

Part III – Casework Services

14. MISSING CHILDREN

14.0 PURPOSE: To provide standard protocols for reporting, locating, and responding to children who are missing from care to reduce the time they are absent from care and to increase their safety and well-being.

14.1 AUTHORITY:

Federal and State Statutes and Administrative Rules:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| A. 45 CFR 1340.14 | Reporting by mandated and non-mandated persons to a child protective agency or constituted authority |
| B. Public Law 113-183 | The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act |
| C. CHAP 346-14, HRS | Establishment and administering of programs, standards and adoption of rules for protection of abused and neglected children |
| D. CHAP 350-1, HRS | Review of who must report, how reports are to be submitted, and confidentiality of reports |
| E. CHAP 350-2, HRS | Action on reporting |
| F. CHAP 587A-4, HRS | Definitions (“Harm”) |
| G. CHAP 587A-5, HRS | Jurisdiction |
| H. CHAP 587A-7, HRS | Safe family home factors |
| I. CHAP 587A-8, HRS | Protective custody by police without court order |
| J. CHAP 587A-9, HRS | Temporary foster custody without a court order |
| K. CHAP 587A-11, HRS | Investigation; department powers |
| L. CHAP 1610-6, HAR | Eligibility requirements |
| M. CHAP 1610-9, HAR | Authorization |
| N. CHAP 1610-10, HAR | Confidentiality |
| O. CHAP 1610-17, HAR | Acceptance of Reports |

Part III – Casework Services

- P. CHAP 1610-23, HAR Child welfare assessment
- Q. CHAP 1610-25, HAR Intervention services
- R. CHAP 1610-45, HAR Termination of child welfare casework services

14.2 MISSING CHILDREN PROTOCOL

14.2.1 Intake, Assessment, and/or Placement

Child Welfare Services (CWS) staff will:

- A. Document or update the child’s identifying information on the CPSS screens CU22/CU24 at intake, assessment and/or placement, including:
 1. Full name, nickname(s), and alias(es);
 2. Date of birth;
 3. Gender;
 4. Race/ethnicity;
 5. Language;
 6. Hair and eye color;
 7. Height and weight; and
 8. Specific physical attributes, such as glasses, braces, scars, marks, piercings, and tattoos.

The “Special Instruct” field may be used for nicknames, aliases, eye/hair color, height/weight information, and any other relevant information.

- B. Take a color photograph of the child at initial placement and during each monthly face-to-face contact, to the extent possible. Ensure that the photograph does not include any other identifying information, such as school uniforms, landmarks, street names, etc.; however, attempt to capture identifying physical attributes in the photograph (e.g., glasses, braces, piercings, tattoos, etc.).
- C. CWS/Voluntary Case Management (VCM)/Family Strengthening Services (FSS) may offer a Keiki ID Kit to the parents or legal

Part III – Casework Services

guardians for all children. The Keiki ID Kit is a preventative tool to help recover missing children and is made available through the Missing Child Center of Hawaii (MCCH).

- D. Assess the child's strengths and interests to identify prosocial activities that can foster the child's social connections and mentorships that can build the child's connections to supportive adults.
- E. Assess the child's need for services to address mental health and trauma issues, such as but not limited to sexual abuse, physical abuse, psychological abuse, exposure to domestic violence, neglect, and ensure that appropriate services are provided.
- F. If the child has one or more prior runaway(s), provide the child with information on the risks of being absent from care and steps they can take to be safe during absences, including who they can contact for help. (See Section 14.3, A. Runaway Resources).

