

1558 MISSING CHILD/YOUTH	
Chapter: Case Management Standards for CP and JJ Field Services	Section: Case Management
 <p>New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families Policy Manual Policy Directive: 17-26 Effective Date: July 2017 Scheduled Review Date:</p>	<p>Approved:</p>  Christine Tappan, Senior DCYF Director
Related Statute(s): RSA 169-A , RSA 169-B , RSA 169-C , RSA 169-D , and RSA 169-E Related Admin Rule(s): Related Federal Regulation(s): SSA 471 , Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-386) , Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2013 (P.L. 113-4)	Related Form(s): FORM 1558 , and FORM 1559 Bridges' Screen(s) and Attachment(s):

All children and youth deserve to be safe. The Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) is committed to assisting families, youth, law enforcement, and all others associated with a missing child/youth in support of the child/youth's safe return. While DCYF has limited authority to assist in missing children/youth cases where there is not a legal relationship, DCYF will use all available resources to locate and return missing children/youth involved with the Division. Upon return of a child/youth in the Division's care, DCYF will screen for possible human trafficking victimization and will work with the New Hampshire Human Trafficking Collaborative Task Force members to provide an individualized trauma-informed and collaborative response.

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to establish DCYF's response to children/youth that are reported missing. This policy does not address the responsibility of Sununu Youth Services Center Staff in responding to committed youth who may have absconded or escaped from custody (refer to policy [2068 Escape and Abscond](#)).

Definitions

"Abduction" means the unlawful removal or taking of a minor against their will, or the will of their parent or legal guardian, or in violation of a custody order.

"CPSW" or **"Child Protective Service Worker"** means an employee of DCYF who is authorized by the Division to perform functions of the job classification Child Protective Service Worker.

"DCYF" or the **"Division"** means the Department of Health and Human Services' Division for Children, Youth and Families.

"Human Trafficking" for the purpose of this policy means, Sex Trafficking, Labor Trafficking, and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

"ICJ" or **"Interstate Compact for Juveniles"** means the interstate agreement, codified in NH as RSA 169-A, authorizing the supervision of adjudicated delinquents and status offenders on probation or parole; the return of juvenile runaways, escapees and absconders; and the rendition of juveniles charged as delinquents, from one state to another.

"JPPO" or "Juvenile Probation and Parole Officer" means an employee of DCYF who is authorized by the Division to perform functions of the job classification Juvenile Probation and Parole Officer.

"Missing Child" means a child/youth absent from his/her legal place of residence and whose location cannot be determined by the person responsible for the child/youth's care.

"NCIC" or "National Crime Information Center" means the computerized index of criminal justice information that is operational 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and maintained for the purpose of providing criminal justice agencies access to information to aid in the apprehension of fugitives, location of missing persons, locating and returning stolen property, and the protection of law enforcement officers encountering the persons described in the system.

"NCMEC" or "National Center for Missing and Exploited Children" means the national entity identified in the Social Security Act to receive information on any child/youth legally involved with a state's child protective or juvenile justice services program who is missing.

"Runaway Child" means a child/youth that left their legal place of residence voluntarily without the knowledge or permission of the parent, guardian or legal custodian.

Policy

- I. When a child/youth residing in New Hampshire is not involved with DCYF, and is reported missing:
 - A. DCYF will provide any available information to law enforcement agencies upon request to support efforts to locate the missing child/youth, as legally authorized.
 - B. Upon return of the child/youth, a report may be made to Central Intake to screen for a Child Protective Assessment or Juvenile Justice CHINS case.
- II. When a child/youth involved with DCYF is missing, all efforts will be made to determine whether the child/youth has been abducted or has run away.
 - A. The Supervisor must notify the Field Administrator and/or their designee immediately if there is suspicion the child/youth was abducted.
- III. For a child/youth in an Assessment or pre-Adjudication for delinquency or CHINS, the CPSW/JPPO should assist the parent/guardian with how to report a child/youth missing.
- IV. Upon receipt of notification that a child/youth with an open Family Services case or post-adjudication delinquency or CHINS case is missing, the CPSW/JPPO or Supervisor will:
 - A. Ask the reporter, the reason he/she has determined the child/youth is missing. Guiding questions should include, but not be limited to:
 1. When, where, and by whom, was the missing child/youth last seen?
 2. What was the child/youth wearing?
 3. Is clothing or are personal items missing (such as money or medications)?
 4. Has the child/youth made threats to run away?

