



Appendix 8: GLTC Missing Child Policy

1. Policy Statement

GLTC is committed to providing a safe environment for all children participating in club activities. In the unlikely event that a child goes missing while under the club's care, this policy outlines the immediate actions to be taken to ensure the child's safety and well-being, in line with Tennis Ireland's safeguarding standards.

2. Immediate Actions if a Child Goes Missing

1. Ensure the Safety of Other Children

- Assign responsible adults to supervise the remaining children in a secure area.
- Reassure and support the group while the search is organised.

2. Inform Parents/Guardians

- If present, notify the child's parents/guardians immediately.
- If not present, nominate a responsible person to contact them by phone.
- Provide reassurance and regular updates.

3. Organise a Search

- Divide available responsible adults into search teams.
- Assign specific areas to each team (e.g., changing rooms, toilets, club grounds, car park, public/private areas).
- Take a moment to plan the search to ensure all areas are covered thoroughly.

4. Record Key Information

- The lead adult or a nominated person should document:
 - The child's physical description (height, build, eye/hair colour, clothing, etc.)
 - Where and when the child was last seen
 - Actions taken and by whom

5. Coordinate Search Efforts

- Set a specific location and time for all searchers to report back.
- Maintain communication among search teams.

6. Escalate if the Child is Not Found

- If the search is unsuccessful after a reasonable period (usually 10–15 minutes), contact An Garda Síochána (police) immediately.
- Provide all recorded information to the authorities.
- Follow any guidance or instructions given by the Gardaí.

7. Ongoing Communication

- Keep parents/guardians, searchers, and authorities updated at every stage.
- If the child is found, inform all parties immediately.

8. Refer to Safeguarding Team

- As soon as possible, report the incident to the GLTC Child Safeguarding Team for follow-up and review.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Club Staff/Volunteers:** Must be familiar with this policy and act promptly if a child is missing.
- **Child Safeguarding Team:** Responsible for policy implementation, incident review, and liaison with statutory authorities.
- **Parents/Guardians:** Must provide up-to-date emergency contact information and support the club's safeguarding measures.

4. Prevention and Review

- Ensure all staff and volunteers are trained in safeguarding and missing child procedures.
- Maintain accurate attendance records for all activities.
- Regularly review and update this policy, especially after any incident or near-miss.