 Department of Children & Family Services <i>Building a Stronger Louisiana</i>	Division/Section	Child Welfare
	Chapter No./Name	6 – Foster Care (FC)
	Part No./Name	12 – Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Section No./Name	Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Document No./Name	6-1215 Runaway, Missing, Kidnapped Foster Child
	Effective Date	October 15, 2023

I. STATEMENT OF POLICY


When a child in foster care is on runaway, missing, or kidnapped, the following procedures shall be followed to ensure all avenues to locate the child are taken. It should also be noted all children in foster care on runaway are to be considered missing children, regardless of the reason for their runaway or the behaviors associated with the runaway incident. Collaborative work with all professionals named in this policy, regarding the runaway, missing, or abducted child is essential.

II. PROCEDURES


A. PROCEDURE WHEN THE FOSTER CHILD IS MISSING OR RUNS AWAY

When notifying other agencies that a child is missing or has run away, the case worker shall advise the other agencies of the necessity of maintaining the confidentiality of the child's foster care status.

1. **Immediately**, the following shall be done, upon notice a child in foster care has run away, has been kidnapped, is lost, or is otherwise missing:
 - The case worker shall immediately contact a state or local law enforcement agency or a 911 Public Safety Answering Point, to report the child's runaway or absent status. The case worker shall request and document the law enforcement file number of the report.
 - Even when a caregiver has made a report of the child's status, the case worker shall follow up with a state or local law enforcement agency or a 911 Public Safety Answering Point to coordinate efforts to locate the child, and to ensure all necessary information has been reported.
 - The case worker shall immediately request law enforcement enter the child on the National Crime Information Center's (NCIC) database and record the NCIC # in the case record. Case workers must notify law enforcement the child is in foster care.
 - The case worker shall immediately ask the law enforcement agency to evaluate if the report meets criteria for the Louisiana Amber Alert System.
 - The case worker shall provide the local law enforcement agency with the CW Form 8, Foster Child Identification Page, which shall include a recent photograph of the child, description of the child, pregnancy status, prescription medication, suicidal tendencies and other health or risk factors, as well as the Human Trafficking Risk Screening (which indicates vulnerability to being sex trafficked), if indicated by policy to complete.

 Department of Children & Family Services <i>Building a Stronger Louisiana</i>	Division/Section	Child Welfare
	Chapter No./Name	6 – Foster Care (FC)
	Part No./Name	12 – Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Section No./Name	Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Document No./Name	6-1215 Runaway, Missing, Kidnapped Foster Child
	Effective Date	October 15, 2023

- The case worker shall list the child as a missing child or endangered runaway on the National Center on Missing and Exploited Children's (NCMEC) database by calling 1-800-THELOST, or via their website at <http://www.ncmec.org>. This referral shall be reported immediately, but in no case should the report exceed 24 hours (P.L. 113-183).
 - The case worker shall provide NCMEC with the CW [Form 8](#), Foster Child Identification Page, which shall include a recent photograph of the child, description of the child, pregnancy status, prescription medication, suicidal tendencies and other health or risk factors as well as the Human Trafficking Risk Screening (which indicates vulnerability to being sex trafficked), if indicated by policy to complete.
 - The case worker shall immediately notify the child's parents (unless parental rights are terminated), CASA, * Human Trafficking Advocate, if applicable, ** and the child's attorney the child is missing or has run away.
- 2. Within 24 hours**, the following shall be done, upon notice a child in foster care has run away, has been kidnapped, is lost, or is otherwise missing:
- The case worker shall notify the court the child is missing, has run away, or been abducted.
 - In regions where necessary only, the case worker shall file a verified complaint through the juvenile court which may issue a "pick-up order" for the child in accordance with local court procedures for such filings.
 - The case worker shall make appropriate contacts to family, friends, previous places the child was located when on runaway, other agencies, etc., in an attempt to locate the child and document all efforts.
- 3. Within 3 calendar days**, the following shall be done, upon notice a child in foster care has run away, has been kidnapped, is lost, or is otherwise missing:
- The [Runaway Notification Form](#) shall be sent to State Office via email at Operation.Runaway.DCFS@La.Gov within three (3) calendar days.
 - Once the [Runaway Notification Form](#) is received, State Office will schedule a staffing within two (2) working days to occur within one (1) week. The necessity for further intervention will be determined during the staffing.
 - If there is concern of potential media involvement, the case worker shall notify their Regional Administrator (RA) so the RA can determine the applicability of DCFS policy [1-17](#), DCFS Media Relations.

