ALL COMMUNITIES MATTER CIC

Lost Children Policy

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July 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any child who becomes separated from their parent, guardian, or responsible adult while attending the community market. All volunteers, staff, and traders are expected to follow this procedure.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All market organisers.
- Staff and volunteers.
- Traders who become aware of a lost or found child.
- Procedure for a Lost Child

If a child is found without their parent or guardian:

- Stay calm and reassure the child.
- Move the child to the designated Welfare or Information Point if safe to do so.
- Never leave the child unattended.
- Ask the child for their first name and, if they know it, the name of their parent or guardian. Avoid asking leading questions.
- Notify the Event Manager or designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

- Make a discreet announcement where appropriate, avoiding giving the child's full name or unnecessary personal details. For example:

"Would the parent or guardian of a child waiting at the Information Point please attend immediately."

Keep the child comfortable and engaged while waiting. At least two members of staff or volunteers should remain present where possible.

Do not release the child until the identity of the parent or guardian has been reasonably confirmed.

Procedure for a Parent or Guardian Reporting a Missing Child

Obtain:

- Child's first name.
- Approximate age.
- Physical description.
- Clothing description.
- Last known location.
- Time they were last seen.
- Notify the Event Manager immediately.
- Inform staff, volunteers, and security (where available) using the agreed communication method.
- Search the market in a coordinated manner while ensuring the reporting adult remains at the agreed meeting point.

If the child is not located promptly, contact the police by dialling 999. The Event Manager should determine when this is appropriate, taking account of the child's age, vulnerability, and circumstances.

Safeguarding

Never take a child to a private or isolated area.

Physical contact should be kept to the minimum necessary for the child's safety or comfort.

Do not take photographs of the child unless requested by the police.

Protect the child's privacy and avoid discussing the incident with members of the public.

Record Keeping

Following any incident, the Event Manager should complete an incident report including:

- Date and time.
- Location.
- Child's first name (if known).
- Description of the incident.
- Actions taken.
- Time the child was reunited with their parent or guardian.
- Details of any police involvement.
- Names of staff or volunteers involved.

Records should be stored securely in accordance with applicable data protection requirements.

Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

All staff, volunteers, and traders should:

- Be familiar with this policy.
- Report any concerns immediately.
- Cooperate fully with the Event Manager during a lost child incident.
- Treat all children with respect, kindness, and sensitivity.

Review

This policy should be reviewed annually or following any lost child incident to ensure it remains effective and reflects current safeguarding best practice.