Policy: Child is Absent, Missing or Absconds from Care

# Policy Purpose

To ensure Case Managers act promptly and appropriately, and record details accurately in situations where a child is absent, missing or has absconded from their place of care.

# Policy Statement

When a child is in the care of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Territory Families has responsibility for the placement and care of the child. If the child is absent from their placement, the child’s Case Manager must make reasonable effort to locate the child.

Case Managers will need to consider a number of factors, when determining how best to manage the situation. These include:

* An assessment of the circumstances surrounding the child’s absence from their place of care;
* The level of risk to the child and/or others;
* The child’s age;
* Previous strategies that have been successful in returning the child to their place of care; and
* Future care arrangements once the child is located.

The following circumstances are Reportable Incidents and the *Reportable Incidents Policy* and must be adhered to, the *Reportable Incidents form* submitted, and the Police contacted:

* A child who has absconded from their placement, is missing for more than 24 hours and serious concerns exist for their wellbeing; or
* The child has been abducted.

Section 85 of the *Care and Protection of Children Act* provides Authorised Officers, including police officers, the power to apprehend a child in the care of the CEO and return them to their placement. These provisions should only be used after consultation with the Team Leader and Manager and where a decision is made that it is necessary to use these powers.

All attempts 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

# Standards

Standards of Professional Practice – 1, 4 and 6

##### Authorised by:

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| **Executive Director, Service Development and Policy on:** | 16/03/2015 | **Active from:** | 16/03/2015 |
| **Version 1.0** | To ensure Case Managers are aware of their responsibilities when a child in care is missing. |

##### Current Version V 1.01

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| **Active from:** | 6/02/2017 | **Authorised by:** | Director, Policy |
| **Update:** | Rebranded. Caseworker to Case Manager. Links updated. |
| **Review due:** | March 19 | **Maintenance:** | Policy TF.Policy@nt.gov.au |