



TUOLUMNE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
ISOC-Children's Services of Care Policies and Procedures



Subject: Youth Who are Missing or Runaway from Care

Effective Date: 05/01/2026

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I. Background and Purpose:

1. Youth who go missing from foster care face substantial risks, including exposure to harm, commercial sexual exploitation, unmet medical needs, and disruption of permanency and well-being. Federal and state mandates, including WIC §16501.35, PC §11166, AB 2108, ACL 16-15, ACL 24-18, ACL 25-67, and the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) require counties to notify law enforcement and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), conduct ongoing location efforts, collaborate with Tribes for Native children, and ensure immediate stabilization when the youth is located. This policy establishes standardized county procedures to ensure safety, compliance, and consistent practice when responding to children and nonminor dependents (NMDs) who are missing or absent from their court-ordered placement.

II. Policy

1. A youth is considered missing from care when their whereabouts are unknown or when they are located in a setting not approved by the court that may pose a risk to their safety. For NMDs, this determination is based on whether they voluntarily left care or are at risk of substantial harm. County staff must complete all state- and federally mandated notifications within 24 hours of being notified of the youth missing or running away, maintain ongoing communication with law enforcement, NCMEC, and Tribal representatives, and document all efforts in CWS/CMS. A harm-reduction, trauma-informed, and youth-centered approach must be applied when engaging or attempting to engage youth who are missing. When the youth is located, timely assessment, debriefing, and stabilization are required, along with reassessment of placement and service needs.

III. Procedure

1. Initial Notification and Reporting (within 24 hours of receipt of the information)

- a. Verify the report and gather last-known information.
- b. Notify local and tribal law enforcement and obtain a Missing Person Report number.
- c. Report the youth to NCMEC and provide all available identifying and endangerment details.
 - i. NCMEC: 1-800-843-5678, [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](https://www.fbi.gov/missing-and-exploited-children)
- d. Notify required parties including parents (unless parental notification has been limited or terminated by the Court), attorneys, CASA (if youth is placed out of county), court, Tribe, and siblings age 10+ when appropriate.

2. Ongoing Location Efforts:

- a. Contact significant people in the youth's life including: parents, relatives, caregivers, school personnel, therapists, CASA, attorney, Tribal representatives, and anyone close to the youth such as friends.
- b. Conduct physical checks of frequented locations.
- c. Request law enforcement welfare checks when appropriate.



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- d. Review social media and public locator databases consistent with policy.
- e. Document ongoing efforts in case management databases and confirm missing status every 30 days.

3. If the Youth Makes Contact but Refuses Return:

- a. Maintain consistent, non-punitive contact using harm-reduction strategies.
- b. Assess for immediate needs and safety.
- c. Coordinate with CFT members and Tribe to support the youth.
- d. Develop a Safety and Support Plan when appropriate.

4. When the Youth Is Located:

- a. Notify law enforcement, NCMEC, parents, attorneys, court, CASA, and Tribe (as appropriate).
- b. Request recall of any protective custody warrants, and/or 602 W&I Code warrants.
- c. Update CWS/CMS placement and eligibility systems.

5. Debriefing and Stabilization with the Youth (within 3 business days):

- a. Conduct a trauma-informed debriefing in a private space.
- b. Assess medical and mental health needs.
- c. Screen for commercial sexual exploitation and report to Hotline if suspected.
- d. Identify reasons for absence and address in case planning.
- e. Determine whether the youth can return to the same placement.

6. Follow-Up and Case Planning:

- a. Convene a CFT meeting when necessary.
- b. Update the case plan and IP-CANS assessment as required.
- c. For NMDs, reassess SILP eligibility if applicable.

County Youth Missing from Placement Protocol AB 2108 Reporting Notice

Submit this form to the COSS' Family Reunification and Pathways to
Permanency Policy Unit at reunification-permanency@dss.ca.gov

California Department of Social Services

Attention: Family Permanency and Support Services Branch

Director Troia:

The purpose of this notice is to inform the California Department of Social Services (COSS) that Tuolumne County [Child Welfare Agency/Probation Department] has reviewed the information provided in the All County Letter (ACL) 25-67 has updated their protocols as mandated and is providing a copy to COSS.

Tuolumne County [Child Welfare Agency/Probation Department] agrees to the conditions set forth in the ACL, including but not limited to, adhering to mandated reporting and notification requirements.

Tuolumne County [Child Welfare Agency/Probation Department] certifies that the county [Child Welfare Agency/Probation Department] currently utilizes protocols or policies that contain all required notification and reporting requirements.



4/21/2026

Signature(s) of Child Welfare Director/Chief Probation Officer
or Authorized Representatives

Date

COSS will accept electronic signatures in lieu of traditional manual signatures.

Please submit completed plans to: reunification-permanency@dss.ca.gov