

0210.0 Missing Child

0210.1 Policy Approval Clearance Record

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DCFS Child Welfare Policy	This policy supersedes: N/A	Number of pages in Policy: 8
Review by Representative from the Office of the Attorney General:	Date: 01/06/2014	Date Policy Effective: 02/11/2014
DCFS Rural Region Manager Approval:	Date: 01/31/2014	
DCFS Deputy Administrator Approval:	Date: 01/31/2014	Policy Lead: Karla Navarro, SPSS II

0210.2 Statement of Purpose

- 0210.2.1 Policy Statement:** DCFS Rural Region will ensure that when a child in the custody of the agency is missing or runs away, a standardized search for the child is conducted and the proper authorities are notified.
- 0210.2.2 Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to ensure prompt measures are taken to report when a child in DCFS custody is missing or has run away and attempts to locate the child occur in a timely manner. This policy guides caseworkers on what to do when a child is missing and what to do once the child has been located.

0210.3 Authority

Federal law 42 U.S.C. § 5772
NRS 432B.165
NAC 424.475(5)

0210.4 Definitions

- 0210.4.1 DCFS Rural Region:** Division of Child and Family Services, Rural Region
- 0210.4.2 Missing Child:** Federal law (42 U.S.C. § 5772) defines a "missing child" as "any individual less than 18 years of age whose whereabouts are unknown to such individual's legal custodian."
- 0210.4.3 Runaway:** A child whose whereabouts are currently unknown who is believed to have left his or her placement voluntarily.

0210.5 Procedures

0210.5.1 Foster Parent and Unlicensed Caregiver Notification Responsibilities

If a child in the custody of DCFS is missing or is believed to have run away, the foster parent/caregiver is required to complete the following:

1. The foster parent/caregiver will within the first hour check to see what, if any, of the child's personal belongings are missing or if the child left a note; and,

- a. Call the following persons as appropriate to ascertain if the child has been seen or has given any indications that may explain the child's missing status:
 - i. School/child's teacher and school resource officer;
 - ii. The child's relatives/parents, both local and non-local, if appropriate and the foster parent/caregiver has means for such contact;
 - iii. Any friends or places the child generally frequents; and,
 - iv. The child's employer, if applicable.
2. Make a report to local law enforcement and notify DCFS
 - a. Foster parents/caregivers are to report the child as missing or runaway to the Division of Child and Family Services within 1 hour of becoming aware the child is missing or ran away and then should be instructed to file a police report with local law enforcement agency if the foster parents/caregivers have not already made a report.
 - b. Licensed foster homes are required by NAC 424.475(5) to notify law enforcement immediately upon determination that a child is missing or has runaway. A missing person report must be made with the local law enforcement agency. A copy of the law enforcement report should be given to the child's caseworker to be maintained in the child's case file. Unlicensed caregivers are also required to adhere to NAC 424.475(5).
3. If at any time the child returns to the foster parent/caregiver home, or the foster parent/caregiver learns additional information about the possible locations of the child, the foster parent/caregiver is to notify law enforcement and the local DCFS District Office (DO) immediately.

0210.5.2 Child Welfare Caseworker Responsibilities

A. Notification

1. Ensure local law enforcement agency was notified of the missing or runaway child, and make a report if one has not been made.
2. Make a report to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST) within 3 hours of becoming aware that the child is missing.
3. Provide Law Enforcement and/or Missing and Exploited Children with all requested pertinent information about the child, some of which might include:
 - The child's full name including known aliases and nicknames
 - Current Photo of the child (caseworkers should maintain updated photos in each child's file)
 - Provide the date, time, and location where child was last seen, if known.
 - Provide the name(s) of the person/people who saw the child last, if known.