5. Have there been any recent threats made by family members to take the child/youth?
 6. Has there been any suspicious activity or attempted abductions in the area?
 7. Does the child/youth have a history of running away?
 8. Have they reported this to law enforcement? If so, to whom did they report and when?
- B. Make collateral contacts including:
1. Checking with the school or where the child/youth should be at the time of the notification; and
 2. Contacting the current caregiver (the child/youth's parent or placement provider) to:
 - (a) Assess/determine if they know the child/youth's whereabouts;
 - (b) Inquire about any family or friends of the child/youth who may know more information, or any websites the child/youth frequently visited or used;
 - (c) Request that they contact law enforcement to open a missing child report providing all details from the child/youth's last known whereabouts and appearance; and
 - (d) If the child has been in a placement, ask that they notify the parent that the child/youth is missing and law enforcement has been notified.
- C. Contact local law enforcement immediately, and in no case later than 24 hours.
1. If the child/youth has not been reported by the parent or placement provider (per IV-B:2 (c) above), the CPSW/JPPPO or Supervisor must notify the law enforcement agency that the child/youth is missing and verify that the child/youth is entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database, including the following information:
 - (a) The child/youth is missing (in addition to any warrants if applicable);
 - (b) Name of the reporter;
 - (c) Relationship of the reporter to the missing child/youth;
 - (d) Name, age, address of the authorized residence and all identifying characteristics of the missing child/youth (Provide a recent photo if available);
 - (e) Last known location of the child/youth;
 - (f) Length of time the child/youth has been missing; and

- (g) All other information considered important by either the reporter or the law enforcement agency.
- 2. If a law enforcement agency refuses to take a report or enter a child/youth into NCIC, the CPSW/JPPPO or Supervisor must obtain the reason and notify a DCYF Field Administrator immediately for further guidance.
- 3. When the CPSW/JPPPO determines, based on available information, that the child/youth may have been abducted:
 - (a) Apprise the local law enforcement agency of the reason it is believed the child/youth was abducted, including a description of the vehicle and/or person suspected, if known; and
 - (b) Request the activation of the NH Child Abduction Emergency Alert Plan.
- 4. If there is reasonable cause to believe that the child/youth is at a specific location, or is identified on a website (e.g. Backpage or a dating site), notify the law enforcement agency and request the child/youth be apprehended.
 - (a) If that specific location is out-of-state, notify the [Deputy Compact Administrator for the Interstate Compact for Juveniles \(ICJ\)](#).
- 5. **Obtain** the corresponding **missing persons report number** generated by the law enforcement agency.
- 6. Advise the law enforcement agency on the steps DCYF is taking to search for the missing child/youth, such as:
 - (a) Collateral contacts in IV-B above;
 - (b) Attempting to further determine the whereabouts of the child/youth and any special circumstances (i.e., medical/mental health condition) through ongoing case contacts; and
 - (c) Obtaining any history significant to the possible whereabouts of the child/youth.
- D. DCYF staff shall assist law enforcement or other agencies responding to the situation, based on their statutory powers and duties.
- V. The CPSW/JPPPO or supervisor shall email the completed Form 1558 Missing Child/Youth Worksheet, with a picture of the child/youth and the plan for placement of the child/youth when recovered, to "[DHHS-DCYF-Youth Runaway](#)" email address before the end of his/her work hours.
 - A. DCYF administration shall designate one staff with access to this email account as responsible for providing notifications to the NCMEC by the end of the business day in which an email was received.
 - B. Information received will be monitored on a child/youth runaway list until the child/youth returns or the case is closed.

- C. The Fiscal Specialist will use this information to close the placement authorization pursuant to policy [2671 Authorization and Payments for Hospital Stays and Runaways](#).
- VI. Staff notified that a child/youth is missing between the hours of 4:30 pm and 8:00 am Monday through Friday, or on weekends and holidays, must direct the caller to call Central Intake. Intake staff will make notification to the NCMEC outside of business hours as necessary and prepare an Additional Information referral for the CPSW/JPPPO assigned to the case.
- VII. The CPSW/JPPPO must attempt to contact the child/youth's parents as soon as possible but no later than the close of the next business day if the child is in placement, unless otherwise instructed by the law enforcement agency.
- VIII. The Supervisor must verify the following with the CPSW/JPPPO:
 - A. Contact was made with local law enforcement agency and the child/youth is entered into NCIC as a missing person;
 - B. The child/youth is reported to NCMEC; and
 - C. A timely determination has been made of whether the child/youth was abducted or ran away.

