



**Administrative Policies and Procedures: 31.2**

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Responsibilities Regarding Runaways, Absconders and Escapees</b>
<b>Authority:</b>	TCA 37-1-101; 37-1-119; 37-4-101; 37-5-103; 37-5-105(3); 37-5-106; 39-6-601.
<b>Standards:</b>	<b>DCS Standards of Professional Practice:</b> 5-602, 5-604; 8-203B, 8-204B, 8-205B, 8-206B; 10-200, 10-201, 10-202, 10-203, 10-204, 10-205, 10-206, 10-207, 10-208, and 10-209; <b>COA:</b> PA-FC 12.05, PA-FC 16.07, PA-KC 13.05; <b>ACA:</b> 4-JCF-2A-19, 4-JCF-2A-30.
<b>Application:</b>	To All Department of Children's Services Employees, Resource Parents and Contract Providers/Agencies.
<b>Policy Statement:</b>	
The Department of Children's Services (DCS), Resource Parents, and Provider/Contract Agencies will work diligently and cooperatively to discourage children from running away, absconding, or escaping from placements. Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) shall be used to discuss precipitating factors of a runaway/escapee and develop strategies to discourage future episodes.	
<b>Purpose:</b>	
This policy and accompanying protocols are guidelines to reduce the risk of harm to youth while on runaway status. Three steps identified to reduce risk of harm are: (1) the active engagement of the youth upon placement and throughout the placement with an emphasis upon identifying and properly responding to runaway signals, (2) the protocols to follow if a child/youth makes the decision to leave their placement and (3) what to do when the child/youth returns to the placement at the close of the runaway episode.	
<b>Procedures:</b>	
<b>A. Prevention</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To effectively prevent children and youth from running away, Case Manager/FSW's and caregivers must engage the youth to determine how they are feeling, what their needs are and what problems they may be facing that would cause them to want to run. Keeping lines of communication open and being aware of clues such as a bad phone call, a family emergency, holidays, or anniversaries of special events, mood swings, incidents at school or work, peer pressure, or an upsetting letter can often deter a runaway episode. Listening to youth and having concern for their problems and working with them and their families to find solutions can provide a supportive environment in which youth may grow. Ensuring the youth's participation in positive activities at school and in the community gives them a sense of grounding, involvement and normalization and more reason to remain in place.</li> <li>2. Youth who reside in residential placements additionally require written supervision protocols to include, but not be limited to, staff to youth ratios,</li> </ol>

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	<p>transportation procedures, monitoring of security devices on doors, windows, and accountability for youth movement. Facilities must ensure that there is no maltreatment of youth by staff or bullying by other youth. Staff must ensure that the youth's needs are met and that a system of behavioral management where positive behavior is recognized and rewarded is utilized.</p>
<b>B. Pictures</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Upon entering DCS custody or probation supervision, the court liaison, FSW, or a person designated by the Regional Administrator (RA) will take a photograph of each child along with any visible distinguishing marks/tattoos. The photograph(s) will be maintained in the child's case file and updated annually. Photographs taken in JPEG Software are acceptable.</li><li>2. Current, clear photographs must be included in runaway packets, provided to Law Enforcement (LE) to enable LE to accurately identify at large children and for Endangered Child Alerts.</li></ol>
<b>C. Reporting</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Upon determining if a youth has run away, absconded, or escaped from placement (including while on a Trial Home Visit), the Family Service Worker (FSW), resource parent, provider/contract agency staff, or DCS YDC staff will <b><i>immediately</i></b> contact the local Law Enforcement (LE) Agency and report the child as missing. LE is responsible for entering the child into the NCIC and the MCOT databases.</li><li>2. When a youth becomes at-large, follow the applicable protocol below:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ <a href="#"><u>Protocol for Social Services Runaway Children/Youth</u></a></li><li>◆ <a href="#"><u>Protocol for Provider and Contract Agencies for Runaway Children/Youth</u></a></li><li>◆ <a href="#"><u>Protocol for Youth Development Center Escapes</u></a></li><li>◆ <a href="#"><u>Protocol for Reporting Delinquent Runaways, Absconders for DCS Juvenile Justice Case-Managers: Non Custodial Cases</u></a></li><li>◆ <a href="#"><u>Protocol for Reporting Delinquent Runaways, Absconders, and Escapees for DCS Juvenile Justice Case Managers: Custodial Cases</u></a></li></ul></li></ol> <p><u>Note:</u> Interstate Compact for Juveniles (ICJ). When a child/youth has been picked up in another state, the FSW will immediately notify the applicable LE Agency and the DCS Deputy Compact Administrator (DCA) for Interstate Compact-Juveniles (ICJ) in Central Office, but no later than the next business day, via telephone or email. The DCA will coordinate the return of the custodial child/youth in accordance with established ICJ protocol. Refer to the <a href="#"><u>Interstate Compact for Juveniles Practices and Procedures Manual</u></a> for procedures and required forms needed to return runaway juveniles who have been located in Tennessee and /or who have been apprehended in another state.</p>

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	3. All protocols should be reviewed and updated annually. Any revisions will need to be approved by the applicable program Executive Directors in conjunction with Internal Affairs.
<b>D. Non-Cooperation by Law Enforcement (LE)</b>	Local LE may refuse to enter a child into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) or the Missing Children of Tennessee (MCOT). When unable to resolve the problem with the local LE, report the refusal to the TBI Missing Children Clearing House at <b>1-800-TBI-FIND (800-824-3463) (Statewide)</b> .
<b>E. DCS Office of the Inspector General (OIG), Internal Affairs Absconder Recovery Unit (IAARU)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. OIG, IAARU's Investigators will coordinate with regional staff, LE, TBI, and other agencies in locating/apprehending runaways from DCS custody. The investigators advise and assist individuals on policies and procedures. They also provide training, either by correspondence or in person, upon the request of RA's and the approval of the Director of Internal Affairs. IAARU Investigators also act as responders to the SIR web application for DCS custodial at-large children.</li><li>2. Each RA will appoint at least one Regional Absconder Recovery Program Representative who will be available twenty-four (24) hours; seven (7) days per week. RARUI's will contact the representative(s) when:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ A tip on the whereabouts of an absconder is received.</li><li>◆ LE has located and apprehended an at-large child.</li><li>◆ Necessary to communicate about other absconder matters.</li></ul></li></ol>

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<b>Forms:</b>	<p><a href="#"><u>BI-0083 TBI Missing Child Report</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>CS-0156, Violation Report</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>CS-0296, Notice of Apprehension</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>CS-0311, Facility Incident Report</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>CS-0496, Serious Incident Report</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>CS-0749 Penalty for Harboring</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>CS-0705, Absconder-Runaway-Escapee-Recovery Checklist</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>CS-0890, Incident Debriefing</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>CS-0910, Confirmation of Review of Runaway Prevention Plan</u></a> (For Providers Only)</p>
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<b>Collateral documents:</b>	<p><a href="#"><u>Family Service Worker Absconder Guide</u></a> (To be posted in a conspicuous location at office or facility)</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Provider Policy Manual</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Incident Reporting Manual for YDC's</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Protocol for Social Services Runaway Children/Youth</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Protocol for Provider and Contract Agencies for Runaway Children/Youth</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Protocol for Youth Development Center Escapes</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Protocol for Reporting Delinquent Runaways, Absconders for DCS Juvenile Justice Case-Managers: Non Custodial Cases</u></a></p> <p><a href="#"><u>Protocol for Reporting Delinquent Runaways, Absconders, and Escapees for DCS Juvenile Justice Case Managers: Custodial Cases</u></a></p>
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