- Identify and secure any computers and wireless devices used by the child and provide access to these items to law enforcement. Ask law enforcement to look for clues in any chat and social networking websites the child has visited.
 - Compile descriptive information about the child. Descriptive information should include items and information such as a recent photo of the child, a description of the clothing worn at the time the child was last seen, cell and other phone numbers, date of birth, hair and eye color, height, weight, complexion, identifiers such as eyeglasses or contact lenses, braces, body piercings, tattoos, other unique physical attributes, and/or any general health and medical conditions the child may have.
4. Notify immediate supervisor via text, telephone or email within 3 hours of becoming aware the child is missing or has run away. Complete and submit an Incident Report Form to your supervisor within 24 hours of becoming aware the child is missing or has run away.
 5. Notify or, if unable to reach parent, make a concerted effort to notify child's parents that their child is missing within 6 hours of becoming aware, if parental rights have NOT been terminated (weekends and holidays excluded as parent contact info may not be available during off work hours).
 6. Notify the child's service providers that the child is missing within 2 business days. Service providers could include, but are not limited to:
 - Legal representative (Guardian ad Litem, CASA, or Attorney) that the child is missing.
 - Therapist
 - Parole or probation officer
 - IL service provider
 7. The child's placement location must be updated to runaway status in UNITY when the child is missing from placement for more than 3 days, regardless of the reason.
 8. When a child is absent from a paid placement for more than 48 hours, the caseworker MUST end the service authorization within 2 business days.
 9. Child welfare caseworkers must document their actions including the report number provided by law enforcement and confirmation from the National Center of the successful filing of the missing persons report in UNITY within 5 days.
 10. If the child is residing in another state through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC), the caseworker will immediately contact the ICPC worker providing supervision to request their assistance in reporting the child as missing to the local law enforcement agency in the state which the child resides. For children not placed pursuant to ICPC, the caseworker will contact the foster parent/caregiver with whom the child was residing and request their assistance in reporting the child as missing. The caseworker will notify the ICPC Office as soon as possible that the child has been reported as missing and of the efforts to locate the child via the NVICPC@dcfs.nv.gov email address. The caseworker will complete all other Missing Child Policy requirements in its entirety until the child is located.

B. Continued Efforts to Locate the Child

1. After initial contacts, the child welfare caseworker must:
 - Continue to seek information from the parents, relatives, adult mentors, child attorney, friends and others who may have information about the child's whereabouts while the child is in missing or runaway status.
 - Ask the other children in the home if they have heard from or know where the child may be.
 - Check all of the child's contacts (i.e. local family members, friends, significant other, etc.) to ask if they have heard from the child and if they know of their whereabouts.
 - Conduct a search on social media websites at least monthly to see if the child has posted anything about their whereabouts or who they may be with.
2. If at any time new information is obtained on the child's location, all law enforcement agencies and other agencies notified that the child was missing must be contacted immediately.
3. Child welfare caseworkers must document their actions of continued efforts to locate the child in UNITY with a monthly case note until the child has been located. **TIP:** Many times, children will run away to a location where they were previously found. Keeping detailed information on past locations may help locate a child who frequently runs away from care.

C. Procedures After a Child Has Been Located

Upon a child's return to care the child welfare caseworker must ensure that the following steps are completed:

1. Assess need to see the child as quickly as possible to determine safety and well-being;
2. When the child returns, the child must hear and see statements of concern regarding the child's safety and well-being from the adults who have significant relations with the child;
3. Identify any medical or counseling needs the child may need upon their return to care. A child may have experienced abuse and/or trauma while they were missing, caseworkers should ensure that the child is not in need of medical attention;
4. If age appropriate, the child will be interviewed privately by the caseworker within 24 hours of the child's return to determine the child's need for further services and/or change in placement. Additionally the caseworker will work with the child to try to determine the circumstances surrounding the episode;
5. Inform their supervisor within one hour of becoming aware that the child has been located. Supervisors will inform the District Office Manager and the Rural Region Manager that the child has been located;
6. Inform the child's parents that the child has been located (if parental rights have not been terminated);
7. Inform the local law enforcement within 3 hours of becoming aware that the child has been located;
8. Update the child's placement location in UNITY;

9. If the child is on parole or probation, inform the child's assigned Youth Parole or Probation Officer that the child has been located and establish a plan for the child's placement;
10. Inform any other agencies and people who were contacted regarding the missing child that the child has been located; and,
11. Send notice to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children by calling 1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST) and file a recovery report within 48 hours of becoming aware that the child has been located.

D. Children Out of Area or Out of State

If a child is located in Nevada outside of their District Office area or in another state the following must be completed to return the child to their District Office.

1. Depending on what agency located the missing child, contact local CPS office and/or local law enforcement agency to request assistance in sheltering the child until travel arrangements can be made to return the child to Nevada.
2. Organize transportation of the child back to the originating District Office. Depending on the circumstances, the assigned caseworker may be required to travel to another state and supervise the child's return home.
3. Seek assistance from Supervisor/District Office Manager if other jurisdictions refuse to help facilitate the child's return to care.

E. Placement

A plan must be developed for the child's placement upon their return from missing status. Ask if current foster parent/caregiver is willing to have the child returned to their home when found.

0210.5.3 Supervisor's Responsibilities

A. Notification

Once notification that a child is missing, has runaway or a child has been located comes to the attention of the supervisor, the supervisor must:

1. Ensure that staff follows the Missing Child policy and procedures in its entirety;
2. Notify the District Office Manager about the missing child;
3. District Office Manager notifies the Rural Region Manager; and
4. Rural Region Manager notifies Deputy Administrator.