During the Absence of a Child/Youth

- I. The CPSW/JPPPO shall support efforts to locate and return a missing child/youth by:
 - A. Reviewing initial efforts to locate the child/youth with their supervisor within 24 hours and establishing an ongoing plan to locate the child/youth;
 - B. Maintaining ongoing contact with the parents/guardians, siblings, friends, school personnel, professionals, other collateral contacts, and any CPSW/JPPPO who may know the child/youth, to attempt to determine the possible location of the child/youth;
 - 1. The CPSW/JPPPO should inform the parent/guardian when the child/youth goes missing that the CPSW/JPPPO will reach out every two weeks to share any information received and ask if they have heard from the child/youth;
 - 2. Advise contacts that any person can add information to the NCMEC report by calling the NCMEC at 1 (800) THE-LOST [1 (800) 843-5678]; and
 - 3. Review any websites that the child/youth is reported to have used every couple of weeks to monitor for updates, as accessible.
 - C. Maintaining contact with the local law enforcement and other responding agencies to provide and receive updates on any new information;
 - D. Reviewing efforts to locate the child/youth with their supervisor every 14 calendar days after the date of the child/youth's disappearance;
 - E. Documenting all efforts and communications in the Bridges case contact log; and

- F. Providing ongoing updates to the "[DHHS-DCYF-Youth Runaway](#)" email address regarding the continued runaway status and any changes at 10 calendar days after the date of the child/youth's disappearance, and every 14 calendar days thereafter.
- II. The Supervisor must:
 - A. Ensure that there is continued focus on locating the child/youth; and
 - B. Continually document all reviews of the case in Bridges.
 - III. The Field Administrator or their designee shall:
 - A. Provide oversight at least once every other week that ensures efforts to locate the child/youth continue; and
 - B. Provide reports and updates to the Bureau Chief of Field Services and/or DCYF Director, upon request.
 - IV. The child/youth's DCYF case must remain open during the child/youth's absence unless otherwise determined by the DCYF Director or designee.

Return of Missing Child/Youth

- I. When the child/youth is located the CPSW/JPPO must:
 - A. Contact the New Hampshire Deputy Compact Administrator for the Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ) for the return of all children/youth found in another state.
 - 1. The Deputy Compact Administrator shall determine if a child/youth is in the custody of another state or known to be physically present in an out-of-state location;
 - 2. The Deputy Compact Administrator shall make return arrangements (See policy [1597 ICJ Other Provisions](#)); and
 - 3. CPSW/JPPOs shall assist the Deputy Compact Administrator as requested.
 - B. Support the parent/placement provider in picking up the child/youth located in New Hampshire, and returning the child/youth to the appropriate residence.
 - C. Meet with the child/youth within 24 business hours, but no later than 72 hours, after their return to complete a screening, in collaboration with law enforcement and other responding agencies when available.
 - 1. Work cooperatively to share and receive screening information.
 - 2. Children/youth might experience a wide range of traumatic events while missing (including abduction or human trafficking) and the screening process must prioritize their well-being.
 - 3. The screening should determine:
 - (a) The primary factors that contributed to the child/youth's running away or otherwise being absent from care;

- (b) Their activities and experiences while absent, including if he/she may be a victim of human trafficking;
 - (c) Other individual(s) who may have been assisting or were involved in the incident; and
 - (d) The child/youth's willingness to stay at their current residence.
- D. Take a photograph of the child/youth upon their return and appropriately document any new physical characteristics (such as marks and tattoos).
- E. Work collaboratively with the involved agencies to ensure the following notifications are made if not previously completed:
 - 1. Notify the local law enforcement agency;
 - 2. Notify the parents/guardians, unless otherwise requested by a law enforcement agency;
 - 3. Submit Form 1559 Recovery of Missing Child Report to the Youth Runaway Group (email "[DHHS-DCYF-Youth Runaway](#)") to close the NCMEC case, or contact NCMEC directly to identify that the child/youth has been located and document in the Bridges Case Contact Log;
 - 4. Update the Supervisor and the Field Administrator and/or their designee; and
 - 5. As appropriate, the supervising family court, CASA/GALs, schools, service providers and other individuals or agencies involved.
- F. Work collaboratively with law enforcement and other responding agencies to interview the child/youth and coordinate further investigative efforts, such as with law enforcement, Child Advocacy Centers or the New Hampshire Attorney General's Office.
 - 1. Efforts must be made to avoid multiple interviews to support the child/youth's emotional well-being.
 - 2. Follow policy [1554 Response to Human Trafficking – Screening, Referral and Case Planning](#) for children/youth determined to be victims of human trafficking.
- G. Determine service planning for each child/youth after they return from an abduction or runaway episode on a case-by-case basis.
 - 1. The child/youth's medical needs must be assessed and appropriate medical services provided.
 - 2. The child/youth's case plan must address the primary factors that contributed to the runaway or absence episode for the current and subsequent placements.
 - 3. Additional reporting must be made to Central Intake, at 1-800-894-5533 or 603-271-6556, if the circumstances indicate the child/youth has been abused/neglected pursuant to RSA 169-C.

