Policy: Managing children absent or missing from placement

Policy Purpose
To ensure Territory Families acts promptly and responds appropriately to incidents where a child or young person is absent or missing from their place of care.

Policy Statement
Territory Families and NT Police categorise children who are absent from their place of care as either absent or missing.

An absent from care child is:
- a child who is absent for a short period of time without permission of the carer; and
- where the child’s whereabouts are known or can be quickly established.

A missing from care child is:
- a child whose whereabouts is unknown; and
- where there are fears for the safety or serious concern for the welfare of that child.

Territory Families and Carers have a shared responsibility to locate a child who is missing or absent from their place of care.

Territory Families must notify the parent(s) of the child that they are missing or absent from their place of care.

The following circumstances are Reportable Incidents, the Reportable Incident Policy must be adhered to and a Reportable Incident form submitted when:
- The child has been abducted;
- The whereabouts or location of a child in care is unknown and there are serious concerns for their immediate safety and/or wellbeing.

Section 85 of the Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 provides Authorised Officers, including police officers, the power to apprehend a child in care and return them to their placement.

All efforts to locate a child who is absent from their place of care must be documented in CCIS.

Legislative Basis
Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 s85 and s74.

Authorised by:

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<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>16/03/2015</td>
<td>To ensure Case Managers are aware of their responsibilities when a child in care is missing from their place of care.</td>
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Current Version V 2.1

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<th>Active from</th>
<th>Authorised by</th>
<th>Update</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/08/2019</td>
<td>Executive Leadership Group</td>
<td>Replacing Child is Absent, Missing or Absconds from Care Nov 2019 amendment made – ‘Carers’ and ‘Territory Families’ have a shared responsibility to locate a child who is absent or missing</td>
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Review due: August 21

Maintenance: Policy TF.Policy@nt.gov.au