14.2.2 Following the child's absence from care

A. Within 24 hours:

1. Report the child's absence to local law enforcement and document the officer's name, badge number, telephone number, and the report number. Provide law enforcement with the child's:
 - a. Full name, nickname(s), and alias(es);
 - b. Date of birth and age;
 - c. Gender;
 - d. Race;
 - e. Hair and eye color;
 - f. Height and weight;
 - g. Specific physical attributes, such as glasses, braces, scars, marks, piercings, and tattoos, if any;

Part III – Casework Services

- h. Suspected runaway or abduction, and information on the suspected abductor if known;
 - i. When and where the child was last seen
 - j. What the child was wearing;
 - k. Information on where the child may be, if known;
 - l. Medical conditions, if any;
 - m. Status with DHS, date of custody, and current placement;
 - n. Recent color photograph, if available; and
 - o. If requested and available, assist law enforcement in obtaining fingerprints, deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) samples, and dental records. DNA evidence may include a hairbrush or toothbrush used only by the child.
2. If the police report was made by the resource caregiver, emergency shelter, or other placement staff, document the police report number and follow-up with police to ensure that CWS is contacted upon recovery of the child. Provide any additional information (above) that would assist law enforcement in locating the child.
3. Notify the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), parents/legal guardians, resource caregiver (RCG), probation officer, and service providers, as appropriate, of the child's absence from care and request their assistance in locating the child.
4. Call the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) to report the child's absence from care and send the child's picture via email to Imaging@ncmec.org. Include the child's name, state, and NCMEC case number, if known, in the email.
5. Enter a "CWI Alert" in the log of contacts to document any information needed upon recovery of the child, such as

Part III – Casework Services

possible placements, placements/persons to avoid, health concerns, history or suspicion of exploitation, etc.

6. Complete Parts I and II of the Missing Child Profile (see Section 14.3, B. Missing Child Profile), and email it to the Section Secretary or designee, with copies to the Supervisor and CWS Program Development (PD), for immediate input into the Department of Human Services (DHS) Missing Children website. Also include the CWS Branch Administrator and Assistant Branch Administrator in the email if the child:
 - a. Is known or suspected to have been abducted;
 - b. Is under age ten (10); or
 - c. Has a life threatening health condition or limited mental capacity which would place the child at risk of imminent harm.

B. Within 2 working days:

1. Complete and document a minimum of three (3) efforts to locate the child, such as but not limited to the following:
 - a. Check with the child's school, neighbors, relatives, service providers, or anyone else who may know of or have clues about the child's whereabouts. Ask them to notify you if they hear from the child.
 - b. Check the child's computer, phone and/or other online devices, if available, as a possible source of leads regarding people the child may have been communicating with or may have planned to meet.
 - c. Review social media for information regarding the child's current whereabouts, including Facebook, Twitter, etc.
 - d. Call or visit local spots that the child may frequent.
 - e. Call the child's employer or co-workers if the child is/was employed.

Part III – Casework Services

- f. Contact runaway shelters, such as Hale Kipa on Oahu.
 - g. Call the National Runaway Switchboard at 1-800-621-4000 to ask if the child has left a message, and leave a message for him or her.
 - h. Review the Missing Child Center of Hawaii's (MCCH) Photo and Information Release (see Section 14.3, C. MCCH Photo and Information Release) with the parent/legal guardian if CWS does not have permanent custody, and request signed permission to publish and/or circulate the child's photo and missing child. Do not post missing child information if the information may increase the risk of harm to the child.
2. If information is obtained about the suspected whereabouts of the child, immediately report the information to police.
 3. The CWS Section Secretary or designee will enter the child's name and required information into the DHS/MCCH Missing Children website.

C. Follow-up actions:

1. **During the first month** following the child's absence from care, continue to complete a minimum of three (3) efforts to locate the child per week and document all attempts.
2. **Following the first month** of the child's absence from care, complete a minimum of one (1) effort to locate the child per week and document all attempts.
3. **By the last work day of each week**, each CWS Section will compile and submit a Weekly Tracking Report on Missing Children (see Section 14.3, D. Weekly Tracking Report on

Part III – Casework Services

Missing Children) to CWS PD (cc: PD Office Assistant), including:

- a. The number of efforts to locate conducted for each child during the report week;
 - b. The reason for the child's absence from care, if known;
 - c. Whether the child was exploited while absent from care, if known; and
 - d. Whether the efforts to locate contributed to the child's recovery.
4. **At the end of each month, CWS PD will:**
- a. Compile the weekly tracking reports for all Sections into a statewide tracking report.
 - b. Compare it with the DHS Missing Children Website at <http://humanservices.hawaii.gov/ssd/missing-children/>.
 - c. Notify the Section Administrators of any discrepancies between the tracking reports and the website that require correction.