4. The CPSW/JPPPO must refer matters to law enforcement when information obtained during screening indicates the child/youth may have been or was a victim of a crime.
 5. If there is concern that a missing child/youth was a victim of human trafficking, and is at risk for continuing to put themselves in harm's way, immediate services through RSA 169-C or RSA 169-D may be sought to keep the child/youth safe.
- H. Clearly define efforts for follow-up case coordination and service planning with the agencies involved, including consideration of any other supports the child/youth may need for general health/well-being.
- II. The Supervisor must:
- A. Ensure that the correct procedures are followed regarding handling runaways as they relate to the ICJ.
 - B. Ensure that the CPSW/JPPPO submitted Form 1559 to the ["DHHS-DCYF-Youth Runaway"](#) or contacted NCMEC directly to report that the child/youth returned; and
 - C. Ensure a timely determination of needs and service planning for the child/youth.

Practice Guidance

Does a child/youth have to be reported as missing if they default on a Juvenile Justice court hearing, and a warrant will be issued?

- If a child/youth defaults on a Juvenile Justice court hearing but their location is known, then they should not be reported missing.
- If their location is unknown as they have reportedly runaway, they must be reported as missing.
- When the police do not enter a child/youth on the NCIC as missing, but under a separate status with a warrant, it impedes the ability of the NCMEC to enter their information in connection with the NCIC report which can negatively impact the efficiency of these resources in trying to locate and return a child/youth who is missing. The child/youth should be entered as missing and as with a warrant when applicable.

Do we report if a child/youth is missing in an Assessment or pre-Adjudication for delinquency or CHINS?

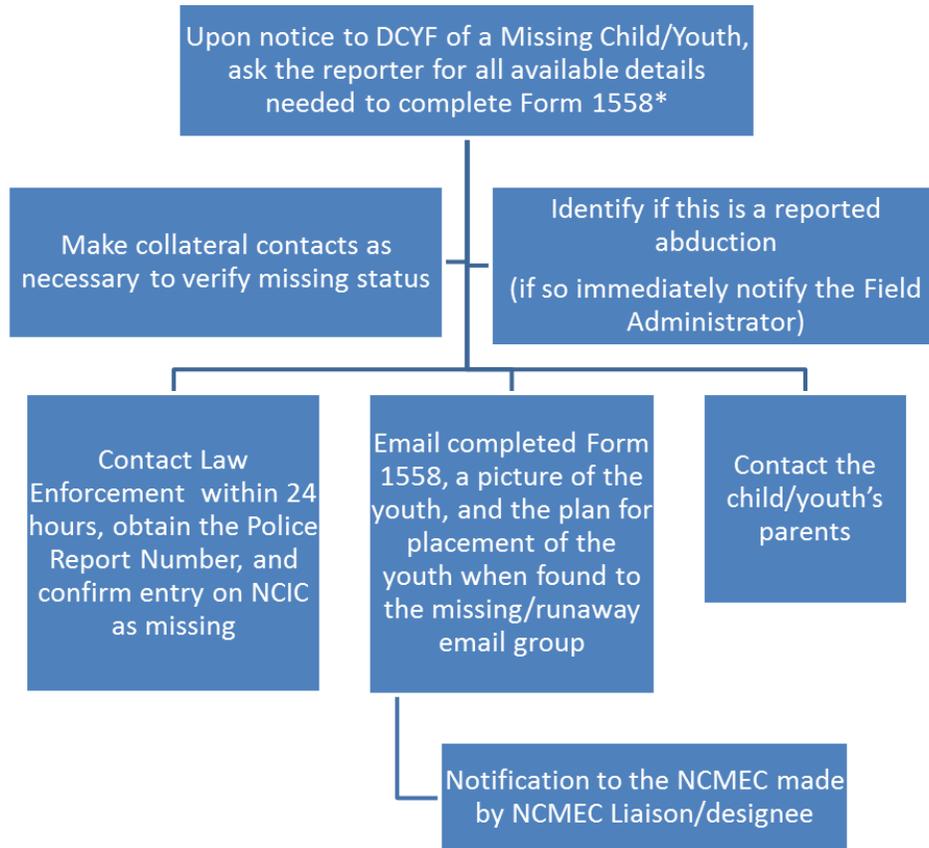
- Title IV-E of the Social Security Act requires that the Division report any child/youth with whom the agency is legally involved and responsible for supervision or placement and care. Any Juvenile Justice case that is pre-adjudication or Child Protective Assessment is not required to be reported by the Division to law enforcement or the NCMEC. However, this does not preclude the primary CPSW/JPPPO from efforts to engage the parent in their responsibility to report.

