**Rutland County Council**

**Protocol for Children and Young People who Run Away, are absent or missing from Home, Care or school**

This document provides a localised and condensed summary of the LSCB guidance on **Children and Young People who Run Away or go Missing from Home or Care Joint Protocol 2014** (please refer to this protocol for further details).

N.B The definition for a ‘**missing person’** is as follows: **“Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another”**

The **‘absent’** category states: **“A person is not at a place where they are expected or required to be”** for example school.

**Step 1 -** Social Care (Children’s Duty or the Long Term Team) is made aware that a child is identified as missing or absent. When a child has been reported as Missing or absent, necessary action should be taken, dependent on the vulnerability factors ie age, circumstances, and the allocated or screening Social Worker should inform the relevant senior/manager and maintain a log of incidents of children/young people going missing via case notes on the recording system. All episodes should be logged using the Missing and Absent Tracker on SharePoint, which is the responsibility of Social Care, (the allocated or screening Social Worker or School Inclusion Development Officer).

For children who are looked after by the local authority, any incident of absent or missing should immediately upon notification be escalated to the head of service for safeguarding, in all situations.

**Step 2** **-** Throughout the missing episode, parents, carers and the Police will continually review the case. After the child has been missing for 3 days, or earlier, if deemed appropriate, the Local Authority will call an urgent case review meeting. It will involve Police officers, carers, the child’s Social Worker, and any other professional involved in the care of the child.

**Step 3** **-** The meeting will review: What action has been taken so far by the Police and professionals and what action needs to be taken by the Police and professionals and decide whether the child should return to that placement when located and consider any other relevant information.

**Step 4** **-** Further such reviews will take place at least every 3 days thereafter or earlier, if deemed appropriate.

**Step 5 -** Social Care managers who chair the review meetings should ensure that a Senior Manager briefs the Director of Children’s Services of any incident where a child has been missing for a protracted period beyond 3 days. Provision should be made in relation within those 3 days for; following of the search protocols as per the statutory guidance, Dealing with any Media enquiries, and any forms of Press releases in consultation with the RCC Communications Officer.

**Step 6** **-** Once a young person has been located the allocated Social Worker (or Duty Social Worker) makes contact with the Youth team and requests **an Independent Return Interview** following the period of missing from home. **(See missing process overleaf)**. (Please note Statutory Guidance states that when a child returns from being missing, they must be offered an Independent Return Interview to take place **within 72 hours of return**).

When a child has been absent[[1]](#footnote-1) from school a meeting will take place with the parents/carers and Local Authority representative. Support will be offered and attendance at all lessons will be monitored through the lesson tracker. A return interview may be offered in consideration of the vulnerabilities or after 3 consecutive absences.

In the case of children/young people who are looked after by the authority, or Care Leavers, the manager may request a Return Interview be completed for episodes lasting less than 24 hours where there is a concern (for example of potential placement breakdown). In addition, repeat absent episodes lasting less than 24 hours may require completion of a Return Interview where there is a concern, following monitoring of such repeat episodes.

**Step 7 -** Independent interviews are carried out by Rutland County Council Youth Service within 72 hours of the referral to social care. It is the responsibility of the allocated or screening Social Worker to make a referral for the Return Interview to the Senior Youth and Community Development Worker/Youth Service at Jules House 01572 758301(x 6001) **jules@rutland.gov.uk** **and** **slogue@rutland.gov.uk**

**Step 8 -** The referral will be received by the Youth Service Team who will liaise with the allocated or screening Social Worker regarding arranging for a member of their team to meet with the young person and complete the interview.

**Step 9 -** The allocated Youth Worker will undertake the Return Interview utilising the **Return to Home interview Form**, issued under the LSCB guidance. The form will be completed between the interviewer and the child/young person and sent back to the Social Worker for recording on the case management system, and this will be signed off by the Senior/Manager. The Interviewing Officers will also verbally feedback to the Social Worker. All completed Missing Person Return Interviews should be sent to the Leicestershire Police Missing Person’s Unit by the manager of the Return Interviews – **Missingreturninterviews@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk**

**Step 10 -** All reports of Missing or Absent notified to RCC must be correctly recorded on Liquid Logic and recorded on the Missing and Absent Tracker on SharePoint. Upon the completion of a Return Interview it is the responsibility of the allocated social worker to update their Senior/Team Manager

1. A person is not at a place where they are expected or required to be [↑](#footnote-ref-1)