

WAC 110-145-1540 What are my reporting responsibilities when a child is missing from care, except for overnight youth shelters? (1)

As soon as you or your staff have reason to believe a child in your care is missing as defined in WAC 110-145-1305, has refused to return to or remain in your care, or whose whereabouts are otherwise unknown, you are required to notify the following:

(a) The child's assigned DCYF caseworker, as appropriate;
(b) DCYF intake, if the DCYF caseworker is not available or it is after normal business hours.

(2) You are required to notify local law enforcement within six hours if the child is missing. However, if one or more of the following factors is present, you must contact law enforcement immediately:

(a) The child is believed to have been taken from placement. This means the child's whereabouts are unknown, and it is believed that the child has been concealed, detained, or removed by another person;

(b) The child is believed to have been lured from placement or has left placement under circumstances that indicate the child may be at risk of physical or sexual assault or exploitation;

(c) The child is age thirteen or younger;

(d) The child has one or more physical or mental health conditions that if not treated daily will place the child at severe risk;

(e) The child is pregnant or parenting and their infant or child is believed to be with them;

(f) The child has severe emotional problems (e.g., suicidal thoughts) that if not treated will place the child at severe risk;

(g) The child has an intellectual and developmental disability that impairs the child's ability to care for themselves;

(h) The child has a serious alcohol or substance abuse problem;
or

(i) The child is at risk due to circumstances unique to that child.

(3) After contacting local law enforcement, you must also contact the national center for missing and exploited children at 1-800-843-5678 and report the child missing from care.

(4) If the child leaves school or has an unauthorized absence from school, you should consult with the child's DCYF caseworker to assess the situation and determine when you should call law enforcement. If any of the factors listed in subsection (2)(a) through (i) of this section are present, you and the child's DCYF caseworker may decide it is appropriate to delay notification to law enforcement for up to four hours after the end of the school day to give the child the opportunity to return on their own.

(5) You must provide the following information to law enforcement and to the child's DCYF caseworker when making a missing child report, if available:

(a) When the child left;

(b) Last known location of the child;

(c) What the child was wearing;

(d) Any known behaviors or interactions that may have caused the child's departure;

(e) Possible places where the child may go;

(f) Special physical or mental health conditions or medications that affect the child's safety;

(g) Known companions who may be aware or involved in the child's absence;

(h) Other professionals, relatives, significant adults, or peers who may know where the child would go; and

(i) Recent photo of the child.

(6) You must ask law enforcement for the missing person report number and provide it to the DCYF caseworker or staff and the child's tribal Indian child welfare (ICW) case manager.

(7) At any time after making an initial report you learn of a missing child's whereabouts, you must report that information to the child's DCYF caseworker and the child's tribal Indian child welfare (ICW) case manager.

(8) If a child is returned to your care, it is your responsibility to cancel the run report and notify all persons you have informed of the child's return.

(9) Youth participating in the extended foster care (EFC) program are exempt from these requirements. You must follow all other reporting requirements as defined in WAC 110-145-1535.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.15.030. WSR 22-11-091, § 110-145-1540, filed 5/18/22, effective 6/18/22. WSR 18-14-078, recodified as § 110-145-1540, filed 6/29/18, effective 7/1/18. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.15.010, 74.15.030, 74.15.040, 74.15.090, 74.13.031, and P.L. 113-183. WSR 16-17-101, § 388-145-1540, filed 8/19/16, effective 9/19/16. Statutory Authority: Chapters 13.34 and 74.13 RCW, RCW 74.15.030(2), 74.15.311(2), 74.13.032, 13.04.011, 74.13.020, 13.34.030, 74.13.031, 13.34.145, 74.15.311, 74.15.030, and 2013 c 105. WSR 15-01-069, § 388-145-1540, filed 12/11/14, effective 1/11/15.]