

**TUSCARAWAS COUNTY JOB & FAMILY SERVICES
CHILDREN SERVICES PROCEDURE**

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW WHEN A CHILD IN CUSTODY RUNS AWAY

CAREGIVER'S RESPONSIBILITY:

1. Within one (1) hour of a foster child running away, caregivers shall notify Tuscarawas County Job & Family Services at 330-339-7791. After hours, holidays, and weekends caregivers should contact the Tuscarawas County Sheriff's Department at 330-339-2000, who will notify the on-call worker.
2. Within two (2) hours of a foster child running away, caregivers shall notify their police and/or sheriff's department with the following:
 - a. The child's name, date of birth, height, weight, and any other unique identifier, such as eyeglasses or braces, and any specific physical attributes, such as scars, marks, or tattoos.
 - b. The child's general health, stamina, and any medical conditions or concerns.
 - c. Any changes in the child's behavior prior to the disappearance.
 - d. Inform of any previous run-away episodes.
3. Caregivers shall obtain the initial officer's name, phone number, report number, and ask who will follow up the initial investigation.
 - a. Ask if a neighborhood canvas will be done.
 - b. Provide access to any electronic devices, such as computers, for sources of leads or other information concerning groups or people with whom the child may have been communicating.
 - c. Record all contacts with law enforcement (dates and times).
4. Caregivers shall request that the child's name and identifying information be immediately entered in NCIC Missing Person File. This is to be done by local law enforcement within two (2) hours of the report. If local law enforcement will not do this, contact the nearest FBI field office for assistance.
 - a. Record the entry date and time.


AGENCY'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Upon receiving notification that a child is absent without leave (AWOL) from a substitute care placement, TCJFS will immediately, and in no case later than twenty-four hours, contact both law enforcement for entry into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database AND the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). The website to report children missing from care is cmfc.missingkids.org.
2. The child's case manager or supervisor will document in the child's case record the following information:
 - The date, time and name of the law enforcement agency contacted.
 - The date and time NCMEC was contacted.
 - The last known location of the child.
 - The length of time the child has been AWOL.
 - Anyone the child may have been with prior to or during AWOL.
 - Efforts and resources used to locate the child.

3. By the next working day, the child's case manager or supervisor shall contact the police and/or sheriff's department(s) where the child's birth family/legal custodian lives and give law enforcement the above-referenced identifying information about the foster child and his/her birth family/legal custodian.
4. By the next working day, the child's case manager or supervisor shall contact the child's parents/legal custodians, guardian ad litem, and probation officer (if applicable). The Director's office shall also be notified.
5. The agency case manager shall make arrangements to have signs with a picture of the child posted within the agency, if deemed appropriate, in consultation with management. The child's picture may be put on the TCJFS public website, if deemed appropriate.
6. The child's case manager or supervisor shall contact the investigating law enforcement agency every week to obtain or give an update. This information shall be captured in an activity log within the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS).
7. When the child is located, the case manager or supervisor shall notify appropriate law enforcement department(s) and the child's parents/legal custodian, guardian ad litem, probation officer (if applicable), and the Director's office.
8. When the child is located, the case manager or supervisor shall internally notify staff so all posters can be taken down within the agency and the child's picture removed from the TCJFS website, if necessary.
9. When the child is located, the case manager or supervisor will address and document in the child's case record the following information:
 - The circumstances that contributed to the child running away or being absent from care. When possible, these factors shall be considered when determining subsequent placements.
 - The events or experiences that took place while the child was AWOL, including whether the child is found to be a sex trafficking victim.
 - TCJFS follow procedural requirements pursuant to rule 5101:2-36-12 of the Administrative Code regarding cross-referring reports of child abuse and neglect. Any PCPA shall report any allegations of abuse or neglect to TCJFS.
10. The PCSA or PCPA shall send a copy, within fourteen days, of the documentation identified in this rule to the recommending agency of the caregiver if the caregiver is not certified by the PCSA or PCPA. The recommending agency shall maintain the information in the caregiver's record.

CAREGIVER'S, AGENCY'S, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

On a case-by-case basis and in consultation with the parties listed above and agency counsel, run-away charges may be filed on the foster child by any of the parties.

 May 3, 2021
David W. Haverfield, Director Effective Date