Do I have to keep a case open if a youth is missing and doesn't return before their 18th birthday?

- The DCYF Director or designee may identify circumstances where it is appropriate to close a case when a child/youth has not returned. If there are no other children in the case that the Division is still working with, the CPSW/JPPPO should consult with their Supervisor and/or Field Administrator about the appropriateness of asking the court to close the case, if applicable.

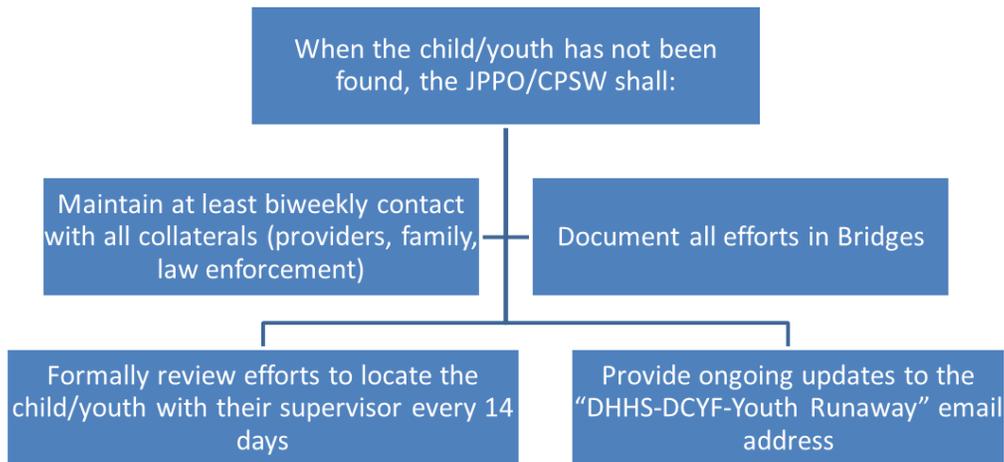
Is there a workflow for what I need to do if a child or youth on my caseload is missing?

