



New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families Policy Manual

1558 MISSING CHILDREN

Chapter: Case Management Standards for CP and JJ Field Services

Section: Case Management

Approved:

Joseph E. Ribsam, Jr., DCYF Director

Policy Directive: **21-28**

Effective Date: **January 2022**

References Of Note

Federal Authority: [42 USC 671](#), [Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 \(P.L. 106-386\)](#), and [Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2013 \(P.L. 113-4\)](#)

Statutes: [RSA 169-A](#), [RSA 169-B](#), [RSA 169-C](#), [RSA 169-D](#), [RSA 169-E](#), and [RSA 170-H](#)

Administrative Rules:

Case Law:

This policy establishes DCYF's response when a child is reported missing (including runaway, abduction, or having escaped/absconded from parole), regardless of placement status.

Required Practices

Any deviations to the following information must be documented with Supervisory Approval.

- I. When a report is received that a child is missing, it must immediately be determined:
 - A. If the child was possibly abducted;
 - B. If law enforcement has been contacted; and
 - C. If the child is currently involved with DCYF.
- II. If law enforcement has not been notified, essential facts will be gathered and the reporter will be directed to contact law enforcement immediately.
 - A. When there are concerns that the child has been abducted, there must be timely follow-up with law enforcement to ensure a report was made.
- III. If DCYF is not currently involved with the child, no further action shall be required.
- IV. The Supervisor and Field Administrator must be notified immediately of any report that a child involved with DCYF is thought to have been abducted, in accordance with policy [1099 Critical Incident Reporting-Case Specific](#).
- V. Any assigned CPSW/JPPPO and Supervisor must be notified as soon as possible regarding any child on their workload who is thought to be missing (including runaway, abduction, or having escaped/absconded from parole).

- VI. The CPSW/JPPO must follow-up with law enforcement prior to submitting the Missing Child Report (Form 1558), and no later than 24 hours from notification of the missing child, to:
 - A. Ensure continuity of information and coordinate efforts as applicable;
 - B. Ask that the child be entered into NCIC if not already done; and
 - C. Obtain the police report and NCIC numbers.
 1. If law enforcement declines to take a missing child report or enter a child into NCIC, the CPSW/JPPO must clarify the reason why and immediately consult with a Supervisor to determine next steps.
- VII. The reporter will be interviewed to obtain critical details as soon as possible once they have contacted law enforcement.
- VIII. Upon notification that a committed youth (JJS specific) who is on administrative release or parole is reported missing from home or a placement facility, the JPPO must immediately notify their Supervisor and the Administrator/Supervisor On-Duty at SYSC.
 - A. SYSC will contact the State Police in accordance with policy [2068 Escape and Abscond](#).
 - B. The JPPO must notify the Juvenile Parole Board when an absconded child on parole is missing for more than 30 days.
- IX. Unless there are mitigating circumstances, the CPSW/JPPO or their Supervisor must contact the parents/guardians before the end of their workday.
- X. The CPSW/JPPO must complete Form 1558 and email it to the "Youth Runaway Group" before the end of their workday. The following must also be attached:
 - A. The most recent picture of the child (if available);
 - B. The plan for placement when found (as applicable);
 - C. The Parent/Guardian Authorization for Medical Dental and Psychiatric Treatment (if the child is going to placement); and
 - D. Any court orders regarding custody or placement.
- XI. Upon notification that a child who has been placed through DCYF or who is on parole or furlough is missing, the Human Trafficking Specialist (or designee) will notify the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) within 24 hours of the child being reported missing and provide all requested information.

