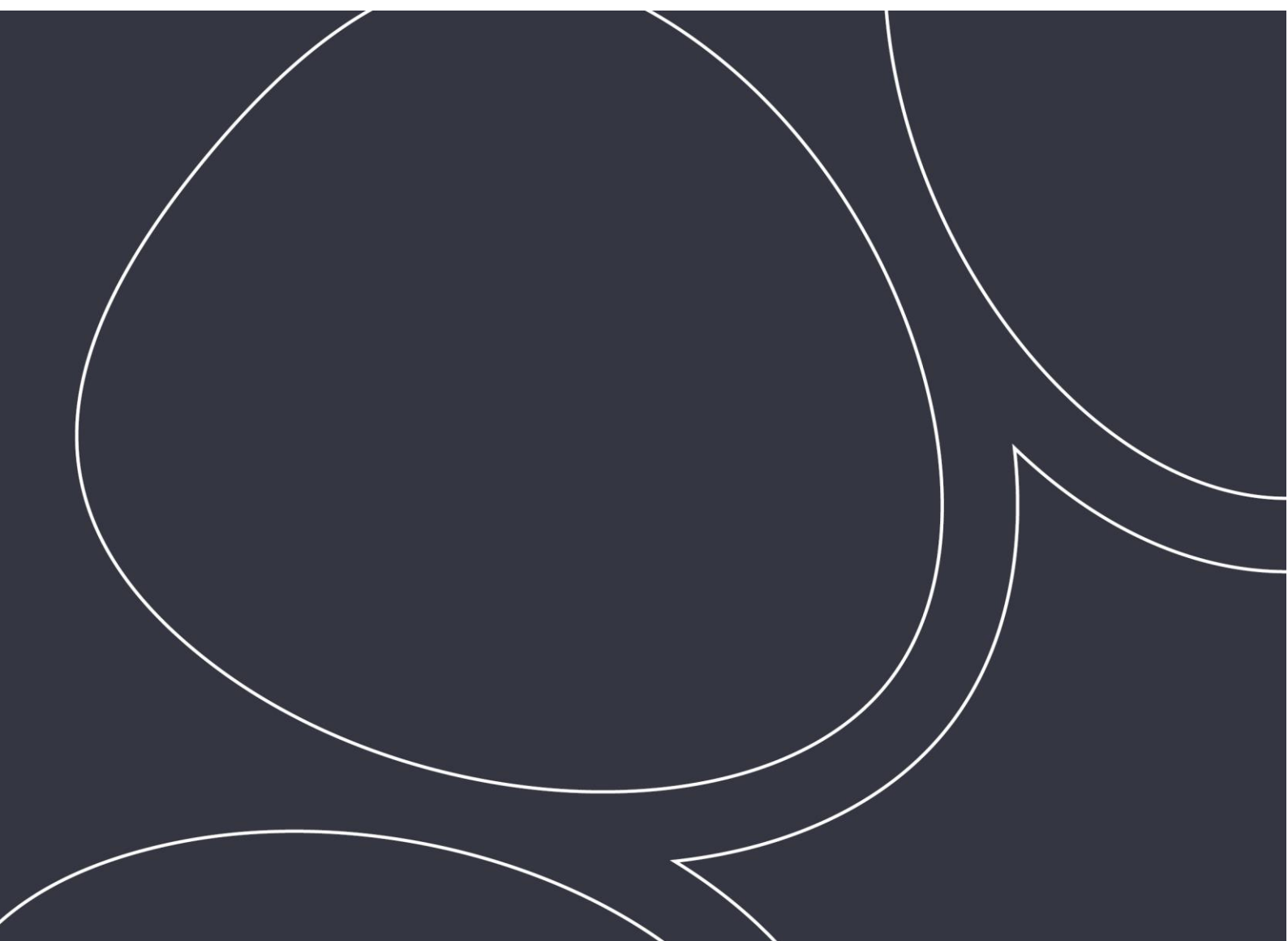


Managing Children Absent or Missing from Placement

Policy



Document title	Managing Children Absent or Missing from Placement
Contact details	Department of Children and Families Operational Policy dcf.policy@nt.gov.au
Approved by	Executive Leadership Group
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Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1.0	16/03/2015	Service Development and Policy	To ensure Case Managers are aware of their responsibilities when a child in care is missing from their place of care.
1.01	06/02/2017	Director Policy	Rebranded. Caseworker to Case Manager. Links updated.
1.02	25/07/2017	Director Policy	Minor amendments.
2.0	01/08/2019	Policy	Replacing Child is Absent, Missing or Absconds from Care.
2.1	01/11/2019	Policy	Nov 2019 amendment made – ‘Carers’ and ‘Territory Families’ have a shared responsibility to locate a child who is absent or missing
2.2	15/01/2026	Operational Policy	Rebranded the document – changed <i>Territory Families</i> to <i>Department of Children and Families</i> . Hyperlinks added to document.

Acronyms	Full form
CMS	Client Management System
The Act	<i>Care and Protection of Children Act 2007</i>
The Department	Department of Children and Families

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1. Policy Purpose

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

2. Policy Statement

The Department and Northern Territory 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.
- Where the child's whereabouts are known or can be quickly established.

A missing from care child is:

- A child whose whereabouts is unknown.
- Where there are fears for the safety or serious concern for the welfare of that child.

The Department and carers have a shared responsibility to locate a child who is missing or absent from their place of care.

The Department 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 incidents 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 Act 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 Client Management System.

3. Legislative Basis and Related Documents

[Care and Protection of Children Act 2007](#)

[Reportable Incidents Policy](#)