

LOST & FOUND CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY



Adopted: October 2024
Review: October 2027

The welfare of lost and found children and vulnerable adults is the responsibility of all staff and should be reported immediately to Biggleswade Town Council ("The Council") management as a priority. Council staff should be clearly identifiable using their Council ID, lanyards and hi-vis jackets. When escorting or looking after lost or found children and vulnerable adults there must be at least two members of Council staff present. If only one member of staff is present, it is essential that another adult is present so that the Council staff member is not alone with the child/vulnerable adult. In the absence of the second member of staff, a member of the public will be asked to temporarily present whilst the second member of staff makes their way over.

A **vulnerable adult** is anyone over the age of 18 years old who may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, harm or exploitation. This may be as a result of illness, age, mental illness, disabilities or other forms of physical or mental impairment including those not immediately visible.

Lost & Found Child/Vulnerable Adult Procedure

A **lost child/vulnerable adult** is classified as where you **have** the parent/carer/guardian (reporting adult) present, and the child/vulnerable adult is **missing**.

Please follow this procedure:

1. If an adult approaches the Council about a lost child/vulnerable adult, act calmly and reassure them. Immediately inform all Council staff, giving the lost child/vulnerable adult's first name only. Ask the reporting adult for a detailed description/photograph of the child/vulnerable adult and their name and relationship to child/vulnerable adult. The detailed description shall be communicated to Council staff. If all staff provide confirmation of no sighting, contact the Police. In an event scenario, contact the first aid team and or other appropriate partners, such as Biggleswade Community Safety team.
2. The reporting adult should return to the last place where they saw the lost child/vulnerable adult, accompanied by a member of Council staff. In the event that the reporting adult wants to search for their child, they should please request that they stay at this location. Explain that there are staff on the ground looking for the lost child/vulnerable adult and that it is important to get as much information as possible from them.
3. Once a child/vulnerable adult has been reunited with the reporting adult, Council management should notify all relevant personnel. **In the event of a child/vulnerable adult appearing reluctant to be handed over to the reporting adult, Police support should be requested, and Council staff should remain present until the Police arrive.**
4. If the child/vulnerable adult is not found after 30 minutes, Police once present will then take over management of the incident.

A **found child/vulnerable adult** is where a child/vulnerable adult is present but **not** the parent/carer/guardian (responsible adult). They may approach a member of Council staff, or other event staff, be identified to the Council or event staff by a member of the public or be observed by a member of Council Staff.

Please follow this procedure:

1. If a child/vulnerable adult is identified as lost, they will often be too distressed or too young to give you clear details. Act calmly and try to reassure them. Immediately inform all Council staff that we have a found child/vulnerable adult. If possible, ask the child/vulnerable adult their name and age and where they last saw the person that they were with and who that person was.
2. In the event that the child/vulnerable adult wants to go and search for their responsible adult, please request that they stay with Council staff. Explain that there are staff on the ground looking for their responsible adult and that it is important they stay put. In an event scenario, staff must use the public address system (at 5-minute intervals) to invite the named adult to visit the Council desk.
3. Once a child/vulnerable adult has been reunited with their responsible adult, Council management should notify all relevant personnel. **In the event of a child/vulnerable adult appearing reluctant to be handed over to the reporting adult, Police support should be requested, and Council staff should remain present until the Police arrive.**
4. If the responsible adult is not found after 30 minutes, Police must be contacted and once present will then take over management of the incident.

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