

Search Action Plan

for Elementary Schools

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March 1988 Updated July 1995

In cooperation with:
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Wishart Safe Arrival program volunteers
Colwood Detachment R.C.M.P., Community Policing Branch

Example Elementary School Search Action Plan

INTRODUCTION

There was a case of two missing six year old girls. They disappeared after being dropped off at their Elementary school. They were missing for about an hour. During that time, it became clear that there really was no plan for such an event. The Safe Arrival program volunteers know their program, and know of a child's absence within moments of roll call. But what to do after notification?

SARBC volunteered to draft a plan, which would address what to do next.

The Plan, which follows, is the result of several consultations with school staff, Principal, Safe Arrival program volunteers and the RCMP.

Please note that Sections D-E are School specific.

PREAMBLE

"Safe Arrival Program"

At the beginning of each school year, children are sent home with the "Safe Arrival" Form.

Parents are asked to list the following phone numbers:
home, both parent's business numbers, and three alternate numbers (neighbors, relatives and friends). This information is then put on a rollex card file at the school.
If a child is to be absent from school, a "Contact Parent" is to be notified.

Each morning, a volunteer from the Safe Arrival program phones the designated "Contact Parent" and gets a list of all the children who will be absent that day.

Teachers take "roll-call" at school.

Absentees are checked with the "Contact Parent's list".

If a child is absent and not on the list, then the following occurs:

- Parent(s)/Guardian notified.
- If unable to contact the parent/guardian, check back with the teacher to see if the child has arrived in the interim. Siblings are questioned regarding the whereabouts of missing child.

If at this point the child is still missing, the "Safe Arrival" volunteer notifies the Principal of the school.

NOTE : The above procedure is based on the assumption that the child is registered in the "Safe Arrival" program.

NOTE : In the school records, it is noted who is the child's court appointed guardian and any stipulations.

SECTION A GUIDELINES and INSTRUCTIONS

ITEM 1

Safe Arrival program personnel will advise the Principal (Search Coordinator), and will contact parents of the missing child. They will advise parents that their child has not arrived at school. If the child is not at home and parents are unaware of their child's whereabouts, instruct the parents they are responsible for the following:

1. Attempt to locate their child by contacting the homes of their child's friends, and check with family and neighbors.
2. Check the route the child normally takes to school and areas the child frequents.
3. If there is no adult at the child's home, make arrangements for someone to be there, or parents should return home, in case child returns and/or additional information is needed.

Parents must be given a fixed time to locate the child, minimum 20 min - maximum 30 min, with the understanding that the school will be contacting the RCMP after 30 minutes. Advise the parents that if they are unable to locate their child within thirty minutes, they are to contact both their local RCMP Detachment and the school.

***** Obtain description of child's clothing*****

ALSO SEE PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

ITEM 2

Missing child's siblings and classmates are to be questioned regarding the following:

1. Known intentions of the missing child (identify child's friends).
2. Possible sightings of the missing child.
3. Areas the missing child frequents/plays.

ITEM 3

Search Coordinator will establish a Search Headquarters - a quiet room with access to telephone, tables, paper, pens, etc.

Search Coordinator is to complete "Missing Child Information Form".
(For information: school records, teacher and child's parents)

- Include child's picture on the form as well.
- Photocopy several copies for searchers.

Search Coordinator will stay at search headquarters.

ITEM 4

Search Coordinator will dispatch search teams and document all information and decisions.

Search Coordinator is responsible for the following briefings:

- School Staff : Notify that child is missing, description of child and subsequent procedures.
- Staff Search Teams :
 1. Description of missing child -see "Missing Child Information Form".
 2. Search Procedures :

NOTE: The Search Coordinator will, in advance, assign personnel by function, to search each Zone.

1. Building Search - Thorough search of all rooms, including small spaces that a child could hide in. (ie.cupboards, etc.)
2. Outbuildings and Grounds Search - Thorough, systematic search for child and possible articles that the child may have dropped. Periodically, call out the child's name and listen for at least ten seconds for a response.
3. In the event of clues or items found, note precisely where found. Bring back to Search HQ.
4. Give searchers deadlines to return to Search HQ.
3. In the event that the child is found and there is suspicion of foul play, send someone for help, don't disturb the area and administer First-Aid as necessary. (See Section F for more info.)

NOTE: School staff (Searchers), do not leave the school grounds, only "call and listen" from the perimeters.

The Search Coordinator will also document the following:

1. Child's home address on the map.
2. Areas searched and any observations.
3. General public sightings (Witness reports).
4. Any applicable information for the search effort.

The Search Coordinator will, if the child is not found within 30 minutes, notify the RCMP, and have copies of the following documents:

1. Missing Child Information Form - completed.
2. Log or list of what has been done so far.
3. Map with the school and the child's house identified on it.
4. List of areas the child would frequent.

The news of a missing child sends a chill through any caring person, especially the Parents or Guardians. Sometimes, what to do first or next seems to be confusing, as thoughts of what could have happened, race through our minds. There are some things which can be done, now.

If a child is found to be missing from school, then the child's Parents/Guardians are notified by the school.

Once notified that their child is missing from school, Parents/Guardians should be prepared to help the search effort by doing the following:

1. Arrange to leave work if it becomes necessary.
2. Attempt to locate their child by contacting the homes of their child's friends, and check with family and neighbors.
3. Check the route the child normally takes to school and areas the child frequents.
4. If there is no adult at the child's home, make arrangements for someone to be there, or Parents/Guardians should return home, in case child returns and/or additional information is needed.

