
ORANGE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY
CFS OPERATIONS MANUAL

Effective Date: October 1, 2014
Revision Date: March 24, 2026

Policy No.: K-0214

Children/Non-Minor Dependents (NMD) Missing From Care

Purpose To provide guidelines when children and non-minor dependents (NMDs) supervised by Children and Family Services (CFS) are determined to be missing from care.

Approved This policy was approved by Loan English, Director of CFS.
Signature on file.

Most Recent Revision This revision of the Policy and Procedure (P&P) includes:

- Updated reporting and communication guidance regarding children and NMDs missing from care per California Department of Social Services (CDSS) All County Letter (ACL) 25-67
- Guidance related to After Hours Juvenile Court notification
- Updated policy name and terminology
- Updated Legal Mandates
- Updated policy guidance regarding 24-hour notification requirements
- Removal of definitions:
 - Runaway
 - AWOL
- Addition of the definition for Dependent Child (for the purpose of this P&P)
- Updated Attachments:
 - Attachment 1—Missing From Care Liaisons
 - Attachment 2—National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) Reporting Guidelines
 - Attachment 3—Ex Parte Template for Child Missing from Care

- Attachment 4—Ex Parte Template for Missing Non-Minor Dependent (NMD)
- Autotext Code Updates (**Note: Available upon PC reboot**)
 - New: MISSCHDEXP (Attachment 3—Ex Parte Template for Child Missing from Care)
 - New: MISSINGEXP (Attachment 4—Ex Parte Template for Missing Non-Minor Dependent (NMD))
 - Obsolete: AWOLEXP

Background

Children and NMDs that are missing from foster care are vulnerable to multiple risks and may experience, or engage in, harmful behaviors to include homelessness, injury, untreated mental or medical health conditions, drug use, sexual exploitation, delinquency, and even death. For guidelines on the death of clients or serious incidents involving children/NMDs missing from care (e.g., suicide attempt or injury resulting in hospitalization, involvement in criminal acts, etc.), refer to:

- Social Services Agency (SSA) Administrative Policy and Procedure (P&P) [Client Death/Serious Incident Notification Dependent Children and Voluntary Supervision Cases \(D 9\)](#)
- SSA Administrative P&P [Special Incident Report \(F 13\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Child Fatalities and Near Fatalities \(A-0204\)](#)

The needs of children/NMDs missing from care are of national concern. The Federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) (Public Law [PL] 93-415) provides funding for programs to support children/NMDs missing from care and homeless children, training, research, and other activities/resources, such as the National Runaway Switchboard.

In 2014, the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (PL 113-183) was enacted, requiring increased oversight of children receiving child welfare services, as these children are often the most vulnerable to sexual trafficking and exploitation. The requirements of this Act were incorporated into state law with the passage of SB 794 (2015) which, in part, requires counties to develop and implement protocols to expeditiously locate any missing child, or NMD determined to be missing from care.

The California Statewide Ebony Alert Program was introduced through SB 673 and established California Government Code § 8594.14 in 2024. The Statewide Feather Alert Program was introduced through AB 2348 and AB 1863 and established California Government Code § 8594.13 in 2023. These resources were created

to address racial disparities and focus on individuals who might not meet the criteria of other Alert systems (e.g. Amber Alert).

In 2025, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) published All County Letter (ACL) 25-67 which provides guidance related to changes made by the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 2108 (Chapter 660, Statutes of 2024) and AB 161 (Chapter 46, Statutes of 2024) for children/NMDs that are missing from foster care. Changes include amendments to Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) section (§) 16501.35 and Penal Code (PEN) § 11166(j)(3), affecting notification requirements and requiring additional communication with and reporting to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and law enforcement agencies. AB 161 added WIC § 827.14 to provide the authority to share information from the juvenile case file with NCMEC as necessary to carry out the duties required by PEN § 11166(j)(3).

For guidelines on the abduction of children supervised by CFS, see CFS P&P [Child Abduction \(B-0119\)](#).

Orangewood Children and Family Center (OCFC) may have additional procedures and protocols. CFS staff assigned to OCFC will also adhere to applicable policies outlined in the OCFC Operation Manual.

