



Liverpool Archdiocesan  
Lourdes Pilgrimage  
Association

## Missing Person Policy

|                            |                     |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Name of originator/author: | Policy Review Group |
| Date issued:               | June 2024           |
| Date Reviewed:             | June 2026           |
| Date next review due:      | June 2028           |

## Policy Statement

A child, young person, or a vulnerable adult is collectively known as a Protected Pilgrim. A Protected Pilgrim's safety is always maintained as the highest priority, whilst on the journeys to and from, and in Lourdes. All Pilgrims will have available the Safeguarding Lead mobile number for use in the event of an emergency. In the case of young people and children, the parent or Youth Leader will have details of each child or young person, showing who is responsible for them throughout the day. *See Youth Pilgrims Policies for all procedures with regards to youth pilgrimage.*

Supported Pilgrims will be given support on how to keep themselves safe whilst travelling to and around Lourdes. Various meeting points will be shown to first-time pilgrims on the first day such as the Permanence.

## Scope

This policy applies to:

- Hospitalité volunteers
- Health Care Team members
- Group leaders and youth leaders
- All pilgrims travelling with LALPA

## Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy aligns with:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Care Act 2014
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (UK guidance)
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR
- French emergency procedures (Police Nationale / Gendarmerie)

## Definitions

- **Protected Pilgrim:** A child, young person or vulnerable adult
- **Missing Person:** A pilgrim whose whereabouts are unknown and who is not where expected
- **Incident Lead:** Pilgrimage Director or delegated senior leader
- **Search Coordinator:** Person appointed to organise and control the search
- **Safeguarding Lead:** Designated safeguarding officer responsible for escalation

## Policy Principles

- Immediate action must be taken if a pilgrim is missing
- Safety and safeguarding take priority over all other considerations
- A coordinated and controlled response must be used
- Parents/guardians and authorities must be informed promptly
- All actions must be documented

# Prevention Measures

To reduce the risk of a missing person incident:

- Clear supervision arrangements must be in place
- Registers/headcounts must be regularly completed
- Meeting points must be clearly explained and reinforced daily
- Protected Pilgrims must be given guidance on what to do if lost
- Contact numbers (including Safeguarding Lead) must be easily accessible
- A recent photograph of Protected Pilgrims must be available

## Immediate Response Procedure

### **Step 1 – Identify and Confirm (0–5 minutes)**

- Confirm the individual is missing
- Conduct an immediate headcount
- Establish the last known location and time seen
- Inform the Incident Lead and Safeguarding Lead immediately

### **Step 2 – Secure the Group**

- Ensure all remaining pilgrims are safe and supervised
- Allocate responsible adults to maintain group safety

### **Step 3 – Controlled Search (5–15 minutes)**

- Appoint a Search Coordinator
- Assign DBS-checked helpers to specific search areas
- Check:
  - Toilets
  - Meeting points
  - Hotel rooms/reception
  - Sanctuary locations (e.g. Permanence)
- Maintain a record of:
  - Search areas
  - Personnel deployed

### **Step 4 – Escalation (15–30 minutes)**

If the pilgrim is not located:

- Establish a Search Coordination Point
- Inform:
  - Pilgrimage Director (if not already aware)
  - Safeguarding Lead
  - Parents/guardians (if applicable)

## Step 5 – Contact Authorities

If not already done and particularly if the person is vulnerable:

- Contact Police Nationale / Gendarmerie immediately
- Inform Sanctuary security staff (if in Lourdes Sanctuary)

Provide:

- Full description (height, build, clothing, distinguishing features)
- Last known location and time
- Photograph
- Medical or behavioural needs

## Ongoing Management

- Continue coordinated search under direction of authorities
- Maintain clear communication between:
  - Search teams
  - Incident Lead
  - Authorities
- Ensure accurate record-keeping throughout

## Communication

- Parents/guardians must be informed promptly and reassured
- Only designated individuals communicate externally
- No information should be shared on social media
- Information should be controlled, factual and proportionate

## When the Pilgrim is Found

- Inform:
  - Search teams
  - Safeguarding Lead
  - Authorities
  - Parents/guardians
- Assess:
  - Physical wellbeing
  - Emotional wellbeing
- Provide reassurance and appropriate support

## Safeguarding and Support

- All volunteers must follow safeguarding procedures
- Remaining pilgrims must:
  - Be reassured
  - Not exposed to unnecessary detail
- Emotional support must be offered to all affected

## Documentation and Reporting

The following must be recorded:

- Time reported missing & last known location
- Actions taken
- Time authorities informed
- Outcome
- A formal incident report must be completed within 24 hours.

## Post-Incident Review

Following any incident:

- A safeguarding review will be conducted
- Statements may be taken from those involved
- Lessons learned will inform future practice
- A debrief may be arranged for staff and pilgrims

## Roles and Responsibilities

| <b>Role</b>         | <b>Responsibility</b>                   |
|---------------------|---|
| Pilgrimage Director | Overall incident leadership             |
| Safeguarding Lead   | Safeguarding oversight & escalation     |
| Search Coordinator  | Organises and manages search            |
| Volunteers          | Follow instructions and maintain safety |
| Group Leaders       | Supervision and headcounts              |

## Data Protection

Information will be shared only where necessary to protect life or safety, in accordance with UK GDPR.

## Disclaimer

This policy provides guidance and does not override:

- Professional judgement
- Emergency service direction

# One-Page Emergency Quick Reference Sheet

## MISSING PILGRIM – QUICK ACTION GUIDE

### IF A PILGRIM IS MISSING: ACT IMMEDIATELY

#### ✓ 1. CONFIRM

- ✓ Conduct headcount
- ✓ Identify WHO is missing
- ✓ Record LAST SEEN location and time

#### ✓ 2. REPORT (IMMEDIATELY)

- ✓ Inform:
  - Safeguarding Lead
  - Pilgrimage Director / Leader

⚠ DO NOT delay to search first

#### ✓ 3. SECURE GROUP

- ✓ Ensure all other pilgrims are safe
- ✓ Maintain supervision

#### ✓ 4. START CONTROLLED SEARCH

- ✓ Appoint Search Coordinator
- ✓ Search key areas:
  - Toilets
  - Hotel reception
  - Meeting points
  - Sanctuary / Permanence
- ✓ Assign helpers to specific areas

#### ✓ 5. ESCALATE (IF NOT FOUND QUICKLY)

- ✓ Inform:
  - Safeguarding Lead
  - Parents/guardians
- ✓ Set up coordination point

#### ✓ 6. CONTACT AUTHORITIES

- ✓ Police Nationale / Gendarmerie
- ✓ Sanctuary security (if applicable)

Provide:

- Description
- Last seen location
- Clothing
- Photo

#### ✓ 7. WHEN FOUND

- ✓ Inform ALL parties immediately
- ✓ Check wellbeing
- ✓ Record incident

#### ⚠ IMPORTANT RULES

- Stay calm
- Follow instructions
- Do NOT leave assigned role
- Do NOT share information on social media
- Protect dignity and privacy

#### 📞 Key Contact

Safeguarding Lead:

**Mgr Des Seddon +44 7850 150716**