- A. If the child is involved with DCYF, but no legal relationship has been established between the child, family, and the Division, the CPSW/JPPO will work with the parents/guardians to ensure NCMEC is notified.
- XII. Upon notification that a child in placement through DCYF is missing, the Fiscal Specialist Unit (FSU) will refer to policy [2671 Authorization and Payments for Hospital Stays and Runaways](#).
- A. The CPSW/JPPO will work with FSU to make sure all necessary authorizations and documentation are in place.
- XIII. Staff notified that a child involved with DCYF is missing outside traditional work hours must:
- A. Take essential information;
 - B. Ask if there are concerns that the child has been abducted; and
 - C. Direct the reporter to call the appropriate on-call line for CPS (1-603-271-6556 or 1-800-894-5533) or JJS (1-603-625-5471 or 1-888-230-0606).
 - 1. If there are concerns the child has been abducted, the reporter must be directed to call law enforcement immediately and the CPSW/JPPO will contact the CPS On-Call Supervisor/JJS On-Call staff, who will immediately contact the appropriate Administrator (see [policy 1099 Critical Incident Reporting-Case Specific](#)).
 - 2. For all other instances related to a child involved with CPS, the CPS On-Call Supervisor will contact the appropriate Field Administrator, who will make the report to NCMEC as necessary to meet the 24-hour time frame and process the report according to intake policy.
 - 3. For all other instances related to a child involved with JJS, JJS On-Call staff will make a report directly to NCMEC as necessary to meet the 24-hour time frame.
 - 4. The CPS On-Call Supervisor/JJS On-Call staff will notify the assigned CPSW/JPPO and their Supervisor of any report of a missing child by 8:00 am the next business day.
 - 5. The assigned CPSW/JPPO or Supervisor will complete and submit the Form 1558 as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the business day.
- XIV. The CPSW/JPPO must make ongoing concerted efforts to locate the child until they are located or the assessment/case closes.
- XV. Once a child has been located, the CPSW/JPPO must:

- A. Notify law enforcement (as applicable) and the parents/guardians (unless otherwise directed by law enforcement) immediately;
- B. Notify the ICJ Compact Administrator (or designee) before the end of the workday if the child is from another state, but found in NH or if a NH child is found in another state;
- C. Meet with the child within 24 hours (unless there are mitigating circumstances, as outlined in procedures) to:
 - 1. Assess the child's physical and emotional needs;
 - 2. Complete screening in accordance with policy [1554 Human Trafficking Response](#); and
 - 3. Photograph the child as follows:
 - (a) Any child involved in an open CPS case; or
 - (b) Any child who is the subject of a JJS case in accordance with policy [1344 Photographing Delinquent Minors and Children In Need of Services](#);
- D. Work with the parents/guardians and placement provider (as applicable) to secure timely assessment of the child's medical and mental health needs and any recommended follow-up care, to include immediate medical examination when the child:
 - 1. Has experienced physical assault/abuse, or shows signs of injury;
 - 2. Has experienced sexual assault/abuse within the past 72 hours;
 - 3. Shows signs of, or reports, severe physical neglect;
 - 4. Reports or demonstrates suicidal or homicidal thoughts/ideations;
 - 5. Indicates concern for their physical health or reports physical ailments; or
 - 6. Has an unattended medical problem;
- E. Notify the "Youth Runaway Group" before the end of the workday, complete the Return of Missing Child Report (Form 1559), and email the report to the group within 3 business days;
- F. Complete the Human Trafficking screen in the DCYF electronic information system within 3 days; and

- G. Work collaboratively with other responding agencies to interview the child and coordinate further investigative efforts when the child may have been the victim of a crime.
 - 1. This includes collaboration with law enforcement, Child Advocacy Centers, or the New Hampshire Attorney General's Office.
 - 2. Efforts must be made to avoid multiple interviews to support the child's emotional well-being.
 - 3. The Human Trafficking Specialist must be consulted in all instances where a child is suspected to have been the victim of human trafficking.

XVI. The child's prevention/case plan must be updated to address:

- A. Any medical and mental health needs as they relate to any trauma the child may have experienced while missing; and
- B. The primary factors that contributed to the runaway or absence episode.

XVII. All efforts to identify and locate a missing child must be thoroughly documented in the DCYF electronic information system.

XVIII. Copies of Form 1558 and Form 1559 are maintained in the file.

Standard Operating Procedures		
SOP	Title	Applicable Disciplines
1558.1	Missing Child Procedures - CPS	CPS
1558.2	Missing Child Procedures - JJS	JJS
1558.3	Missing Child Procedures - CPS On-Call	CPS
1558.4	Missing Child Procedures - JJS On-Call	JJS
1558.5	Located Child Procedure - CPS	CPS
1558.6	Located Child Procedures - JJS	JJS

Applicable Forms	
Form	Title
1558	Missing Child Report
1559	Return of Missing Child Report

Glossary and Document Specific Definitions

[A - B](#) [C - D](#) [E - F](#) [G - I](#) [J - L](#) [M - N](#) [O - Q](#) [R - S](#) [T - V](#) [W - Z](#)

Document Change Log			
PD	Modification Made	Approved	Date