Definitions

For the purposes of this P&P, the following definitions apply:

Dependent Child: A child supervised by CFS after a dependency petition is filed with the court to initiate proceedings *and includes a child who is pre-disposition for purposes of this P&P.*

Missing Child: Per ACL 25-67, when a child's (i.e., under the age of 18) whereabouts are unknown to CFS, or when the CFS has located a child subject to an order of foster care placement in a location not approved by the court that may pose a risk to the child, taking into account the child's age, intelligence, mental functioning, and physical condition.

This includes instances in which children are missing from care, but their whereabouts are known to the social worker (e.g., left the approved placement and is with a friend or family member and refuses to return to placement). As these children have absented themselves from care, they are to be considered missing from foster care.

Missing NMD: Per ACL 25-67, only apply to an NMD whose whereabouts are unknown to CFS, and based on the totality of the circumstances, reasonable suspicion exists that the NMD did not voluntarily leave foster care or is at risk of substantial harm (e.g., NMD abducted or held against will, etc.), or the NMD has competency issues.

POLICY

Prevention/ Intervention

CFS staff are encouraged to assess the need for missing from care intervention for a dependent, with consideration to the child's/NMD's age and case circumstances, through:

- Exploration of thoughts or desires of leaving care
- Assessment of high-risk triggers or precipitating events (e.g., substance use, bullying, recent sexual orientation or gender identity disclosure, physical/emotional safety jeopardized, prior history, recent placement, etc.)
- Discussion of alternatives and available supports, intervention or safety plan that may be in place, etc.
- Education on the dangers and consequences of being on the street (i.e., homelessness)
- Convening a staffing or Child and Family Team (CFT) meeting, as appropriate
- Referral to CFS Missing from Care Liaison (see [Attachment 1—CFS Missing from Care Liaisons](#))
- Discussion with parent/caregiver about child's thoughts or history of leaving care supports, and/or intervention plan
- Consultation with County Counsel regarding court-related options

Note: The above guidelines may also be considered for an NMD.

Non- Dependent Children

Upon becoming aware that a non-dependent child participating in voluntary placement, Family Preservation Services (FPS), Informal Supervision (Welfare and Institutions Code [WIC] Section [§] 301), or Non-Dependent Legal Guardianship (NDLG) has left care, staff will provide the parent/legal guardian with information and resources that may be used to locate the child. This may include assistance with the filing of a Missing Person Report with law enforcement and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). It is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian to file a Missing Person Report for the non-dependent.

Leaves Care Prior to Detention Hearing

As authorized within WIC §§ 300 and 305, if a child leaves care prior to a Detention hearing and the case remains open, the guidelines within this P&P apply.

Note: If a child leaves care from First Step Assessment Center or OCFC, facility staff will promptly notify the assigned Senior Social Worker (SSW) and implement relevant facility practices and/or OCFC's runaway plan.

Leaves Care and Whereabouts are Known

Per ACL 16-15 and ACL 25-67, if a dependent child leaves care, but whereabouts are known to the social worker, (e.g., left the approved placement and is with a friend or family member, refusing to return to placement), the child is considered missing from foster care. In these instances, follow the reporting and notification responsibilities noted in this policy.

Reporting Requirements

In accordance with ACL 16-15, ACL 16-85, ACL 25-67, WIC § 16501.35(b)(2) and Penal Code (PEN) § 11166, **immediately but no later than 24 hours from becoming aware of the child's absence or making a determination that the child/NMD is missing**, the assigned SSW or designee will:

A. **Law Enforcement-Missing Person Report**

Report the child/NMD's absence to the local law enforcement agency and, in the case of an Indian child, any tribal law enforcement agency for the child's Tribe, and file a Missing Person Report.

Alternatively, if appropriate, direct the child/NMD's caregiver to immediately file the report with local law enforcement and obtain the final report number from the caregiver.

Note: Pursuant to PEN § 14211, in situations where the Missing Person Report is provided to a law enforcement department other than that of the missing child/NMD's city or county of residence, the law enforcement department taking the report shall notify and forward a copy of the report to the law enforcement department(s) having jurisdiction of the residence of the child/NMD, and of the place where the child was last seen, within 24 hours.

Exception: OCFC staff will initiate a Missing Person Report for children that have left care at OCFC. OCFC staff will contact the OCFC Sheriff's Special Officer (SSO) to file a Missing Juvenile Report with the Sheriff's Department who will initiate law enforcement recovery efforts. OCFC staff will provide the

assigned SSW with the report number to include in the notification to Juvenile Court (see the “Notification—Requirements” Policy section below).

