If my child wanders off: a plan for our family

For a parent whose autistic child has slipped away before.

Fill it in once. Keep it on your phone. Give a copy to the school and your helper.

About my child

- Name:
- Age:
- How my child communicates:
- Does my child answer to their name?
- What my child is drawn to:
- What calms my child:
- Parent phone numbers:

Keep a current photo beside this note.

What pulls my child away, and what pushes

- Places or things my child loves: water, trains, lifts, a favourite shop
- Special interests to watch for
- Noise, light or crowds that are too much
- Anxious moments: queues, changes of plan
- The fun of running, or being chased

Water goes at the top of the list.

The ID my child carries

- First name
- "I am autistic", or our family's words
- One or two parent phone numbers
- How my child communicates
- One line on what calms my child

Put it on what my child already wears: a lanyard, a bag tag, a bracelet or a label.

Before an outing

- Tell my child the plan, in pictures if that helps
- Pack ear defenders or a fidget toy
- Take a photo of my child on arrival
- Say out loud which adult is watching
- Leave early if overload is building

If my child goes missing

Call 999 at once. There is no wait.

Say: my child is autistic, their age, what they are wearing, how they communicate, where I last saw them.

Then, straight away

- Tell the nearest staff: mall security, station staff or the Passenger Service Centre
- Search water nearby first, then my child's favourite places
- Give police the photo and this note
- One adult stays where my child was last seen, or at home

When my child is found

- No questions yet
- Somewhere quiet first
- Later, write down where my child was found