14.2.3 **Recovery or return home:**

When the child is recovered or returns home, the focus shall be on the child's well-being and the opportunity for positive intervention.

A. Immediately upon the child's recovery or return:

1. **If the child is recovered by police, the child shall be picked up by the assigned caseworker, whenever possible, or by another Social Worker (SW)/Human Services Professional (HSP) within 2 (two) hours of notification by police.**
2. If the child refuses to go with the CWS staff, staff shall not chase or restrain child/youth. Instead, encourage the

Part III – Casework Services

child/youth to accompany staff to get something to eat, clothing, etc., first.

If the child leaves, staff shall report the incident to police immediately, and follow the steps delineated under “14.2.2.”

3. If the child voluntarily returned, notify police immediately so they can respond to the site to close their case.
4. At the initial contact with the child, staff shall express concern for his or her safety and well-being. Ask the child about his or her immediate needs and address them first, such as food, clothing, medical care, etc. (see Section 14.3, E. Sample Questions).
5. Ask the child about his/her experiences while absent from care, including where the child stayed and how the child’s basic needs were met (see Section 14.3, E. Sample Questions). Assess whether any immediate services are required due to harmful/high risk incidents such as, but not limited to:
 - a. Sexual exploitation;
 - b. Sexual assault;
 - c. Sexual activity;
 - d. Physical abuse/assault;
 - e. Suicide ideations/attempt(s);
 - f. Substance use; and
 - g. Self-harm, such as cutting, tattoos, and piercings.
6. If the child indicates or reports to the caseworker or caregiver that he or she was of a victim of any crime, the caseworker must report the information to law enforcement immediately, but no later than 24 hours.
7. If human trafficking is known or suspected, follow the human trafficking protocol under Part III, Section 13, and arrange for needed services.
8. Assess appropriate placement options for the child, including the following:

Part III – Casework Services

- a. Determine the factors that led to the child's absence from care so that those factors can be addressed in subsequent placements to the extent possible.
 - b. Ask the child where he or she would like to live, and evaluate whether that is an appropriate placement or can be made appropriate with services and supports;
 - c. If that placement is not available or appropriate, seek a placement that does not pose the kinds of problems that contributed to the child's previous absence, to the extent possible; and
 - d. Have a candid conversation with the child about whether the child will stay in placement and what would support it.
9. With the child's permission, take an updated photo of the child and document any changes in physical attributes or health concerns.
 10. Report the child's return to parents/legal guardians, GAL, probation officer, and service providers, as appropriate.
 11. Report the child's return to NCMEC at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).

B. Within 2 working days of the child's recovery or return:

1. Complete Part III of the Missing Child Profile (see Section 14.3, B. Missing Child Profile), and email it to the Section Secretary or designee, with copies to the Supervisor and CWS Program Development (PD), for immediate update in the Department of Human Services (DHS) Missing Children website.
2. If the child is picked up by another SW/HSP, the assigned caseworker shall contact the child within 2 working days to follow-up on assessed needs.
3. Complete a Safety of Placement Assessment or Safety Assessment in Child Caring Institutions (see Section 14.3, F. Safety of Placement Assessment and G. Safety Assessment in Child Caring Institutions) if the child is returned to the same placement and the assessment is not current.

Part III – Casework Services

4. The Section Secretary will enter the recovery information into the DHS website and include the information on the next Weekly Tracking Report on Missing Children form.

14.3 FORMS

- A. Runaway Resources
- B. Missing Child Profile
- C. MCCH Photo and Information Release
- D. Weekly Tracking Report on Missing Children
- E. Sample Questions
- F. Safety of Placement Assessment
- G. Safety Assessment in Child Caring Institutions