1. Provide law enforcement with the following where reasonably possible:
 - a. Identifying information, any unique identifiers (e.g., glasses, braces, disabilities, tattoos, piercings, clothing last worn, etc.).
 - b. Name and location of caregiver and family members.
 - c. CFS names and contact numbers, including the Child Abuse Hotline.
 - d. Known dangers, risks to, and exploitation of the child/NMD.
 - e. Possible whereabouts or areas the child/NMD may be found.
 - f. A photo of the missing or abducted child or youth. For guidelines on digital photographs in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS), see CFS P&P [County-Issued Cellular Phones \(B-0202\)](#).
 - Note:** Per best practice, CFS staff may take annual or semi-annual photographs of children under the jurisdiction of the Orange County Juvenile Court to enable provision of identification to law enforcement in the event a child/NMD is missing or abducted.
 - g. A description of the child’s or NMD’s physical features (e.g., height, weight, sex, ethnicity, race, hair color, and eye color).
 - h. Endangerment information, such as the child’s or youth’s pregnancy status, prescription medications, suicidal tendencies, vulnerability to being sex trafficked, and other health risk factors, to the extent such information is released in compliance with other applicable laws.

- i. Information about whether the child or NMD is or may be an Indian child/NMD, as defined in WIC § 224.1, including the name of the child's Tribe.

2. Request that law enforcement:

- a. Issue a "Be on the Lookout (BOLO)" jurisdictional broadcast (per PEN § 14211).
- b. Include the child/NMD in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Persons File database (per PEN § 14211).
- c. Include the child/NMD in the Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Missing and Unidentified Persons System (MUPS).
- d. Issue an "Ebony Alert" and/or a "Feather Alert" as appropriate based on race, ethnicity and/or Tribal affiliation.
- e. Provide the preliminary report number and the final written report when it is available.

B. **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)**

Per CFS policy, immediately or no later than 24 hours from becoming aware of the child's absence or making a determination that the child/NMD is missing, report the missing child/NMD to NCMEC.

Refer to [Attachment 2—NCMEC Reporting Guidelines](#) for further information on how to report to NCMEC and WIC §827.14 which authorizes SSA to share information about missing foster children and NMDs with NCMEC.

Refer to the "Documentation" Policy section for guidelines to document completion of the above reporting responsibilities in the child/NMD's Permanent Record.

For children under Family Maintenance (FM) status, where appropriate, instruct the custodial parent/legal guardian to report the missing child/NMD to law enforcement and NCMEC in accordance with the timeframes above and advise the custodial parent/legal guardian to make efforts to locate the child/NMD. In such instances, the Missing Person Report number obtained from the parent, and

efforts made by the SSW and parent/legal guardian to locate the child/NMD will be communicated to Court via Ex Parte.

**24-Hour
Notification—
Requirements**

Per CFS policy and in line with ACL 16-15, ACL 25-67 and WIC § 16501.35, if a dependent child or a NMD is determined to be missing, the SSW or designee will immediately but no later than 24 hours from becoming aware that the child/NMD is missing from care notify the following parties of the child/NMD's absence, as follows:

A. **Parents/Legal Guardians/Indian Custodians**

1. **Missing Child**

Notify unless parental contact is prohibited by court order or parental rights have been terminated. Inquire if the child is with the parent or if the parent is aware of the child's current or possible location. Request the parent inform CFS if the child establishes contact. If available, provide the parent with the Missing Person Report number.

2. **Missing NMD**

Notify that the NMD is missing, if:

- Family reunification (FR) services are being provided and a case plan goal of "return home" is in effect

—Or—

- Assigned SSW determines circumstances are appropriate (e.g., NMD has contact with parent, NMD has special needs, parent may be able to provide information on whereabouts or support to NMD, etc.)

If available and appropriate, provide the parent/legal guardian/Indian custodian with the Missing Person Report number.

B. **Tribal Representative**

If the child is designated, or may be, an Indian child, notify the identified tribal representative. The notification process may be coordinated with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Unit. See CFS P&P [Indian Child Welfare Act \(G-0309\)](#).

Tribal notification also applies to a missing NMD, if the NMD elected for the provisions of ICWA to continue to apply while remaining in extended foster care (EFC).

