

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 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:

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 from their place of care.		

Current Version V 2.1

Active from:	1/08/2019	Authorised by:	Executive Leadership Group
Update:	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		
Review due:	August 21	Maintenance:	Policy TF.Policy@nt.gov.au