risk assessment) the VEM should carry out a dynamic risk assessment. Dependant on all the circumstances the risk assessment may indicate that police must be called. At this stage, the Head of Security and Resilience and Head of Visitor Operations should be informed. Consideration

should be given as to whether it would be appropriate to make a loudspeaker announcement about the lost child/vulnerable person, taking into account that this could alert someone who has abducted or attempting to abduct a child or vulnerable adult. This decision should be part of a dynamic risk assessment. The name of the child/vulnerable person or their description should **not** be announced. If an announcement is made, a parent/guardian/carer/teacher should approach a member of staff who will accompany them to the designated lost/fount child/vulnerable adult point. (See below.) During sightseeing hours, the VEM should take the parent/guardian/carer/teacher to the meeting point at the Main Stairs desk to report the incident and wait to be re-united with the child or vulnerable person. During services outside of sightseeing hours such as Evensong the meeting point should be at the Welcome Point.

6. If a Security Officer or member of staff see a child or vulnerable adult of a similar description walking out of an exit, or if they are seen inside the Cathedral, the Security Officer/staff member must alert a colleague to accompany them and then engage with the possible missing child/vulnerable adult to ascertain if they are lost. It should be remembered that a vulnerable adult may be confused and not remember that they had arrived with someone. If it is ascertained or suspected that the person is lost the staff member must immediately contact the VEM and Security Control Room.
7. Where there is a particular welfare need or need for pastoral support, a Virger should contact an appropriate Cathedral Minister to attend and remain to assist as needed and appropriate until they arrive. Physical contact can easily be misinterpreted and should be avoided at all times, unless it is to prevent risk to life or limb. It would be appropriate to sit or crouch to be at eye level with a young child.
8. The VEM will instruct the member of staff member with the person to bring them back into the Cathedral and go to the meeting point at Main Stairs or welcome point as in para. 6. If a vulnerable adult refuses to re-enter the Cathedral, then the carer should be taken out to the vulnerable adult by two members of staff.
9. Once found, the VEM should investigate the circumstances as to how the child or vulnerable adult became separated from their parent/guardian/carer/teacher. If it appears possible that the child or vulnerable adult became separated/lost because of a purposeful or neglectful lack of appropriate parental/carer supervision e.g. supervision as one would reasonably expect in the circumstances, the incident should be reported as a safeguarding incident and a report sent to the safeguarding officer. Once the lost child/vulnerable person has been re-united with the carer/parent, any further concerns about an ability to provide appropriate care should be discussed with the Safeguarding Officer, Chaplain, or Canon in Residence. If necessary, advice should be sought from statutory services.

10. The child or vulnerable adult must not leave the premises or be left alone with their parent/guardian/carer/teacher until any outstanding concerns have been addressed and the ID of that person has been checked.
11. If police were called and attended full details should be obtained of the police investigation, including the police reference (cad) number, and a report should be completed and sent to the safeguarding officer and the Canon in Residence.

Dealing with a FOUND child or vulnerable adult

1. Staff members should take all found children or vulnerable adults to the Main Stairs desk where there will always be a VEA present when the Cathedral is open. During services outside of sightseeing hours such as evensong the meeting point should be at the Welcome Point.
2. On arrival at the Main Stairs desk the VEM and the Security Control Room must be informed immediately. The staff member alerting the VEM and Security Control Room must ensure, as far as possible, that members of the public do not overhear their conversation. The VEM should attend the desk to take charge of the incident. There **MUST** always be two members of staff present at all times with the child or vulnerable person, until the child has been collected by a parent/guardian, or a responsible person has collected the vulnerable adult, or other arrangements have been made; for example, taking advice from statutory services, or calling a relative to take advice about any necessary further support for the vulnerable adult.
3. All staff and volunteers should be informed by the VEM over the radio that there is a found child/vulnerable adult at the Main stairs desk. The message should be prefaced with advice that the dialogue should be confidential if possible. Staff will then be able to accompany a parent, guardian or member of teaching staff who reports them lost. If the child is believed to be part of a group such as a school, the lead teacher must be informed immediately.
4. Where there is a particular welfare need or need for pastoral support, a Virger should contact an appropriate Cathedral Minister to attend and remain to assist as needed and appropriate until they arrive. Physical contact can easily be misinterpreted and should be avoided at all times, unless it is to prevent risk to life or limb. It would be appropriate to sit or crouch to be at eye level with a young child.
5. As much information should be taken from the child or vulnerable adult, including a full description of the person with whom they arrived, clothing, age and name. All members of staff should be actively looking for an adult who may appear to be distressed or appears to be searching for their lost child or vulnerable companion. The VEA should not leave their position when

undertaking this. As a last resort the manager dealing with the matter on the Cathedral floor should considering requesting that the Security Control Room issue an announcement on the PA system. The name of the child or their description should not be announced. This must be part of a dynamic risk assessment as there is a risk that a dubious person who is not attached to the child or vulnerable person could come forward.

6. If the parent/carer/guardian/teacher approaches the Main Stairs desk or welcome point their full details should be obtained together with a request for proof of their identity. The child or vulnerable adult should not be handed over to them unless the VEM is absolutely certain that they are the parent or guardian. This will normally be established by relevant questions and answers to the found child/vulnerable person and the parent or guardian. If there is any doubt police should be called to assist. The VEM should ensure that a report is completed and forwarded to the VEM and safeguarding officer if appropriate. The VEM should also alert the Head of Schools and Families Learning if the child is with a school party. In the event of police involvement, the Canon in Residence should also receive the report.
7. If an individual case presents with circumstance which may lead to the child/vulnerable adult being a high-risk case, for example a victim of crime, police should be called immediately. The Head of Security and Resilience and Canon in Residence should be contacted at the same time. If a parent/guardian/carer/teacher appears to be unable to care for a child due to being under the influence of alcohol/drugs, or if willful neglect/carelessness led to the child becoming lost, the Safeguarding Officer or if appropriate the police, should be consulted; in the event of a concern about a teacher, the Schools and Family Learning team should be contacted and the appropriate school notified.
8. If children or vulnerable adults are not re-united with their parent/guardian/carer or teacher within a short period, consideration should be given to contacting the police. Under these circumstances, the decision about how long to wait before calling the police should be made by the manager dealing with the matter on the Cathedral floor, in conjunction with Security if necessary.