C. **Attorney**

Notify the attorneys by completing the form *Attorney/Court Notification for Child Missing From Care (F063-25-884)* and sending it by email to the attorneys of the following:

- Child/NMD

—And—

- Unless notification has been limited or terminated by the court, the attorneys of the:
 - Parent(s)
 - Legal guardian
 - Indian custodian

D. **Juvenile Court**

Notify the Juvenile Court by completing the form *Attorney/Court Notification for Child Missing From Care (F063-25-884)* and sending via email to County Counsel (copy the Court Officer SSSS/designee). The notification will be submitted to the court clerk by County Counsel/Court Officer SSSS/designee.

E. **Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)**

The child or NMD's CASA, if one has been appointed.

F. **Siblings**

Any known sibling of the child or NMD who is 10 years of age or older and adjudged to be a dependent child of the juvenile court, if such notice would not be contrary to the safety and well-being of that sibling. Consult with SSSS when determining whether notice is contrary to the sibling's well-being and safety.

Note: Consistent with established CFS policy, notice to siblings will be provided in a trauma-informed manner.

G. **Local Law Enforcement Agency**

The local law enforcement agency, including, if applicable, any tribal law enforcement agency for the child's Tribe in the case of an Indian child. Refer to the policy section 'Reporting Requirements' for further information.

H. **Foster Care (FC) Eligibility**

Per CFS policy, within 24 hours of notification of the child's absence, or making a determination that the NMD is missing from care, call the Placement Change Hotline and follow-up with *Placement Information Change (PIC) Notice (F063-28-301)*

submittal. See CFS P&P [Placement Change Notification \(K-0209\)](#).

On a case-by-case basis and in consultation with supervisor and/or Eligibility Technician (ET), temporary absence regulations (i.e., bed hold) may be considered per Eligibility and Assistance Standards (EAS), Division 45-302.23.

Note: When a designee (i.e., CFS staff other than the ASW) provides 24-hour notification to the required parties, additionally, the designee will provide notification and relevant materials to the ASW and SSSS within 24 hours of notification of the child's/NMD's absence.

Refer to the "Documentation" Policy section for guidelines to document completion of the above notifications in the child/NMD's Permanent Record.

Additional Notification—Requirements

A. Other Relatives/Important Persons/Service Providers

The SSW or designee may notify certain relatives, important persons, and service providers of the child/NMD's absence, in a timely manner, as applicable. These individuals include, but are not limited to:

- Relatives, identified important persons
- Therapist, Public Health Nurse (PHN), Physician
- Foster Youth Services (FYS) Liaison
- Educational attorney/representative
- Mentor/Youth Partner/Coach
- School/Education Personnel
- Wraparound Service Providers
- CFT Members

For children that have left care at OCFC, OCFC staff will notify Community Care Licensing (CCL) within 24 hours and submits an initial report to CCL within seven calendar days.

B. Other CFS Staff

As applicable, CFS staff with secondary assignment may be notified of the child/NMD's absence in a timely manner, including but not limited to:

- RFA Placement worker
- ICPC Liaison
- Staff providing visitation supervision
- Transitional Planning Services Program (TPSP) staff
- ICWA Unit staff

Refer to the “Documentation” Policy section for guidelines to document completion of the above notifications in the child/NMD’s Permanent Record.

Ex Parte and Protective Custody Warrant

A. **Missing Child**

Immediately or no later than one **business day** from the date of becoming aware of the child’s absence, the ASW/designee will complete and submit an Ex Parte and Application Order to the Juvenile Court (see [Attachment 3—Ex Parte Template for Child Missing From Care](#)).

In accordance with WIC § 340, include in the *Ex Parte and Application Order* a request for a Protective Custody warrant.

Refer to CFS P&P [Warrants \(G-0901\)](#) for further guidelines to request a Protective Custody warrant.

Per CFS policy, the warrant request will include but not be limited to:

- The date the Missing Person Report was filed with law enforcement and the report number
- Recall of any previous warrants in the system or not served
- A completed and attached:
 - [Protective Custody Warrant \(L-3042\)](#)
- *Declaration to [Support Protective Custody Warrant \(Runaway/Missing Minor\) \(F063-28-39\)](#)*

Note: If the child returns to care prior to submittal of a warrant request, information regarding the child’s absence or absences will be reported to Court within 15 calendar days.

