

# Absent and Missing Children

## 1. Overview

### 1.1. Purpose

The safety and wellbeing of all children while at the Service is our priority. Clear procedures are in place to support staff and children where a child is unaccounted for or does not arrive at the Service when they are expected to.

### 1.2. Scope

All Junior Adventures Group (JAG) People are required to comply with the provisions set out in this policy, their contract of employment and all other relevant policies, procedures and legislation.

### 1.3. Legislative Requirements

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, Junior Adventures Group is required to have policies and procedures in place to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the children in care.

## 2. Policy Statement

JAG is committed to providing a safe and positive environment where children and young people can participate in a broad range of experiences and learning opportunities. We must deliver a service that ensures that parents and guardians feel that their children are safe and that emergency procedures are in place and followed to support the wellbeing and safety of children attending the Service.

## 3. Principles

### 3.1. Duty of Care

Team Members have a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the Service. In the event of an incident, injury, trauma or illness to a child, all Team Members have a duty of care to respond appropriately.

All children involved in an incident, injury, trauma or illness will be monitored and cared for until an authorised person takes charge of them, where applicable.

### 3.2. Absent Children

Parents must notify the Service when their child/ren will not be attending the Service to assist the group in delivering the best service and meeting their obligations.

Team Members will communicate information to all other Team Members verbally and through the Service admin diary.

Where a child does not arrive at the Service, and Team Members have not been notified that the child will be absent, a 'no show' fee is charged to the family's account.

### 3.3. Non-arrivals

The Service will follow up on non-arrivals to the Service by phone, following procedures. The Service will enquire at the school to identify whether the child was at school on the day.

If no confirmation can be obtained, local police will be notified of the missing child within 30 minutes of school finishing.

### 3.4. Missing Children

Where it is determined that a child is missing from the Service, Team members will follow the *Missing Child Procedure*. After the session, an incident report will be completed with the express intention of resolving the issue and lessons learnt to reduce future risks.

### 3.5. Confidentiality

All incidents will be managed confidentially.

Parents and guardians of children involved will be given information or identifying details about other children. This includes information provided in an incident report.

### 3.6. Leaving the Service Boundaries

If a child leaves the Service boundaries without supervision or authorisation, Team Members will implement the supporting procedures as soon as they are aware of the child's absence. Team Members will work cooperatively with each other to enact a response to any incidents that occur, including a child leaving a service boundary, and follow the Missing Child Procedure where the child has not been located.

### 3.7. Serious Incidents

Team Members must escalate the instance of a serious incident to their Line manager and emergency service as required following the Incident Management Procedure.

### 3.8. Incident Reporting and Escalation

An incident report must be accurately completed for all instances of an incident, injury, trauma or illness before the end of the session and within 24 hours. We review and reflect on all incidents as they are opportunities to learn and improve.

All incident reports will be kept and stored as per regulatory requirements.

All Team Members are responsible for communicating and escalating the occurrence of a serious incident, injury, trauma or illness to their Line Manager as soon as practicable and in accordance with the Incident Escalation Matrix.

### 3.9. Notification to Parents/Guardians

Where a child leaves the boundary or is missing, the family will be notified by a team member while other staff enact the missing child procedure. The parents and guardians of any child affected by an incident, injury, trauma or illness must be notified within 24 hours.

Parents and guardians are required to provide emergency contact details if they cannot be contacted.

### 3.10. Reportable Incidents and Notifications

Reportable incidents are those that the approved provider is required to notify an external agency or organisation.

Where required, incidents and serious incidents will be notified to the appropriate authority within the prescribed timeframes.

### 3.11. Safeguarding Children and Young People

Any incidents, allegations or disclosures of abuse or neglect must be documented in an incident report and escalated to management as soon as practicable.

All JAG People are considered mandatory reporters. For any safeguarding concerns, notifications to the regulatory authority and state-based child protection reporting authorities must be made following the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedure.

### 3.12. Death of a Child

The death of a child must immediately be reported to:

- an ambulance service
- the police
- management
- the regulatory authority.

It is not the role of Team Members to inform a parent of the death of their child. The emergency services will inform the family. In this case, the approved provider will maintain communication with the family and all stakeholders.

A detailed report must be completed as soon as possible after the event and provided to management and other agencies as required.

