

Missing children procedures

- Child/Young Person identified as missing
- Parent/carer unable to locate child or young person
- Parent/carer reports the young person as missing to the police by dialling 101
- Officers conduct a risk assessment and begin enquiries
- Young person is located and returned to home address, or returns on their own
- Police undertake a 'Safe and Well' check
- Young person is offered an independent return interview and appropriate support



If you think a child is at immediate risk call **999**



Police non-emergency number 101

Call this number to report your child as missing to the Police



Kent County Council Early Help Service 03000 419222

For advice and guidance and to seek additional support from local organisations



Kent County Council Specialist Children's Services 03000 411111

To seek specialist advice and support from Kent County Council's Social Services



SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) 01622 726461
www.beechhousesarc.org

The SARC is a safe place where you can seek confidential advice from specialist healthcare staff.



The Children's Society
www.childrensociety.org.uk/runaways-work



Missing People
www.missingpeople.org.uk
24 hour confidential helpline: **116000**
email: **116000@missingpeople.org.uk**

This publication is available in other formats and can be explained in a range of languages. Helpline: **03000 421553**
email: **alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk**

When your child is missing

A guide for parents and carers



 **Kent Safeguarding Children Board**

Safeguarding the Children and Young People of Kent

Introduction

Children and young people who go missing from home may place themselves and others at risk. Although it can be distressing, fortunately most children who go missing are returned home within a short period of time.

It is important that we try and understand the reasons for a child going missing and work together to minimise the chances of it happening again.



When is a child considered to be missing ?

Every situation is different and there are no set rules about when a child should be considered missing. However, if you have any doubts about whether to contact the police formally to report a child missing, the police will be happy to discuss your concerns and offer advice about what to do.

If your child does not return home when you expect them to and you are worried, in the first instance you should try and find out where they are. Contact relatives or friends to see if they have seen them or know where they are. You should also search your property and local area to see if you can locate them.

Before contacting the police

- Try to contact them directly via mobile phone, text or social networking sites (**such as Whats App, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.**)
- Check their bedroom and any other place where your child might be within the house or building
- Check the garden, garage, sheds, grounds and surrounding area
- Check with their friends, school, neighbours, relatives, work or anyone else who may have any suggestions about where they might be. Ask them to tell you immediately if they hear from the missing person.

How to report a child missing

If you cannot locate your child following a telephone and physical search then you should report them missing to the police by dialling 101. You do not have to wait 24 hours before reporting them missing.

You will need to provide the following information:

- *Child's name*
- *Date of birth*
- *When, where the child was last seen*
- *Who they were with*
- *What he or she was wearing and a description*
- *Recent photograph*
- *Any medical history or complications*
- *The circumstances of when they went missing.*

Return interviews

The priority for all agencies working in Kent is to ensure that children and young people who live in Kent are safe. Once a young person has been returned home, the police will ensure that they are safe and well, and haven't been harmed while they were missing.

In addition, in order for us to support children and young people it is important that they are given an opportunity to talk about their experience with someone who is independent. Return interviews provide an opportunity to place the child's needs and experiences at the centre, gives them an opportunity to talk and to be listened to, and to have their feelings and experiences taken seriously.

The purpose of a return interview is to:

- *Identify and deal with any harm the child or young person has suffered either before they ran away or while they were missing*
- *Understand and address the reasons for running away*
- *Help the child understand that they have options and try to avoid it happening again.*

Following the return interview it may be appropriate to offer the child or young person ongoing support. This may be with one of our Early Intervention Workers, or an agency who can offer specific help to meet their needs.