

# Tewkesbury Junior Anglers

## Tewkesbury Junior Anglers (TJA) Missing Persons Policy

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### 1. Policy Statement

Tewkesbury Junior Anglers (TJA) is committed to the safety and welfare of all participants in our activities. This policy outlines the procedures to be followed in the unlikely event that a child, young person, or vulnerable adult/volunteer goes missing during a TJA organised event or activity. The aim is to ensure a swift, coordinated, and appropriate response to locate the missing individual safely and support all involved. This policy operates alongside our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all children, young people, and any potentially vulnerable adults participating in, or volunteers assisting with, TJA organised activities, sessions, competitions, or events. It covers situations where an individual cannot be located and their absence is unexpected and causes concern.

### 3. Prevention Measures

TJA implements the following measures to minimise the risk of a person going missing:

- Maintaining appropriate volunteer-to-participant supervision ratios, as outlined in activity risk assessments.
- Clearly defining the physical boundaries for each activity area and communicating these to participants and volunteers.
- Implementing robust registration/sign-in and sign-out procedures for participants at each session/event.
- Conducting regular headcounts, especially during transitions between locations or activities.
- Briefing participants at the start of sessions on safety, boundaries, and designated meeting points.
- Ensuring all lead volunteers are familiar with this Missing Persons Policy and emergency procedures.
- Carrying out venue risk assessments which include consideration of potential missing person risks (e.g., proximity to water, roads, public areas).

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## 4. Immediate Procedure When Someone is Noticed Missing

**If a volunteer or participant notices someone is missing or cannot be accounted for:**

- Stay Calm but Act Quickly.
- Conduct an immediate check of the person's immediate vicinity (e.g., within the group, nearby toilets, equipment area).
- IMMEDIATELY alert the designated Lead Coach or Event Organiser for the session/event.
- The Lead Coach/Event Organiser will verify the person is missing and not just momentarily out of sight.
- Secure the Group: Stop the activity for the remaining participants. Gather the group in a designated safe, supervised area. Conduct a headcount of the remaining group.
- Note Critical Details: Record the time the person was last definitely seen, where they were last seen, and who they were with. Note a detailed description (name, age, clothing, distinguishing features).

## 5. Initial Search (Maximum 5-10 Minutes)

- Coordinator: The Lead Coach/Event Organiser will coordinate the initial search.
- Systematic Search: Available volunteers (ensuring remaining group remains adequately supervised) will be assigned specific, clearly defined areas within the immediate activity zone and its close perimeter (e.g., fishing pegs, banks, venue building, car park) for a rapid, systematic search. Avoid sending volunteers into unsafe areas alone (refer to Lone Working Policy).
- Communication: Searchers should maintain communication with the Lead Coach/Event Organiser (e.g., mobile phone, visual contact).
- Time Limit: This initial organised search should typically last no longer than 5-10 minutes.

## 6. Information Gathering

**While the initial search is underway, the Lead Coach/Event Organiser (or delegated volunteer) will:**

- Confirm the missing person's full name, age, description, and clothing.
- Gather information on time/place last seen, direction of travel (if known), state of mind, relevant medical conditions, or vulnerabilities.
- Locate the parent/guardian emergency contact details from the registration records.
- Keep a log of actions taken, timings, and information gathered.

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## 7. Escalation Procedures

- If the person is NOT found within the initial 5-10 minute search period OR if there is immediate significant concern (e.g., child is very young, has known vulnerability, dangerous location, foul play suspected):
- Contact Parents/Guardians: The Lead Coach/Event Organiser or Named Safeguarding Lead (if present/contactable) will contact the parents/guardians. Inform them calmly and factually about the situation, the actions taken so far, and the intention to contact the Police. Obtain any further relevant information they may have.
- Contact the Police: The Lead Coach/Event Organiser (in consultation with Safeguarding Lead/Chair if possible) will contact the Police by dialling 999. Provide:
  - Your name and role within TJA.
  - Exact location.
  - Name and details of the missing person (age, description, clothing).
  - Time and place last seen.
  - Circumstances of disappearance.
  - Any known risks or vulnerabilities.
  - Actions already taken by TJA.
  - Parent/guardian contact details.
- Inform TJA Leadership: The Lead Coach/Event Organiser must inform the TJA Named Safeguarding Lead (Christopher Birch) and/or the TJA Committee Chair as soon as practically possible.

## 8. Ongoing Actions During Search

- Cooperate fully with the Police and follow their instructions precisely.
- Ensure the remaining group of participants is kept safe, supervised, reassured, and ideally moved away from the focus of the search activity.
- Maintain ongoing communication with the parents/guardians, providing factual updates.
- Ensure relevant information (description, photo if available with consent) is available for Police/searchers.
- Keep a detailed log of all communications and actions.

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## **9. Procedure When the Missing Person is Found**

- **Confirm Identity and Check Welfare:** Immediately check the person's well-being. Provide reassurance and first aid if required.
- **Inform Coordinator:** Immediately inform the Lead Coach/Event Organiser.
- **Call Off Search:** The Lead Coach/Event Organiser will ensure all searchers are informed the person has been found.
- **Inform Parents/Guardians:** Notify the parents/guardians immediately.
- **Inform Police:** If the Police were called, inform them immediately that the person has been found and their condition/location. Follow any further Police instructions.
- **Debrief (Age Appropriate):** Gently talk with the individual (if appropriate for age/understanding) to understand why they went missing.
- **Record Incident:** Document the entire incident fully using TJA's incident reporting procedures.

## **10. Post-Incident Review**

- The TJA Committee (including the Safeguarding Lead) will conduct a review of any missing person incident.
- The review will examine the cause, the effectiveness of the response, and identify any lessons learned.
- Risk assessments, policies, and procedures will be updated accordingly.
- Support will be offered to the individual who went missing, their family, and any volunteers affected by the incident.
- Relevant external bodies (e.g., Angling Trust, Insurers, Charity Commission, LADO – if volunteer actions were a concern) will be notified as required by regulations or policy.

## **11. Policy Review**

This Missing Persons Policy will be reviewed annually by the TJA Committee, alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, or sooner if required following an incident or changes in guidance.