



MISSING & WANDERING CHILD POLICY

August 2026

Policy Statement

Maple Ridge Child Care Society is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children in our care. This policy outlines the procedures staff must follow if a child is missing, leaves the supervised area without authorization, or cannot be immediately located.

The safety and well-being of the child is the highest priority. Staff will respond immediately and follow the procedures below.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for maintaining active supervision and immediately reporting any concern that a child may be missing or outside the designated supervised area.

Staff must be familiar with this policy and understand their responsibilities in the event of a missing or wandering child.

The safety of the children in care is the Society's highest priority, and all missing-child situations will be treated seriously and responded to immediately.

Prevention

Staff will take reasonable steps to prevent children from becoming missing or wandering from the program, including:

- Maintaining required staff-to-child ratios and active supervision at all times.
- Completing regular head counts, particularly during transitions, outdoor play, field trips, arrivals, and departures. Knowing the location and attendance status of every child in care.
- Ensuring children remain within designated and supervised program areas.
- Monitoring entrances, exits, gates, and other areas where a child could potentially leave the premises.
- Following the Society's sign-in/sign-out and authorized pick-up procedures.
- Communicating with other staff during transitions to ensure responsibility for each child is clear.
- Ensuring children are appropriately supervised when moving between classrooms, washrooms, playgrounds, and other areas of the facility.

Procedure

If a child cannot be immediately located, staff will treat the situation as an emergency. The staff member who discovers the child is missing will immediately notify the Program Supervisor/Manager and provide all known information, including:

- The child's name and age.
- The last known location.
- The last time the child was seen.



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- What the child was wearing.
- The direction the child may have travelled.
- Any known information about where the child may have gone.

Staff will not delay the search while waiting for additional information.

Immediate Search

The Program Supervisor/Manager will immediately coordinate a search. Staff will:

1. Check the child's last known location and all areas of the facility.
2. Check washrooms, classrooms, storage areas, playgrounds, hallways, and other areas where the child may be hiding or playing.
3. Check all exits, gates, and areas surrounding the facility.
4. Search the immediate surrounding area while maintaining required supervision and ratios for the remaining children.
5. Ask available staff to check areas such as parking lots, sidewalks, neighbouring areas, and other locations the child may reasonably have travelled.
6. Continue communicating with the Supervisor/Manager throughout the search.

Staff will not leave other children unsupervised in order to conduct a search.

Contacting Emergency Services

If the child cannot be located immediately, or if there is any concern that the child may be in danger, the Supervisor/Manager or designate will contact 911 without delay.

Emergency services will be provided with all available information, including:

- Child's name and age.
- Physical description.
- Clothing worn.
- Recent photograph, if available.
- Possible direction of travel.
- Any relevant information about the child's needs, abilities, or behaviours that may assist in locating them.

Staff will cooperate fully with police and emergency responders.

Parent/Guardian Notification

The child's parent/guardian will be contacted as soon as reasonably possible once the immediate emergency response has been initiated. The parent/guardian will be informed of:

- What occurred.
- When and where the child was last seen.
- The steps being taken to locate the child.
- Whether emergency services have been contacted.



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- Any additional information available.

MRCS will continue communicating with the parent/guardian throughout the incident as appropriate.

When the Child Is Located

Once the child is located, staff will:

1. Ensure the child's immediate safety and assess whether medical attention is required.
2. Contact emergency medical services if necessary.
3. Notify the parent/guardian of the child's location and condition.
4. Determine, to the best of our ability, where the child went and how they left the supervised area.
5. Provide appropriate reassurance and support to the child.
6. Document the incident in accordance with Society procedures.

The child will not be disciplined or shamed for wandering or leaving the supervised area.

Documentation and Reporting

A written incident report will be completed as soon as possible following the incident. The report will include:

- Date and time of the incident.
- Child's name.
- Location of the program.
- Last known location and time the child was seen.
- Circumstances surrounding the incident.
- Staff involved.
- Search and response procedures followed.
- Whether 911/police or other emergency services were contacted.
- When and how the child was located.
- Condition of the child upon being located.
- Parent/guardian notification.
- Any follow-up actions required.
- Any required notification to the applicable licensing authority will be completed in accordance with Child Care Licensing requirements.

Follow-Up and Prevention

Following any missing or wandering incident, the Manager and Executive Director/Operator will review the circumstances to determine whether additional preventative measures are required. This may include:

- Reviewing supervision practices.
- Reviewing transition and head-count procedures.



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- Reviewing door, gate, and security procedures.
- Identifying environmental risks.
- Updating the child's individual safety or supervision plan when appropriate.
- Discussing the incident with relevant staff.
- Providing additional staff training or direction.
- Implementing additional safeguards to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

The goal of the review is to improve safety and supervision and not to assign blame.