 Department of Children & Family Services <i>Building a Stronger Louisiana</i>	Division/Section	Child Welfare
	Chapter No./Name	6 – Foster Care (FC)
	Part No./Name	12 – Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Section No./Name	Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Document No./Name	6-1215 Runaway, Missing, Kidnapped Foster Child
	Effective Date	October 15, 2023


- The case worker shall follow-up with the law enforcement agency to coordinate efforts to locate the child and, if necessary, to confirm the child has been entered on the NCIC database and the Louisiana Amber Alert System, if the case meets Amber Alert criteria.
- The case worker shall send a [FAST III](#), Change Redetermination Form, to the Social Service Analyst via the CAFÉ IV-E wizard to indicate the child's runaway, missing status.
- The case worker shall document each contact and effort made to locate the child in the case notes. Such documentation should include the telephone numbers and addresses used for contacts.

There will be variations in procedures regarding runaways according to local juvenile courts and law enforcement.

4. TIPS Entries

When a missing child is absent from the foster care placement overnight, the TIPS code 100 109 shall be entered through CAFÉ in the service authorizations. When entering this code the child's TIPS number shall be used as the provider number. This code is to be entered no later than the next working day when a child is reported missing. This code allows the data system to track a child as missing.

- If the child is in an in-home, payable placement, that will accept return of the child and it is expected the child will return quickly, TIPS code 100 109 is used, as well as keeping the placement authorization for the provider open, to pay the placement for the purpose of reserving space for the child for up to the first 15 days of the missing status. This shall not exceed 15 days. After 15 days of absence, the case worker shall end the placement authorization for the provider. If a provider accepts payment during the first 15 days to reserve space for the child, but then refuses to accept placement of the child when found during that time frame, the Department shall attempt to recoup any payment provided to reserve space for the child.
- If a child is in a Non-Medical Group Home (NMGH), Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP), Therapeutic Group Home (TGH), or Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) setting and the provider will accept return of the child, TIPS code 100 109 is used, to track the missing child and TIPS code 020 022, is used to pay the placement for the purpose of reserving a bed for the child for up to 15 days of the missing status. This shall not exceed 15 days unless approved by State Office Behavioral Health and Placement Services Unit. After 15 days of absence, the case worker shall end the TIPS code 020 022 placement authorization. If a provider accepts payment to reserve space for the child, but then refuses to accept placement of the child when found during that

 Department of Children & Family Services <i>Building a Stronger Louisiana</i>	Division/Section	Child Welfare
	Chapter No./Name	6 – Foster Care (FC)
	Part No./Name	12 – Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Section No./Name	Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Document No./Name	6-1215 Runaway, Missing, Kidnapped Foster Child
	Effective Date	October 15, 2023

time frame, the Department shall recoup any payment provided to reserve space for the child.

- If the child is in a Transitional Living Apartment, non-payable placement, or Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF), the case worker must end the placement provider's authorization effective the date the child was missing from the placement overnight. If the foster youth ran away from a Transitional Living Apartment, suitability of the youth for that program should be reassessed prior to considering return of the youth to such a placement.

B. PROCEDURE WHEN CHILD IS NOT LOCATED

For six months following the date the child went missing, efforts should continue by the case worker, law enforcement systems, NCMEC the foster parent/caregiver, and the parents to locate the runaway or missing foster child. The case worker should document all efforts made monthly.

Ongoing reasonable efforts, by the case worker shall include but are not limited to:


- Bi-monthly contact with the child's parents.
- Unannounced visits to suspected locations where the child may be located.
- Provide any updates or additional information to and request updates from local law enforcement at least monthly, or more as needed.
- Provide any updates or additional information to and request updates from NCMEC at least monthly, or more as needed.
- Searching social media outlets i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat.
- Assessment of child's safety if contact is made with child but is unwilling to disclose their location.

If, after a six month search, the child is not located, the case worker shall:

- Submit a letter to the court documenting efforts to locate the child and request the Department be relieved of custody.
- Advise the parents, CASA, * Human Trafficking Advocate, if applicable and the child's attorney of the Department's request to the court for release of custody.