B. **Missing NMD**

Immediately or no later than one **business day** from making a determination that the NMD is missing from care, the ASW/designee will complete and submit an Ex Parte and Application Order to the Juvenile Court (see [Attachment 3—Ex Parte Template for Child Missing From Care](#)).

Note: Due to the adult status of the NMD, a warrant will not be requested on the NMD’s behalf.

Initial and Ongoing

Immediate steps should be taken to locate a dependent child whose whereabouts are unknown or an NMD determined to be missing from

Efforts to Locate

care. In accordance with ACL 16-15 and California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Manual of Policy and Procedures (MPP), Division 31-320, the assigned SSW will, as information is provided, but no less frequently than once monthly, attempt to locate the child/NMD, and document those efforts in a CWS/CMS case contact. See CFS P&P [Case Compliance Contacts and Documentation \(E-0105\)](#).

Efforts to locate will be documented in each status review report filed during the child/NMD's absence. These efforts may include, yet not be limited to:

- Contacting significant persons in the child/NMD's life (e.g., parents, siblings, relatives, friends, former caregivers, former and current schools and service providers, etc.)
 - Request the caregiver and/or parent make similar inquiries, as appropriate, and report back information obtained
- Physically checking places where the child/NMD is likely to be
- Following up on leads received regarding possible whereabouts
- Conducting visits to relevant addresses, or requesting law enforcement conduct a welfare check
- Consultation with, or referral to, the CFS Missing From Care Liaison. Inquiries or consultation with law enforcement or SSOs
- Searching social media websites (if authorized), per CFS P&P [Standard Operating Procedures \(B-0216\)](#)
- Searching public locator databases (e.g., [California Missing Child Clearinghouse](#), [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](#), etc.)

For Indian children/NMDs, per ACL 24-18, active efforts must be made to prevent the breakup of the family and must continue to be made throughout the life of the case whenever it is known, or there is reason to know, that a child/NMD is an Indian child/NMD. Active efforts include, but are not limited to, contact with:

- Tribal leaders
- Tribal Representatives, and/or
- Tribal organizations/service providers

Per ACL 25-67, CFS is required to collaborate with the Tribal representative on efforts to locate the child and ensuring that the Tribe is regularly updated regarding the child's status, particularly when the child has been located, to determine the most appropriate placement, if a placement change is necessary. For further information regarding documentation of active efforts and placement coordination refer to

[CFS Dispatch Indian Child Welfare Act \(ICWA\) Inquiry/Documentation \(G-0309-D\)](#).

See CFS P&P [Confidentiality—CFS Client Records \(F-0105\)](#) for guidelines on the release of client information.

**Return to
CFS Care**

Per ACL 16-15, when a missing child/NMD has been located, the assigned SSW will arrange for the immediate return of the child/NMD to care. Refer to the “Out-of-County/State” Policy section below.

Additionally, per ACL 16-15, the assigned SSW or designee will complete the following activities as soon as possible, but no later than three business days after return to care:

A. Interview child/NMD using open ended questions to:

- Assess present needs
- Determine reasons for leaving care and, when possible, address the identified reasons in subsequent placements
- Explore alternative options to leaving care including developing a safety plan, support resources, and/or prevention plan
- Learn of behaviors and activities while missing from care, including where and with whom the child/NMD may have stayed
- Identify whether the child/NMD is a possible victim of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE). See [Attachment 2—Identifying Commercially Sexually Exploited Children](#) of CFS P&P [Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children \(M-0110\)](#) for possible indicators of CSE

If it is determined the child/NMD was a victim, or at risk, of CSE during absence from care, refer to CFS P&P [Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children \(M-0110\)](#).

In accordance with PEN § 11165.7, file a report with the Child Abuse Hotline if the child alleges abuse, neglect, sexual abuse or exploitation. See CFS P&P [Child Abuse Hotline \(M-0109\)](#).

- B. Offer medical care for injuries, illness, or harm experienced while missing and/or PHN consultation to rule out injuries, illness, pregnancy, sexual transmitted infections (STIs), effects of substance use, etc.
- C. Evaluate need for mental health services, FYS, or law enforcement assistance due to victimization/commercial sexual

exploitation, exposure to, or participation in criminal activity, missing school credits, etc.

- D. **For children under FM status**, expeditiously return the child to the care of the parent/guardian if, in consultation with the SSSS, no safety concerns have been identified.

