

MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL CYPS AND THAMES VALLEY POLICE

Joint Protocol concerning children and young people who run away or go missing from home or care

1. The Police Enquiry Centre (PEC) receives a report that a child is missing.
2. In cases where the report initially goes to Children's Social Care (CSC), the case should still be referred to the Police Enquiry Centre (PEC) on 08458 505505. There may be occasions when a child in care goes missing and police and CSC do not feel it is appropriate to report it immediately, in these circumstances the case should be reviewed hourly by police and CSC and referred to PEC after 6 hours.
3. The police do an initial risk assessment to establish how quickly to respond.
4. The police duty supervisor is informed. He/she will manage the police response. All high risk cases will be led by a senior officer.
5. POLICE OFFICERS SHOULD:
 - Search the premises and surrounding grounds
 - Obtain details concerning the circumstances of the child's disappearance
 - Complete a full risk assessment
 - Obtain a detailed description of the child's clothing, together with a photograph
 - Obtain consent to release the photograph to the press (if required)
 - Add the child's details to the Missing Person Database
 - Add the child's details to the Police National Computer (PNC) if they have been missing for more than 2 hours
6. Police should undertake a secondary investigation to identify any incidents or issues which may inform the risk assessment or help locate the child more quickly e.g. domestic violence, child protection reports, the child is in care or particularly vulnerable etc
 - Police should consider contacting Children's Social Care (CSC)
 - The risk assessment must be continually reviewed
7. Police are responsible for liaising with the family as well as with other agencies and force areas. There may be occasions (particularly if the child is in care) when CSC working in partnership with the police may have direct contact with the family and with other agencies.
8. The Missing Person (Misper) Co-ordinator is the single point of contact for all agencies.
9. Any child who is in care or who is particularly vulnerable will be reviewed within 24 hours by the Misper Co-ordinator and CSC. All other children will be reviewed by police and CSC once the child has been missing for more than 24 hours.

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10. The police must liaise with CSC to establish whether the child is known to CSC and their case is “open”, or if the child is unknown, whether a referral to CSC is appropriate.
 11. If the child has been missing for more than 24 hours, the case will be reviewed at the police daily management meeting.
 12. Once a child has been missing over 24 hours, the police, in consultation with partner agencies, must consider the media strategy.
 13. When a child has been missing more than 48 hours, the case will be reviewed by a Detective Inspector.
 14. When a child has been missing over 5 days, or whenever there are serious safeguarding concerns, CSC will convene a strategy meeting.
 15. The Misper Co-ordinator will inform the Police National Missing Persons Bureau when the child has been missing over 14 days – this may be earlier if the child is at high risk of harm.
 16. If the child has been missing for more than 10 weeks, the Misper Co-ordinator will ask for the PNC record to remain in place for up to a year.
 17. Within 24 hours of the child’s return, the police undertake a “safe and well” check and inform all relevant agencies of the child’s return.
 18. Wherever a child has an allocated worker in CSC, that worker or other team member will endeavour to meet with the child alone and have a return to home (or care) interview. This should occur within five working days.
 19. In cases when a child goes missing repeatedly, or if there are other concerns about the child, the police will make a referral to CSC irrespective of the duration of time the child has been missing.
 20. In cases where a child discloses a child protection issue, an officer from the Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU) will liaise with CSC in order to consider whether an initial assessment or strategy meeting is appropriate.
 21. To comply with National Indicator 71, data on missing children will be sent by the police quarterly to the Knowledge and Information Team in Children and Young People’s Services.

OUT OF HOURS ARRANGEMENTS

If a child goes missing out of office hours, the police should consider informing the “Emergency Social Work Team” on 01908 265545.

OUT OF AREA ARRANGEMENTS

There may be occasions when a child goes missing and they are in care in a different local authority area. In these circumstances, CSC should inform the Duty Inspector on 08458 505505 as the child may have returned to Milton Keynes.

For further information refer to the Thames Valley Missing Children Guidance at [http://www.mkscb.org/mkscb-professionalsandvolunteers/documents/Missing_Children - TV Guidance Dec 2010.pdf](http://www.mkscb.org/mkscb-professionalsandvolunteers/documents/Missing_Children_-_TV_Guidance_Dec_2010.pdf)