

## DEALING WITH MISSING CHILDREN

Children and young people can go missing for a variety of reasons and it is important you act appropriately to secure their return as soon as possible. A child is deemed to be missing if ***their whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character***. Full policy details relating to missing children can be accessed at [www.proceduresonline.com/greater\\_manchester/childcare/trafford/chapters/pr\\_missing.html](http://www.proceduresonline.com/greater_manchester/childcare/trafford/chapters/pr_missing.html)

### Initial Checks

- Attempt to contact the child directly using their mobile phone or via networking sites
  - Check the last place the child should have been
  - Check if any money or possessions have been taken
  - Check with friends and family (where appropriate) whether the child dropped any hints about running away
  - Refer to any placement plans that allow for some leeway with curfews
- REMEMBER!** Not all occasions will mean a child has run away from home, it might simply be the child is unaware of the time or is engaging in 'boundary testing'

### Points to consider

- Is this significantly out of character?
  - Are there any specific medical needs?
  - Are they likely to be subjected to crime or a victim of abuse?
  - Do they pose a danger to other people?
  - Is there a 'missing from care plan' in place?
  - Are there any indicators the child is at risk of sexual exploitation?
- (See [www.tscb.org.uk/child-sexual-exploitation.html](http://www.tscb.org.uk/child-sexual-exploitation.html) for full guidance)

### Action

- If a child is missing from a foster placement, the foster carer must inform the Police Greater Manchester Police on **0161 872 5050** and the Child's Social worker / Duty Social Worker or Supervising Social Worker **0161 912 5050** or if out-of-hours or at weekend contact the EDT on **0161 912 2020**
- Foster carers to make arrangements to **ensure parents are advised if there are concerns their child is missing**: this could be either direct contact with parents, EDT, Police or the child's Social Worker as appropriate.
- FosterTalk provide useful information and support. Contact them on **01527 836910** or [www.fostertalk.org](http://www.fostertalk.org)

### Police requirement

- A description of the child and a recent photograph
- When the child was last seen and with whom
- Family addresses and known acquaintances
- Any history of absconding

### Follow up

- Complete a '*Notifiable Incidents Form*' and send to the Family Placement Team
- The child should be given the opportunity to talk with their social worker or other independent person to discuss their reasons for running away
- Update daily recording diary
- Contact Trafford Youth Service on **0161 912 2453** who can provide support and offer the child or youth person an independent interview to talk through their Missing from Care episode and offer further support if they want it