Parents/Guardians are RESPONSIBLE for the duties outlined by numbers 2, 3 and 4 above.

Parents/Guardians have a fixed time to locate their child, minimum 20 min - 30 min maximum, with the understanding that the school will be contacting the RCMP within 30 minutes.

If the Parents/Guardians are unable to locate their child within 30 minutes, they are to contact both their local RCMP Detachment and the school.

Give Description of child's clothing to School Search Coordinator.

If the Parents/Guardians feel they must go to the school, they should understand that they come under the direction and control of the Search Coordinator.

SECTION C
MISSING CHILD INFORMATION FORM
(PLEASE PRINT)

Date: _____ Time (reported missing): _____

Name: _____ Nickname: _____

Password: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone #: _____

LAST KNOWN LOCATION: _____

Age: _____ Mental Age: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____

Height: _____ Weight: _____ Build: _____

Hair colour: _____ Hair Length: _____

Eye colour: _____ Wear glasses?: _____

Physical characteristics: _____ (ie. scars etc.)

Physical condition: _____

Coat: _____ Shirt: _____

Dress: _____ Sweater: _____

Pants: _____ Skirt: _____ Hat: _____

Other: _____ Boots: _____ Shoes:

Runners: _____ Other: _____

Lunch kit: _____ Food: _____

Backpack/School bag: _____ Toys: _____

School books: _____ Other: _____

Home room Teacher: _____ Phone #: _____

Classroom #: _____

Known intentions: _____

Areas child frequents: _____

Ever been lost before: _____ Where found: _____

Actions taken: _____

Point last seen: _____

Home to school arrangements:

Transporter's Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Names of child's friends:

Description, Names of companion(s), if any:

Circumstances of disappearance :

SECTION C
WITNESS REPORT FORM

Name of witness: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____ Business #: _____

Reached for further information: _____

Time Period at Alternate Number/Address: _____

Time period Time sighted: _____

Location: _____

Direction of travel: _____

Child alone?: _____

Description of incident: (record in own words of witness)

Compiled by: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

SECTION D
AREAS CHILDREN FREQUENT - SCHOOL SPECIFIC
EXAMPLE ONLY

This would show a map of the area with the following information numbered on the map.

Grade One

- (1) Yards and houses of friends
- (2) Streets near both their own home and friends

Grade Two

- School yards of the following schools:
- (3) Wishart, (4) Dunsmuir and (5) Sangster
 - (2) Friend's homes
 - (6) Ocean View Park

Grade Four

- (7) Gravel Pit
- (8) Webb Place - underdeveloped area

Grade Five and Six

- (9) Metchosin Road - near firehall
- (4) Dunsmuir School Ground
- (10) "Forest Area" - off Wishart Road, going towards Metchosin Road
- (11) Reservoir - Latoria Road
- (12) New Town Houses - Mary Anne Crescent
- (12) Play Ground - Mary Anne Crescent
- (7) Gravel Pit
- (13) Winthrop Path - Near Bunker Road

Grade Five

- (3) Fields behind school

Grade Six

- (9, 10) Around Church
- (15) Forest Behind School
- (7) Gravel Pit
- (14) By Johnny's Store
- (3) Path Between Portables

Grade Six and Seven

- (3) Forest beyond School Field
- (6) Ocean View Park
- (9,10) Church Parking Lot
- (10) End of Wishart Place

NOTE : The above areas are located on Colwood Street Maps.
(You would see accompanying Map for locations of bracketed items.)

ENTER CHILD'S HOME ADDRESS: _____

SECTION E
SCHOOL LAYOUT

This section would show the school layout, as well as, all rooms by floor.

SECTION F PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

Compiled from lectures given by RCMP and District Coroner. This information is to be given to Field Team Leaders only in certain situations (this is a very sensitive topic).

In the case of suspected foul play, or death of the missing person:

1. Safeguard the scene by sealing off the entire area. Allow only people actually engaged in the investigation into the area. Record the names of all people who came into contact with the scene area. If relieved of this duty by Police officer in charge, note his/her name, and time.
2.
 - a. Note any vehicles in the immediate area and record their licence plate numbers.
 - b. Note any people in the area not involved with the search, and write down a general description of each person.
3. The first member on the scene, or the Team Leader if immediately available, will be responsible for completing a file including: names of all persons present; all relevant times; the condition of the scene; the condition, description, and location of the victim; type of day; description of the area; a rough sketch of the scene also noting any peculiar or unusual items or pieces of evidence (signs of struggle, weapons, bloodstains, etc.).
4. Try to hold all witnesses, if any, and limit conversation between them. Treat suspects as witnesses, try and hold as a witness.
5. In the case of violent or sexual crime, record the FIRST statements of the victim, and who the victim made them to.
6. First-aid and evacuation, if necessary, must be the prime concern. However, try to protect the scene as much as possible. Use only the people necessary, the rest of the team must be excluded from the area.
7. One person should approach the scene to determine the course of action. The rest of the team should stay back.
8. All team members who had any part of 1,2,3,4 or 5 above should record their observations and should be prepared to attend a Coroner's inquest if one is called.

This concludes the Search Action Plan.