



Liverpool Archdiocesan
Lourdes Pilgrimage
Association

Missing Person Policy

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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.

In the unlikely event of a Protected Pilgrim going missing, our search procedures are as detailed below:

Search Procedure

- As soon as it is noticed that a supported Pilgrim is missing, the parent/guardian/carer or helper alerts the Pilgrimage Director. (Parents will be encouraged to do this at the earliest opportunity, rather than search for their child first, before raising the alarm.)
- The lead adult will ensure the safety of the other Supported Pilgrims, with regard to supervision and security whilst a search for the missing Protected Pilgrim is taking place.
- In reference to the Music Group, one of their leaders will be appointed by the Assistant Director as co-ordinator to ensure that all other members of the group remain together. This would also be the same for hotel-based pilgrims as part of an arranged group at a hotel.
- All available (DBS checked) helpers with the pilgrimage will be invited to carry out a thorough search of the area the person/ group has been in most recently, allocating each individual to a specific area, having shown the search party an image of the missing Protected Pilgrim(s).
- The co-ordinator remains with the group and requests all those searching to report back within a short time, depending on the size of the area being searched.
- All those who search for the missing Supported Pilgrim MUST ensure that the co-ordinator is fully aware of this and should follow their direction closely.
- If not already aware and the Supported Pilgrim has not been found, the parent(s)/guardian(s)/carers must be notified that a Supported Pilgrim has gone missing and be reassured that procedures are being followed to locate their whereabouts. They may also be able to provide guidance as to favourite places, etc., to help focus the search further and maximise the chance of early success.
- If the Supported Pilgrim is not found within 15 minutes, a Hotel Coordinator will organise a Search Co-ordination desk in the reception of the hotel where the missing person is staying, or if in the Sanctuary, near or around the Permanence. All helpers, who are involved in the search, will operate through this co-ordination desk.
- If not already aware, the Pilgrimage Director must be informed of the incident.
- A helper is sent to check the designated meeting points that the Protected Pilgrims have been told to go to should they get lost.
- If the Protected Pilgrim is not found within 20 minutes, the Hotel Leaders and group coordinators will contact the pilgrimage safeguarding officers to inform them of the incident. They will then contact the local authorities in Lourdes if the person has not been found.
- Continue the search widening the area in liaison with the local authorities once they arrive.
- The parent, if appropriate, or helper talks to the local authorities to inform them of when and where the person was last seen, and they record this. All parties should give as much information as possible with regards to where the person was last seen, a physical

description of the person i.e. hair and eye colour, approximate height and build and clothing they were wearing, and photograph to the local authorities.

- Ensure that you inform all adults involved including the parents, searchers and local authorities if at any stage the person is located.

Investigation

Helpers and other adults are to remain calm and do not let the other Protected Pilgrims become anxious or worried.

The Pilgrimage Officials and the Safeguarding officer carry out a full investigation, taking written statements from all the people involved.

The Pilgrimage official writes an incident report in the Incident Book.

Where necessary and deemed appropriate, the Pilgrimage Director will arrange for a debrief meeting to take place, and for support to be provided to any pilgrim who has been distressed by the incident.

The other pilgrims are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining helpers caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer Pilgrim's questions honestly but also reassure them.