

AWOL Youth: Violation of Curfew, Unauthorized Absence, Missing From Care and Return to Care

SUMMIT COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

<p>ORC: N/A</p> <p>OAC: 5101:2-42-88, 5101:2-36-12, 5101:2-38-05, 5101:2-42-93</p> <p>CFR: N/A</p>	<p>ORIGINAL: 05/12/16</p> <p>REVISIONS: 11/13/18</p> <p>RELATED FORM(S): AWOL Leave Form</p> <p>RELATED PROCEDURE/POLICY(IES): N/A</p>
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety & Security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Services - All Departments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Services - Foster & Adoption |

All Staff Bargaining Unit Non-Bargaining Management

POLICY:

Summit County Children Services (SCCS) is committed to the safety of children served. To that end, SCCS provides case management, support and coordination of services for youth who are in violation of curfew, have an unauthorized absence (AWOL) or are missing from care. Social service staff works closely with law enforcement, substitute caregivers and families to locate missing and/or AWOL children.

PROCEDURE:

SCCS responds to reports of missing or AWOL children according to the following guidelines. In addition to their responsibilities regarding AWOL children, caseworkers should also be familiar with caregiver responsibilities in order to have meaningful discussions with caregivers in the event a child is AWOL.

For children who are age 13 and younger or vulnerable youth regardless of age, caregivers must immediately notify SCCS via the Agency hotline (330-434-5437) of instances of an absence without leave or a situation where the child is believed to be missing. Caregivers must also immediately notify SCCS via the hotline if, regardless of the age of the child, the child is missing or AWOL and has any of the following conditions:

- Cognitive delays,
- Medical concerns,
- Significant mental health concerns resulting in psychotic episodes when not on medication,
- Has been identified as a risk to self or others,
- The child is believed to be a victim of human trafficking,

- The child has been abducted by a parent,

Caregiver must also immediately notify law enforcement and make a Missing Person's Report

For children who are age 14 and older, and not afflicted by one of the above conditions, caregivers should notify SCCS of an AWOL via the Agency non-emergent caregiver line. In determining when to notify SCCS of the AWOL, caregivers should consider the following:

- The child's age, maturity and developmental level,
- Potential risk factors,
- The child's emotional and developmental growth,
- The child's behavioral history,

Despite the above considerations, caregivers must notify SCCS of any AWOL if the child's whereabouts are unknown for more than two hours. Caregivers must also notify law enforcement and make a Missing Person's Report.

SCCS staff responsible for transcribing messages from the caregiver line shall notify the youth's assigned caseworker and supervisor of an AWOL message via e-mail and document the caregiver's call in the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) as an activity log.

Hotline staff must notify the youth's assigned caseworker, supervisor, department director and Placement Services and Permanency Planning department (PPP) of an AWOL via e-mail and document the caregiver's call in SACWIS as an activity log.

Caseworkers must document all contacts regarding missing/AWOL events in SACWIS. In the absence of the assigned caseworker, the assigned supervisor will assume this responsibility. Upon receiving notification of a missing/AWOL child, the assigned caseworker shall immediately contact law enforcement in the jurisdiction the child went missing from to verify that the caregiver made a police report and that law enforcement has made an entry into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database. SCCS requests a Missing Persons Report for all youth, regardless of the child's age, therefore the assigned caseworker is responsible for making a Missing Person Report if the caregiver failed to do so. If a child is over the age of 18 and the police refuse to make a Missing Persons Report, the caseworker shall document their attempt to do so in SACWIS.

Within 24 hours, the caseworker must also contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) via telephone (1-800-THE-LOST/1-800-843-5678) or internet (<http://cmfc.missingkids.org/ReportHere>) and complete registration.

On occasion a child is in the custody of another Public Children Services Agency (PCSA) but placed in a SCCS foster home. In the event SCCS receives notification such a child is AWOL, SCCS shall immediately notify the custodial agency of the

unauthorized absence. The custodial agency is responsible for completing the unauthorized absence procedure required by the Ohio Administrative Code.

Upon receiving notification a child is AWOL the caseworker shall follow up with the caregiver and document the following in the child's case record:

- The date, time and name of the law enforcement agency contacted.
- The date and time NCMEC was contacted.
- The last known location of the child.
- The length of time the child has been AWOL.
- Anyone the child may have been with prior to or during AWOL.
- Efforts and resources used to locate the child.

The assigned caseworker will complete the AWOL Leave Form and forward to (PPP) so that the leave of absence can be entered in SACWIS. As applicable the caseworker must also notify the biological parent / guardian, Juvenile Court (by filing a notice), Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), school, medical provider and other involved service providers. All notification activities shall be documented in SACWIS.

Weekly efforts to locate the youth must be documented. Examples of efforts to locate a child may include, but are not limited to:

- Contact with caregiver, biological family and known friends.
- Social media checks.
- Contact with Law Enforcement, Juvenile Court, and GAL.
- Contact with schools, therapists, and medical providers.
- Direct contact attempts with any individuals the youth is known to run to.
- Direct contact attempts to any known locations where the youth is suspected to be.

If SCCS receives information which indicates the child may be residing in another county or state, the assigned caseworker must contact the local PCSA and law enforcement in that jurisdiction.

Substitute caregivers must notify the agency via the Caregiver line when a youth is found or returns to care. In addition, caregivers should notify the local law enforcement agency and cancel the Missing Persons Report when applicable. SCCS staff responsible for transcribing messages from the caregiver line shall document the caregiver's call in SACWIS as an activity log as well as notify the youth's assigned caseworker and supervisor of the youth's return via e-mail.

The assigned caseworker is responsible for informing all involved parties of the youth's return, including the biological parents/guardians, school, and if applicable the GAL and Court. The caseworker must also notify the clerical specialist in PPP to end the temporary leave. The assigned caseworker shall contact NCMEC to advise that the child has been located.

The caseworker and supervisor will make the determination if and when medical care will be sought. When a child returns, the assigned caseworker or other agency staff must have face to face contact with the youth at the next mandated home visit, if not sooner by telephone. The caseworker shall document the contact in SACWIS, and address the following with the youth concerning their absence:

- Why they left placement,
- Their whereabouts/where they stayed,
- Who they were with,
- Their activities, including if the child is found to be a sex trafficking victim,
- If anyone hurt them in any way,

Children in substitute care who run away are at an increased risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking, therefore caseworkers are encouraged to include education on this risk in their conversations with youth on their caseloads.

All contact with youth shall be documented in SACWIS as an activity log.