### 3.13. Counselling and Support

Counselling services will be made available to all JAG People and children where required following a serious incident or death of a child.

### 3.14. Supervision

Throughout managing incidents, Team Members must ensure supervision and safety of children is maintained. It is important that Team Members communicate their intended movements to ensure that children are adequately supervised throughout transitions.

### 3.15. Child Safety

We safeguard children through our procedures and practices. Policies and practices reflect the relevant legislation, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. JAG provides policies and procedures to equip JAG people with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe. Service Practice are continuously reviewed and improved to ensure current legislation is in effect throughout the business.

## 4. Key Terms

Term	Definition
Incident notifiable to the regulatory authority	<p>Any incidents that seriously compromise the safety, health or wellbeing of children are notifiable to the Regulatory Authority. An Approved Provider must notify the Regulatory Authority of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● any serious incident</li> <li>● any complaints alleging: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ that a serious incident has occurred or is occurring</li> <li>○ that this law has been contravened</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ information regarding any other prescribed matters</li> <li>● any incident that requires the Service to close or reduce the number of children attending</li> <li>● any circumstance that poses a risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child attending the Service</li> <li>● any incident where the approved provider reasonably believes that physical or sexual abuse of a child or children has occurred or is occurring</li> <li>● allegations that physical or sexual abuse of a child or children has occurred or is occurring</li> </ul> <p>the Service is caring for an extra child/children due to an emergency</p>
JAG People/JAG Person	Any adult that governs, manages, conducts work for or provides activities to JAG in a paid or unpaid activity spanning all levels of the organisational structure
Leaving without authorisation	Any instance whereby a child leaves the area of supervision or the approved premises without the knowledge of the Service Leader or with the knowledge of the Service Leader but in a manner that circumvents all safety protocols and places the Service at risk of breaching laws and regulations
Line Manager	The persons in the direct supervisory role overseeing the work of the particular JAG person; the JAG persons escalate matters toward the person in this role, in the event of incidents and breaches
Serious Incident	<p>A <b>serious incident</b> as defined by the National Regulations as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the death of a child while that child is being educated and cared for or following an incident occurring while that child was being educated and cared for</li> <li>● any incident involving serious injury or trauma to a child where urgent medical attention was required, sought, or ought to have been sought (e.g., a broken limb)</li> <li>● any illness where a child attended or ought to have attended a hospital (e.g., an asthma attack or anaphylaxis reaction)</li> <li>● any emergency where emergency services attended</li> <li>● any circumstance where a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for</li> <li>○ appears to have been taken or removed from the Service in a way that breaches the National Regulations</li> <li>○ is mistakenly locked in or locked out of the Service or premises</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Service Leader	<p>Anyone who oversees the Service in one of the following roles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Approved Provider; if the approved provider is an individual, in other cases, a person with management or control of the Service</li> <li>2. The Nominated Supervisor of the Service</li> </ol>