B. Ongoing Efforts

1. Discussion of the child welfare caseworker's efforts to locate the child must be completed in the ongoing case staffings with supervisor.
2. A child's placement must be identified for their return from missing or runaway status.

0210.5.4

Timelines:

Table 0210.1: Timelines for Missing Child Policy: When A Child Is Missing

Requirement	Deadline	Starting Date	Responsible Party	Actions to be Taken
File police report	Within one hour	Day of becoming aware child is missing	Licensed Foster Parent or Child's caregiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> File police report with the local law enforcement agency within 1 hour of becoming aware the child is missing
Notify child's caseworker or on-call worker after hours	Within one hour	Day of becoming aware child is missing	Licensed Foster Parent or Child's caregiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to find child through friends/family Contact law enforcement and complete a missing person report
Make a report to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children	Within 3 hours	Day of becoming aware child is missing	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a report to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
Notify Supervisor	Within 3 hours	Day of becoming aware child is missing	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caseworker is to notify their supervisor of the missing child using the Incident Report form
Involve ICPC worker	Within 3 hours	Day of becoming aware child is missing	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the child is residing in another state through ICPC, the caseworker will immediately contact the ICPC worker to request their assistance is locating the missing child.
Notify child's parent(s)	Within 6 hours	Day of becoming aware child is missing	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify child's parent(s) if their parental rights have NOT been terminated
Notify other agencies and people who are involved with the child	2 days	Day of becoming aware child is missing	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify other agencies and people who are involved with the child (i.e. Legal Representative, therapist, Parole Officer, ILP Service Provider, etc.)
Update child's placement in UNITY	3 days	Day of becoming aware child is missing	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child's placement must be updated to runaway status in UNITY when the child is missing from placement for more than 3 days, regardless of the reason
End service authorization	2 days	48 hours after a child has been missing from their placement	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When a child is absent from a paid placement for more than 48 hours, the caseworker must end the service authorization within 2 business days
Case Notes	Within 5 days	Day of becoming aware child is missing	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter case notes about efforts to locate the child and include police report number and National Center for Missing and Exploited Children confirmation
Notify Rural Region Manager	Within 3 hours	Day of becoming aware child is missing	Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor is to notify the Rural Region Manager that a child is missing
Notify Deputy Administrator	Within 3 hours	Day of becoming aware child is missing	Rural Region Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Region Manager is to notify the Deputy Administrator that a child is missing
Continued Efforts to Locate	Ongoing	Day of becoming aware child is missing	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue efforts to locate the child and document all contacts and ongoing efforts in UNITY case notes

Table 0210.2: Timelines for Missing Child Policy: When A Child Is Located

Requirement	Deadline	Starting Date	Responsible Party	Actions to be Taken
Assess need to see child as quickly as possible to determine safety and well-being	Within 6 hours	Day child is located	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the child returns to care ensure that the child hears and sees statements of concern regarding the child's safety and well-being from the adults who have significant relations with the child
Identify any medical or mental health needs the child may need after their runaway episode	Ongoing	Day child is located	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A child may have experienced abuse and/or trauma while they were on missing status, workers should ensure that the child isn't in need of medical attention
Notify Supervisor	Within 1 hour	Day child is located	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caseworker is to notify their supervisor that the missing child has been located.
Notify child's parent(s)	Day child was located	Day child is located	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify child's parent(s) if their parental rights have NOT been terminated.
Notify Rural Region Manager	Day child was located	Day child is located	Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor is to notify the Rural Region Manager that the missing child has been located
Notify Deputy Administrator	Day child was located	Day child is located	Rural Region Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Region Manager is to notify the Deputy Administrator that the missing child has been located
Notify local law enforcement agency that the child has been located if law enforcement wasn't involved in locating the child	Within 3 hours	Day child is located	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove the child's missing person report with the local law enforcement agency
Update the child's placement location	Day child was located	Day child is located	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the child's placement location in UNITY
Restart the child's service authorization	Day child was located	Day child is located	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the child's service authorization in UNITY
Notify other agencies and people who are involved with the child	Within 24 hours	Day child is located	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify other agencies and people who are involved with the child (i.e. Attorney, Therapist, Parole Officer, ILP Service Provider, etc.)
Inform the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children that the child has been located	Within 48 hours	Day child is located	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove the child's missing person report with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
Update UNITY	Within 5 days	Day child is located	Caseworker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enter case notes about locating the child and include National Center for Missing and Exploited Children recovery report confirmation

0210.5.5 Forms:

A. FPO 0210A: Incident Report Form

1. Must be completed and submitted to Supervisor, then Manager, and also Rural Region Manager within 24 hours.

0210.6 Attachments

0210.6.1 FPO 0210A – Incident Report