

Fall claims gentle boy Jamie First

The parents of a boy killed by a snowdump searched frantically for him, just metres from where he lay buried.

The seven-year-old had momentarily wandered off from his parents and two siblings, who were building a snowman outside their Mt Buller apartment, when snow fell from the two-storey lodge roof and engulfed him.

He was found two hours later under a metre of snow still upright, just 40 metres from where he was last seen.

A family friend posting online last night said "Haadi" had a "gentle personality".

"Family is totally devastated, specially mother is going through such a pain which is hard to describe," Atif Mirza posted.

"And no he wasn't on roof of any building. This is so tragic, and no one's fault.

"RIP Haadi. We will miss you forever," it read.

The panicked parents desperately searched for him for 20 minutes before raising the alarm with emergency services at 4.50pm on Wednesday.

Up to 20 police, local CFA, ski patrollers and resort management staff searched for 90 minutes in blizzard-like conditions before finding him on the corner of The Avenue and Breathtaker Rd.

The unconscious boy was rushed by ambulance to a nearby medical centre.

Doctors and paramedics spent more than an hour vainly trying to revive the boy, who had suffered a cardiac arrest.

The family have returned to their Roxburgh Park home.

"I believe they'd been playing only for a matter of 10 or so minutes," Acting Sergeant Matt Bennett said.

"They'd been out for a day of snow play with the family and, as kids do, building snowmen outside the door of the lodge.

"He's obviously become separated from his two siblings at some points, and they were unaware of him wandering off, or his locations," he said.

"(The parents) were very distraught right from the onset of the child becoming missing."

He said the boy was found by a line search with snow probes, similar to those after an avalanche, due to the snow that had fallen from the roof.

Resort management said: "A young boy tragically passed away at Mt Buller after being buried in snow falling from the roof of a building. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the boy's family and friends."

Chief executive John Huber urged visitors to be more vigilant.

"These unique environments can, at times, pose potential hazards," he said.

"It's important for people visiting the alpine resorts, especially those with young children and first-timers, to be mindful of the hazards that exist, to be vigilant and take appropriate precautions."

He would review safety operations and procedures, but the key was education.

Premier Denis Napthine said the death was "an absolute tragedy".

"Our heart goes out to the family of the young boy. We also think of those emergency workers and other volunteers who worked so hard to try to find him and save him."

Police will prepare a report for the coroner.