Refer to Attachment 3—Ex Parte Template for Missing Child, for guidance to request Court authority for SSA to assess and return a child, under FM supervision, to the care of the parent/legal guardian, upon being located. This authority should be requested at the time of initial notification to Court of the child’s missing status, when a request for a Protective Custody warrant is made, per the “Notification—Requirements” Policy section.

If a determination is made that abuse, neglect, or exploitation has occurred in the home such that the child should be removed from parental custody, the SSW will request a warrant in the absence of exigent circumstance as outlined in CFS P&P [Warrants \(G-0901\)](#).

Refer to CFS P&P Dependency Intake (A-0502) if a determination is made to take the child into protective custody.

- E. Assess placement and service needs. If the previous placement is no longer appropriate, identify a placement that would best meet the needs of the child/NMD. As appropriate, consider:
- The need to convene a CFT or Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meeting
 - If it is appropriate, suitable and safe for the child/NMD to return to the care of a previous caregiver

For further guidance, refer to CFS P&P [Out-of-Home Placement \(K-0208\)](#).

- F. Inform Court and child/NMD’s attorney of the child/NMD’s return. For children, file an *Ex Parte and Application Order* or Court Return Detention Hearing Report (DHR) that includes a request to recall any outstanding warrants. For NMDs, file an *Ex Parte and Application Order*.

For further guidance, refer to CFS P&P [Fifteen Day Review Hearings \(G-0318\)](#) and CFS P&P [Warrants \(G-0901\)](#).

- G. Notify the following of the child/NMD’s return, as applicable:

- Law enforcement
- NCMEC (refer to Attachment 2—NCMEC Reporting Guidelines)
- Child/NMD's parent (if previously notified)
- Tribal Representative
- Child and Family Team (CFT)
- FC Eligibility via *Placement Information Change (PIC) Notice (F063-28-301)* (refer to CFS P&P [Placement Change Notification \[K-0209\]](#))
- Relatives, important persons, service providers, other CFS staff, as appropriate (if previously notified)

Refuses Return

In line with ACIN I-13-17, if a child/NMD makes contact with CFS yet refuses to reveal whereabouts or return to care, the SSW or designee may consider, yet not be limited to, the following activities:

- Encourage return
- Assess safety and service needs
- Provide shelter, food, housing, medical, and mental health care referrals
- Develop a safety and support plan
- Consult with or refer to CFS Missing From Care Liaisons
- Consult with supervisor and/or County Counsel

Out-of-County/State

If an Orange County dependent child is taken into temporary protective custody by law enforcement in another California county pursuant to WIC § 324, CFS will coordinate with law enforcement and/or the child welfare agency in the other county to return the child within five business days of the date of notification.

If an Orange County dependent child is found in another state, refer to CFS P&P [Interstate Compact for Juveniles \(A-0419\)](#).

Note: The Interstate Commission for Juveniles (ICJ) Rules do not apply to NMDs. If a NMD is located out of Orange County, the assigned SSW will assess the willingness of the NMD to return to care and arrange return.

Termination of Dependency

- A. **Missing Child**
 Per *In re Natasha H.*, (1996) 46 Cal. App. 4th 1151, a child's away from care behaviors do not justify termination of dependency jurisdiction, absent extraordinary circumstances which make it in the child's best interest.

Factors for consideration in determining whether to recommend termination of dependency may include:

- Age of child (i.e., reached age of majority). **Note:** Request recall of in-effect protective custody warrants, regardless of open or closed dependency status
- Despite reasonable and documented efforts by CFS, the child cannot be located
- Child is residing out-of-state with parent or relative, law enforcement or child welfare representative from other state reports child is doing well, and/or other state refuses to honor California's warrant

B. Missing NMD

Per WIC § 391, Court may terminate dependency jurisdiction over a NMD if the court finds after reasonable and documented efforts the NMD cannot be located.

If it is suspected the NMD is a victim of harm or foul play (e.g., abducted or held against will) and is not voluntarily absent from care, confirm that a Missing Person Report is on file in the DOJ Missing and Unidentified Persons System, prior to dependency being terminated.

Refer to CFS P&P [Non-Minor Dependency Court Proceedings \(J-0104\)](#) for further guidelines on terminating dependency of a NMD.

If a missing NMD is located, or contacts CFS after dependency is terminated, refer the NMD to the NMD Re-Entry Liaison. Refer to CFS P&P [Re-Entry into Extended Foster Care \(EFC\) \(J-0105\)](#) for more information.