Until the Department is relieved of custody, the foster child's case record shall remain open and the case worker should continue efforts to follow up with law enforcement, NCMEC, family, Human Trafficking Advocate, if applicable, ** and friends at least monthly in an attempt to locate the child.

Once relieved of custody, the foster care case record should be closed and transferred to the parish with court of jurisdiction.

 Department of Children & Family Services <i>Building a Stronger Louisiana</i>	Division/Section	Child Welfare
	Chapter No./Name	6 – Foster Care (FC)
	Part No./Name	12 – Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Section No./Name	Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Document No./Name	6-1215 Runaway, Missing, Kidnapped Foster Child
	Effective Date	October 15, 2023


C. PROCEDURE WHEN THE CHILD IS LOCATED

1. Notifications

- Immediately when the child is found, the following parties shall be notified:
 - Law Enforcement, with request to notify NCIC
 - Child's Parents
 - CASA
 - Child's Attorney
 - * Human Trafficking Advocate **
- By the next working day, the following shall be notified, when the child's whereabouts become known:
 - The Court, to include sharing information pertaining to the child's or youth's recovery and circumstances related to the recovery;
 - DCFS State Office via email at Operation.Runaway.DCFS@La.Gov, to include sharing information pertaining to the child's or youth's recovery and circumstances related to the recovery;
 - Social Service Analyst via the CAFÉ IV-E wizard
 - (NCMEC) National Center on Missing and Exploited Children, to include sharing information pertaining to the child's or youth's recovery and circumstances related to the recovery;
 - Any others contacted and/or requested to help in the search for the child.

2. Required Assessments Upon Return of Child

- Within two (2) working days but recommended to be completed earlier if possible of a child who had previously been on runaway, missing, or kidnapped being located, the following shall be completed and stored in the case record:
 - CW Form [Runaway-1](#) (Runaway, Missing, or Kidnapped Child Assessment), to be completed during an in-person, private interview with the child by the case worker,
 - Child taken for a medical exam with Form [98-R](#) and [98-R Supplemental-1](#) (Runaway/Missing/Kidnapped Child Medical Assessment) completed by a medical professional;
 - If the Runaway-1 or medical exam/forms indicate any concerns, safety issues, or suspected or confirmed human trafficking, a staffing with the supervisor and manager shall occur immediately. (Please see below for staffing content and necessary actions)
 - An updated photograph taken and attached to the [Form 8](#), Foster Child Identification Page; and Form 8 updated if necessary.
- Within three (3) working days of the child being located, or earlier if indicated as above:

 Department of Children & Family Services <i>Building a Stronger Louisiana</i>	Division/Section	Child Welfare
	Chapter No./Name	6 – Foster Care (FC)
	Part No./Name	12 – Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Section No./Name	Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Document No./Name	6-1215 Runaway, Missing, Kidnapped Foster Child
	Effective Date	October 15, 2023

- A staffing to include the Child Welfare Manager, Supervisor, and case worker shall be held to discuss the information collected and need for services or actions.
- When there is any concern of suspected human trafficking: to include but not limited to forced labor, the exchange of sex, or sex acts, for something of value, either received or promised, (place to sleep, food, transportation, phone etc.), exotic dancing, or explicit images of the youth, the DCFS Risk Screening for Sex Trafficking Assessment, located in FATS, shall be completed. If the screening indicates the child is suspected or confirmed for human trafficking, a report shall be made to the child protection reporting hotline, (1-855-452-5437) selecting Option 4, regardless of whether there is alleged parental or caretaker culpability.
- If the child has runaway three or more times in a six month period, the case worker shall convene a meeting of individuals selected by the youth and people important to the youth, to discuss their continued reasons for running away and what would help them to feel safe or content enough to not run anymore. The case manager shall attend the meeting. If some people the child wishes to have at the meeting cannot attend in-person, the use of a conference call should be examined to allow participation by those persons.

3. Placement


When the foster child is located, the child should be returned by the case worker, to the same foster care placement, if the placement can safely provide care for the child, is willing to accept the child and is still appropriate based on information collected from the child regarding the events leading to the runaway episode.

If the child has been located after working hours, refer to [6-1205](#), Replacement for after-hours procedures for replacements. Ideally, this includes transporting the child or, if this is not possible, making arrangements for transportation.

