

Merton Mencap

**Missing Service User
Procedure**

June 2011



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This procedure has been adopted by Merton Mencap through its Executive Committee which remains responsible for its review.

Original signed version is kept at the Merton Mencap office.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Chair of Executive Committee

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Chief Executive

Record of adoption and review of this policy and procedure:-

Adopted: 16 September 2009
Reviewed: 28 June 2011

MERTON MENCAP

MISSING SERVICE USER PROCEDURE

General

This document sets out the procedure to be followed if a service user goes missing whilst involved with Merton Mencap's services or activities.

In this document, staff or staff member refers to employees, bank workers and volunteers.

This document should be read, however, within the context of the other Merton Mencap policies and procedures designed to ensure the safety and security of service users, in particular, risk assessments relating to that service or activity. In the case of service users with a learning disability, reference should also be made to the personal profile form and individual risk assessment or care plan.

A copy of this procedure is provided to the person in charge of each service or activity, and it is the responsibility of that person to communicate the content to all staff involved with that activity.

Prior to activity

At the start of a service or activity, it is the responsibility of the person in charge to take a register.

The person in charge will also:-

- agree with staff who is responsible for overseeing the safety and whereabouts of each service user
- encourage staff to note a description of the service user they are responsible for (e.g. the colour of their clothes) in case this information is needed later
- establish, as far as possible, that service users know what to do if they are lost

In the case of a community-based activity involving service users with a learning disability, Merton Mencap will encourage service users to carry some kind of identification, including, where practicable, contact details for a responsible person at Merton Mencap. This may be provided to the service users, depending on the circumstances.

Procedure if a service user goes missing

Throughout the following procedure, it is important for all staff to maintain personal calm and to cause as little anxiety as possible amongst other service users.

1. The person in charge of the activity should note the time when the service user was first noticed missing and must make a note of every subsequent action, including times

2. The person in charge should discuss with other staff and service users the possible reasons for the absence, in a way that does not generate concern or anxiety
3. The person in charge should ensure the safety and security of other service users while organising a thorough search, for example, of surrounding areas/ grounds/ vicinity/ check of all rooms in the building
4. The person in charge should arrange for the local help point to be notified – for example, Lifeguard, Shop/Venue Manager, Theme Park Guest Services. In such instances, it is important that the following information can be provided:-
 - a description of the missing person
 - some indication of the service user's relevant abilities – e.g. physical mobility, communication skills
 - information about any particular behaviour patterns that may be relevant to their absence or their reaction to feeling lost and needing to seek and/or receive help
5. The person in charge should contact the relevant Projects Manager or Chief Executive to advise of situation. The relevant Projects Manager or Chief Executive may notify the parent or responsible carer of the missing service user at that point
6. If the missing service user is not found, the local police and local hospital will be notified, by the team leader, relevant Projects Manager or Chief Executive. The precise timing of this will be considered with regard to the person's age, competency and level of vulnerability
7. Once the missing person has been located or has returned, the person in charge should ensure that all parties who were advised are immediately contacted again and informed of the outcome
8. The person in charge should check the missing person for any sign of physical injury and try to find out whether the missing service user feels they have been subject to any form of abuse. The person in charge should assess whether the missing person may require first aid, in particular, any treatment for shock, and should observe the missing person frequently for signs of harm
9. The person in charge should complete the relevant Incident Report Form without delay
10. The relevant projects manager or Chief Executive should investigate the incident and update the risk assessment relating to that service or activity, if necessary. The Chief Executive will write to the parent or responsible carer with details of the incident and the findings of the subsequent investigation
11. The relevant Projects Manager or Chief Executive may advise other parties of the incident, as required, such as the relevant social services department, if the service user was referred to the activity by social services.