Note: Notify law enforcement and NCMEC that the NMD has been located.

Personal Property

During a child/NMD's absence, staff will take steps to safeguard the youth's property. Refer to [Child Property Storage Form \(F063-25-725\)](#).

Documentation

In accordance with CDSS, MPP, Division 31-075, the Permanent Record for dependent children and NMDs missing from care will include, yet not be limited to, efforts to prevent, report, notify, locate, and engage in activities related to the return of a missing child/NMD. This includes:

- Discussions with child/NMD, caregiver, service providers

- Plans or agreements made
- Education, or alternative options, provided
- Identification of triggers, frequent hangouts, etc.
- Referrals offered or submitted
- Reports and notifications completed or attempted, and method
- Reasons for suspicion that a NMD is a victim of harm or foul play or has competency issues
- Missing Person Report numbers obtained

See CFS P&P [Case Compliance Contacts and Documentation \(E-0105\)](#) and the following CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards:

- [Ending Foster and Non-Foster Care Placements/Placement Episodes](#)
- [Missing/Abductions Contacts](#)
- [Temporary Leaves](#)
- [Missing/Abductions Case Plan Entry](#)

For a child/NMD determined to be a victim of or at risk of CSE during absence from care, refer to the documentation requirements provided in [Attachment 3—Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation Data Collection Criteria](#) of CFS P&P [Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children \(M-0110\)](#) and [CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Commercially Sexually Exploited Children \(CSEC\)](#).

REFERENCES

Attachments and CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards

Hyperlinks are provided below to access attachments to this P&P and any CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards that are referenced.

- [Attachment 1—CFS Missing From Care Liaisons](#)
- [Attachment 2—NCMEC Reporting Guidelines](#)
- [Attachment 3—Ex Parte Template for Missing Child](#)
- [Attachment 4—Ex Parte Template for Missing NMD](#)
- [CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Ending Foster and Non-Foster Care Placements/Placement Episodes](#)
- [CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—AWOL/Abductions Contacts](#)
- [CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Temporary Leaves](#)
- [CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—AWOL/Abductions Case Plan Entry](#)
- [CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Commercially Sexually Exploited Children \(CSEC\)](#)

Hyperlinks

Users accessing this document by computer may create a direct connection to the following references by clicking on the link provided.

- SSA Administrative P&P [Client Death/Serious Incident Notification Dependent Children and Voluntary Supervision Cases \(D 9\)](#)
- SSA Administrative P&P [Special Incident Report \(F 13\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Child Fatalities and Near Fatalities \(A-0204\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Child Abduction \(B-0119\)](#)
- CFS P&P [County-Issued Cellular Phones \(B-0202\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Indian Child Welfare Act \(G-0309\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Warrants \(G-0901\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Placement Change Notification \(K-0209\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Case Compliance Contacts and Documentation \(E-0105\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Standard Operating Procedures \(B-0216\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Confidentiality—CFS Client Records \(F-0105\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Child Abuse Hotline \(M-0109\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Out-of-Home Placement \(K-0208\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Child and Family Teams \(D-0314\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Fifteen Day Review Hearings \(G-0318\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Interstate Compact for Juveniles \(A-0419\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children \(M-0110\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Non-Minor Dependency Court Proceedings \(J-0104\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Re-Entry into Extended Foster Care \(EFC\) \(J-0105\)](#)
- [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](#)
- [California Department of Justice Missing Persons Information](#)
- [National Crime Information Center \(NCIC\)](#)
- [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children \(NCMEC\)](#)
- [Miscellaneous Order M-2016-3](#)
- [NCMEC Case Worker Guide to Reporting Missing Children](#)

Other Sources Other references include the following:

- California Department of Justice Missing Persons Hotline
 - 1-800-222-FIND (1-800-222-3463)

FORMS

Online Forms

Forms listed below may be printed out and completed, or completed online, and may be accessed by clicking on the link provided.

Form Name	Form Number
Protective Custody Warrant	L-3042
Declaration to Support Protective Custody Warrant (Missing Minor)	F063-28-39
Child Property Storage Form	F063-25-725
Missing From Care Liaison Referral	F063-25-753
Missing Checklist	F063-25-803
Attorney/Court Notification for Child Missing From Care	F063-25-884

Hard Copy Forms

Forms that may be completed in hard copy (including multi-copy NCR forms) are listed below. **For reference purposes only**, links are provided to view these hard copy forms, where available.