Missing Child/Youth with an Open DCYF Case

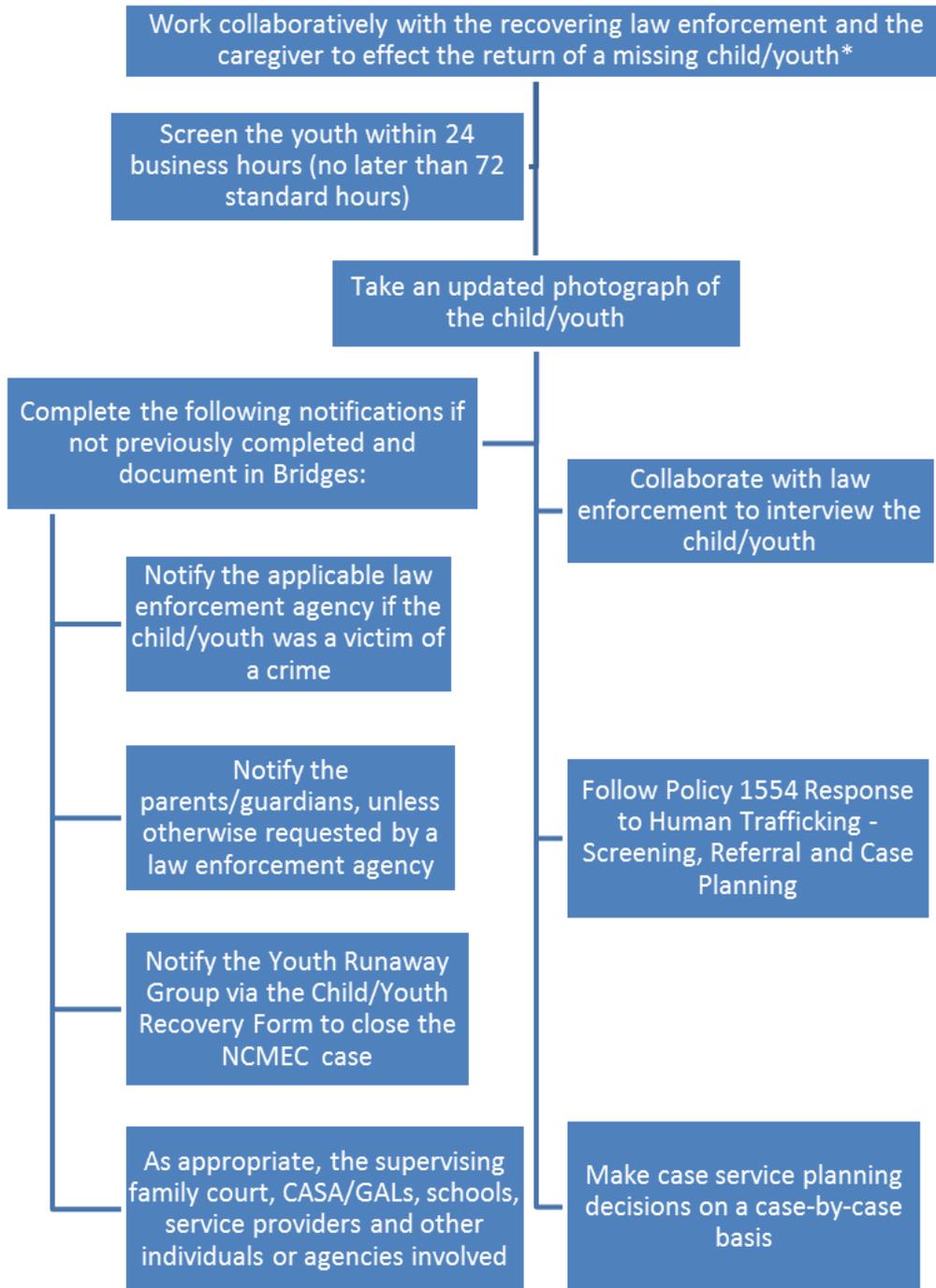


**Staff notified that a child/youth is missing after 4:30 pm Monday through Friday, or on weekends and holidays, must direct the caller to call Central Intake 271-6562.*

Ongoing Case Management for a Missing Child/Youth



Case Planning Following Return of a Missing Child/Youth



** Any youth found in NH that have run away from another state must be reported to the JJS Helpline 625-5471.*

What if a parent of a child/youth refuses to report a child/youth missing?

- The CPSW/JPPPO should attempt to engage the parent in making the phone call together. If a parent refuses to report his/her child/youth missing the CPSW/JPPPO should consider the appropriateness of a report to DCYF Central Intake for neglect.

I received a call from Homeland Security, why are they calling me?

- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is responsible for investigating human trafficking, arresting traffickers and protecting victims. DHS initiates hundreds of investigations and makes numerous arrests every year, using a victim-centered approach. DHS also processes immigration relief through Continued Presence (CP), T visas, and U visas to victims of human trafficking and other designated crimes.
- In NH, Homeland Security is our lead law enforcement agency when it comes to investigating human trafficking.
- As the CPSW/JPPPO who has been working with the family, Homeland Security will sometimes contact you with questions that the Division's NCMEC liaison cannot answer to try to complete information that has been identified as necessary in the efforts to locate a missing child.

Where can I find more information on the NH Child Abduction Emergency Plan?

- More information may be found at the website of the NH Emergency Alert Plan found [here](#).

Does the NCMEC offer any additional resources for families who have a child/youth missing?

- The NCMEC website <http://www.missingkids.com> has up-to-date references and information.