



Administrative Policies and Procedures: 27.11

Subject:	Preventing, Reporting and Apprehending Runaways at DCS Group Homes
Authority:	TCA 37-5-105, 37-5-106
Standards:	DCS Practice Standards: 8-203B, 8-204B, 8-205B
Application:	To All Department of Children's Services Group Home Employees

Policy Statement:

DCS group home employees shall strive to discourage to prevent runaways and must implement special security precautions for youth with a history of runaway behaviors. When it has been determined that a youth has runaway, the appropriate facility employees and central office employees shall be notified immediately.

Purpose:

To ensure a process for prevention, reporting, and apprehension of youth that has runaway from a DCS Group Home.

Procedures:

<p>A. Preventing runaways</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Individual Program Plan (IPP) must address the issue of youth with a history of runaway behaviors. 2. When a youth is determined by the appropriate program employees to be a security risk, the employees will be responsible for implementing extra security precautions appropriate to the individual, the program and community. This may include close monitoring of youth's behavior, restricting movement within the program, and/or other appropriate measures as identified in the <u>Treatment and Supervision Protocols</u>. (A youth cannot be placed in detention without a runaway petition being filed and a court ordering such thereafter in a detention hearing.)
<p>B. Determination of "Runaway"</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before reporting a youth as a runaway, employees must investigate the situation and determine the facts. Employees should question other youth, check the school, consult with other employees and check the facility property.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The youth may be “out of assigned area” with every intention of returning at the appropriate time. Waiting for a short period of time may be advisable if the situation indicates an eventual and reasonably immediate return of the youth, (this should only be allowed if it is a reasonable amount of time in the discretion of the program supervisor). The actual time to wait may vary with specific situations. 3. In all situations the youth and community safety is the primary consideration.
<p>C. Reporting runaways</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When a youth’s absence is <u>verified</u> as a runaway, the employee on duty must immediately notify the Group Home program supervisor or designee of the suspected runaway. 2. The employees on duty will contact the youth’s family to notify them of the suspected runaway circumstances. This may resolve the problem or provide additional information that will determine the next step. 3. The DCS group home supervisor/designee will take a copy of the youth’s commitment order to local jurisdictional law enforcement for filing a Missing/Wanted Child Report for TBI (form <i>BI-0083</i>) and for entering information into the <i>TBI Missing Children of Tennessee</i> (MCOT) database and <i>National Crime Information Center</i> (NCIC) database with the additional information needed. If the youth is delinquent, a “Wanted Person” report will be filed and the law enforcement agency will require the copy of the commitment order. If the youth is a status offender the NCIC report will be filed as a “Missing Person.” 4. A petition for runaway must be filed in the county where the DCS group home is located. If the county refuses to allow a petition to be filed the refusal must be documented in the youth’s case file. 5. The DCS Group Home Director (or the staff appointed by the Director as his/her designee) must be notified of confirmed runaways. An incident report will be completed and electronically generated via the Critical Incident Reporting Web Application on the DCS Intranet to document the escape and search procedure. 6. The DCS group home case manager/designee must contact the youth’s Family Service Worker by the next working day to inform them of the youth’s status. It is the responsibility of the Family Service Worker to file a major violation report if the youth is delinquent with the committing court requesting that an attachment be issued. 7. The DCS Group Home Case Manager in consultation with the Family Service Worker will determine if the youth’s home county law enforcement agency should be notified of the youth’s runaway status. If the decision is made to notify the home county law enforcement, it will be the responsibility of the DCS Group Home Case Manager/designee. 8. The employee who completes the TBI Missing Child Report (form BI-0083) should be listed as the complainant and contact person on the report, and is responsible for notifying law enforcement to remove the youth’s name upon

	apprehension.
D. Apprehending runaways	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A youth cannot be placed in detention without a runaway petition being filed and a Court ordering such thereafter in a detention hearing. 2. The local police, program employees or the youth’s family may return a youth to the program. It will be the program supervisor’s responsibility to coordinate transportation for the return of a youth.
E. Access to information	This policy in conjunction with the facility contingency plan regarding escapees must be made readily accessible in a secure location along with all necessary phone numbers for all program employees.
F. Apprehension of youth	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upon apprehension of the youth(s), the program supervisor must provide written notification via the Critical Incident Reporting web application and as outlined in DCS policy 31.2 Responsibilities Regarding Runaways and Escapees. 2. The program supervisor or designee must ensure that the youth’s family and the Family Service Worker are properly notified of the youth’s apprehension. The local law enforcement agency must be contacted and informed to remove the youth from NCIC. This must also be documented on the appropriate screens or case recordings in the <i>current child welfare information system</i>.¹ 3. If the youth is apprehended out-of-state, the procedure prescribed in the Interstate Compact for Juveniles Manual of Instructions and DCS policy 31.2 Responsibilities Regarding Runaways and Escapees must be followed.

Forms:	<p>BI-0083, TBI Missing Child Report</p> <p>(Due to incident reporting on the <i>Critical Incident Reporting Web Application</i>, the forms listed below will remain in DCS forms on the Intranet for use in the event the <i>Application</i> is unusable.)</p> <p>CS-0296, Notice of Apprehension</p> <p>CS-0311 Facility Incident Report</p>
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¹ **NOTE:** TNKids is the current DCS child welfare information system and will be replaced by the new system “TFACTS” in the near future. When TFACTS is fully implemented, all references to TNKids or “*current child welfare information system*” will mean TFACTS.

Collateral documents:	<p><u>Incident Reporting Manual for Youth Development Centers and DCS Group Homes</u></p> <p><u>Interstate Compact on Juveniles Manual of Instructions</u></p> <p><i>Treatment and Supervision Protocols</i></p>
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Glossary:	
Term	Definition
Critical Incident Report:	An electronic application that collects data relating to Type A, and Type B incidents occurring at Youth Development Centers and DCS Group Homes.
National Crime Information Center (NCIC):	A nationwide information system dedicated to serving and supporting criminal justice agencies -- local, state, and federal -- in their mission to uphold the law and protect the public. NCIC 2000's additional capabilities include, but not limited to, enhanced name searches, fingerprinting searches, probation/parolee information, information linking, mug shots and convicted sex offender registry.