Form Name	Form Number
None.	

CWS/CMS Forms

Forms that may **only** be obtained in CWS/CMS are listed below. **For reference purposes only**, links are provided to view these CWS/CMS forms, where available.

Form Name	Form Number
Ex Parte Application and Order	1XPARTE.dot
Placement Information Change (PIC) Notice	F063-28-301

Brochures

Brochures to distribute in conjunction with this policy may include:

Brochure Name	Brochure Number
None.	

LEGAL MANDATES

[Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Section \(§\) 224.1](#) defines Indian youth and child, which can include an unmarried person who is under 21 years of age if certain circumstances are met.

[WIC § 300](#) describes the conditions under which a child comes within the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court, which may adjudicate them to be a dependent of the Juvenile Court.

[WIC § 301](#) describes a program of supervision which may be offered to a family in lieu of filing a petition or subsequent to the dismissal of a petition already filed.

[WIC § 305](#) provides the legal basis for a peace officer to take a minor into temporary custody without a warrant.

[WIC § 324](#) outlines the provision for minors taken into temporary custody in a county other than the county of jurisdiction.

[WIC § 340](#) provides the legal basis for issuing protective custody warrants for children alleged to come within WIC § 300, or when a dependent minor has run away from court ordered placement.

[WIC § 391](#) details termination of dependency jurisdiction over a NMD, the conduct of the WIC § 391 Termination Review hearing, and the information and services that must be provided to a NMD prior to that hearing.

[WIC § 827.14](#) provides the authority to share information from the juvenile case file with NCMEC as necessary to carry out the duties required by PEN § 11166(j)(3).

[WIC § 16501.35](#) requires child welfare agencies to develop protocols to expedite the location of any child or NMD missing from foster care, including a 24-hour notice requirement for various parties.

[Penal Code \(PEN\) § 11165.7](#) defines mandated reporter.

[PEN § 11166](#) mandates child welfare agency staff report to law enforcement immediately, or within 24 hours, a child (receiving child welfare services) who is missing or who is abducted and is reasonably believed to be a victim of, or at risk of, commercial sexual exploitation.

[PEN § 14211](#) mandates law enforcement agencies accept a Missing Person Report, including reports of runaways, without delay, and broadcast a “Be On the Lookout” bulletin within its jurisdiction for missing persons under 21 years of age or if evidence indicates the missing individual is at risk.

[PEN § 14211](#) mandates that within 2 hours of receipt of a Missing Person Report of an individual under 21 years of age, law enforcement agencies transmit the report to the DOJ for inclusion in the Violent Crime Information Center (VCIC) and NCIC databases.

[Community Care Licensing \(CCL\), California Code of Regulations \(CCR\), Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 5, § 84061](#) lists circumstances group homes are required to report to placing agencies, including runaway incidents.

[CCL, CCR, Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 5, § 84322.2](#) mandates group homes develop a written plan to address runaway situations and that the plan be provided to, and discussed with, youth and placing agency at time of placement.

[CDSS, MPP, Division 31-075](#) outlines the requirements for child welfare case record documentation.

[CDSS, MPP, Division 31-320](#) outlines social worker contact requirements with a child.

[Eligibility and Assistance Standards \(EAS\) Regulations, Division 45-302.23](#) authorizes payment to an eligible caregiver when a dependent is temporarily absent for no more than 14 days in a calendar month.

All County Letter ([ACL 16-15](#) and [16-85](#)) provide guidelines for locating and responding to children who are absent from placement and NMDs who are missing from care.

[ACL 25-67](#) provides guidance for notification, reporting and communication requirements related to the passage of AB 2108 (Chapter 660, Statutes of 2024) and AB 161 (Chapter 46, Statutes of 2024).

[All County Information Notice \(ACIN\) I-13-17](#) provides guidelines and promising practices to locate and respond to children/NMDs who run away or go missing from care.

In re Natasha H. (1996) 46 Cal. App. 4th 1151 held that a child's behaviors leaving placements and lack of cooperation do not justify termination of dependency jurisdiction, absent extraordinary circumstances that make it in the child's best interest to terminate.

REVISION HISTORY

Since the Effective Date of this P&P, and prior to the Current Revision Date, the following revisions of this P&P were published:

December 21, 2016