An assessment to determine the appropriateness of returning the child to the same placement must be made when the child states he ran away because he was mistreated. If there is any indication the child may have been abused and/or neglected, the matter shall be reported to Centralized Intake (1-855-4LA KIDS, 1-855-452-5437). Law enforcement shall be contacted as appropriate.

4. Children Located Out of State

If the child has been located in another state, the DCFS State Office, Field Operations Unit should be contacted via email at Operation.Runaway.DCFS@La.Gov to access the services of the Interstate Compact on Juveniles (ICJ). State Office Field Operations will work with ICJ to determine if return of the child is appropriate and/or possible. If return is appropriate, an [ICJ Form III](#), Consent for Voluntary Return of Out of State Juveniles will be received from ICJ. Travel arrangements should not be made until notification of approval to arrange travel has been received by State Office Field Operations. Once approval has

 Department of Children & Family Services <i>Building a Stronger Louisiana</i>	Division/Section	Child Welfare
	Chapter No./Name	6 – Foster Care (FC)
	Part No./Name	12 – Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Section No./Name	Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Document No./Name	6-1215 Runaway, Missing, Kidnapped Foster Child
	Effective Date	October 15, 2023

been received, travel arrangements should be made as they normally are, submitting the travel request and the ICJ Form III to the ICPC Unit.

If the child refuses to sign the ICJ Form III, while coordinating with ICJ, the juvenile judge in the state where the child has been located shall be approached to order the child back to Louisiana.

- If the judge refuses to order the child back to Louisiana, DCFS local staff shall request the juvenile judge over the Louisiana CINC (Child in Need of Care) case contact the juvenile judge in the other state to request the child be returned to Louisiana.
- If the judge in the other state continues to refuse to return the child to Louisiana, the child's CINC attorney shall be approached to file a petition with the court of jurisdiction in Louisiana to requisition the return of the child.
- If the child's CINC attorney refuses to file the petition, the regional BGC (Bureau of General Counsel) attorney shall be approached to file the petition on behalf of the Department as the child's legal guardian.

5. Service Authorization Entries

When the child is returned to a placement after being away for more than 15 days or is placed in a different setting, the appropriate placement authorization code must be entered.

The end date shall be entered for the runaway tracking code 100 109 on the CAFÉ or TIPS Service Authorization Screen.

III. FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS

[Form 8](#) Foster Child Identification Page

[Runaway Notification Form](#) / [Instructions](#)

[Runaway-1 Form](#) / [Instructions](#) Runaway, Missing or Kidnapped Child Assessment

[Form 98-R](#) / [Instructions](#) Runaway/Missing Child Medical Assessment

[Form 98-R Supplemental-1](#) / [Instructions](#) Runaway/Missing Physical Indicator Worksheet

[FAST III Form](#) / [Instructions](#) Change Redetermination Form

[ICJ Form III](#) Consent for Voluntary Return of Out of State Juvenile

Human Trafficking Risk Screening (located in ACESS and FATS)

IV. REFERENCES

LA Ch. C. Article 1661 et seq., Interstate Compact for Juveniles


[LA RS 14:403](#), Abuse of children; reports; waiver of privilege

[LA RS 46:1433](#), Notification of location of missing or exploited child

[LA RS: 40:2521](#), Law enforcement agency receiving report of missing or recovered child; duty

[Louisiana's Amber Alert](#)

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, <http://www.ncmec.org>

 Department of Children & Family Services <i>Building a Stronger Louisiana</i>	Division/Section	Child Welfare
	Chapter No./Name	6 – Foster Care (FC)
	Part No./Name	12 – Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Section No./Name	Special Circumstances with Foster Children/Youth
	Document No./Name	6-1215 Runaway, Missing, Kidnapped Foster Child
	Effective Date	October 15, 2023

[National Crime Information Center](#)

National Runaway Safeline, www.1800runaway.org

[P.L. 113-183, Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act](#)

Definition of Trafficking in Persons: 22 USC § 7102, et seq. defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” as:

- sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Coercion includes:

- threats of serious harm to or physical restraint against any person;
- any scheme, plan, or pattern intended to cause a person to believe that failure to perform an act would result in serious harm to or physical restraint against any person;
or
- the abuse or threatened abuse of the legal process.

Any child (under the age of 18) engaged in commercial sex is a victim of trafficking.