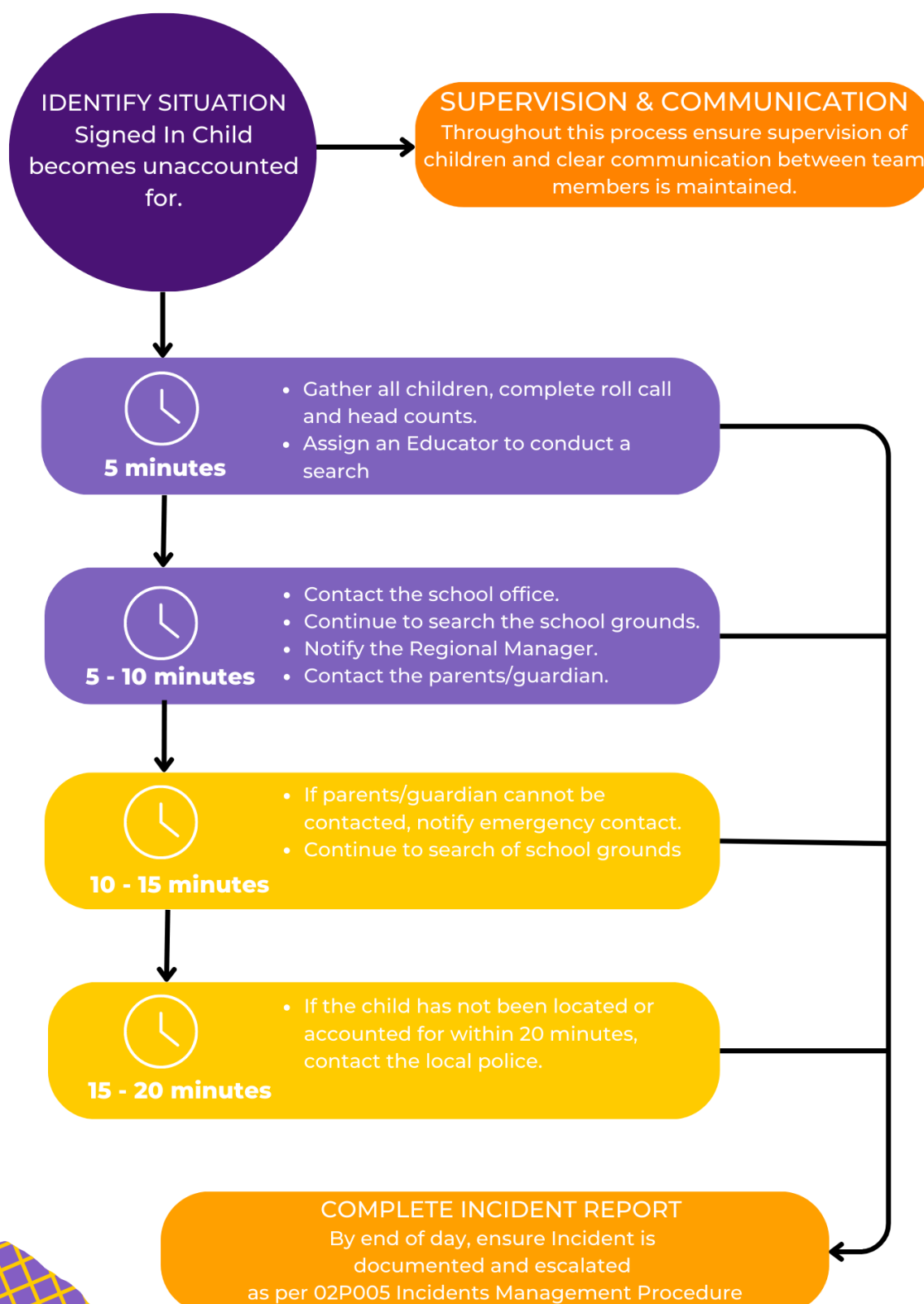
Term	Definition
	3. A Responsible Person who has been placed in day-to-day charge of the Service in the absence of the Nominated Supervisor.
Team Members	JAG People who work directly with children

## 5. References

<b>Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations</b>
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
<a href="https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard">https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard</a>
Family Law Act 1975
<b>Other Relevant Legislation</b>
Regulation 99 – Children leaving the education and care service premises
Regulation 102 – Authorisation for excursions
Regulation 115 – Premises designed to facilitate supervision
Regulation 168 – Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170 – Policies and procedures to be followed
<b>Related Policies</b>
Safeguarding Children and Young People
Service Delivery Governance and Management
Delivery and Collection of Children Procedures
Incident Reporting Policy
<b>Related Procedures</b>
02P003 Absent and Missing Children Procedures
02P002 Delivery and Collection of Children Procedures
02P011 Extra-Curricular Activities Procedures
02P012 Transport Safety Procedures
02P005 Incident Management procedure
<b>Other</b>
Quality Area 2: Elements 2.2.1, 2.23
OCG Guide to Child Safe Standards - <a href="https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-scheme">https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-scheme</a>
CCYP Child safe Standards - <a href="https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/">https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/</a>
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations - <a href="https://childdsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles">https://childdsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles</a>

## 6. Appendices

### 6.1. Appendix 1 - – Missing Child Procedure



<i>Version</i>	3.0
<i>Change History</i>	JAG Policy Change Register
<i>Date Approved</i>	01/07/2023
<i>Date Implemented</i>	01/07/2023
<i>Document Owner</i>	Quality Service Development
<i>Document Approvers</i>	CEO / Approved Provider
<i>Next Review</i>	12 Months