

What to do if YOUR CHILD GOES MISSING



Practical advice
FOR PARENTS AND
CARERS IN JERSEY

This Leaflet is
SUPPORTED BY



Safeguarding
Partnership
Board **Children**

BEFORE CONTACTING THE POLICE

- Try to contact your child directly via mobile phone, text, or social networking sites (such as BBM, Twitter, Facebook, etc).
- Go and check the bedroom and any other place where your child might be within the house or building.
- Check the garden, garage, sheds, grounds and surrounding area.
- Check with your child's friends, school, work, neighbours, relatives or anyone else who may know of his or her whereabouts. Ask them to tell you immediately if they hear from your child.
- If you know where your child is and you are still concerned for their safety (eg if they are at a house where you suspect criminal activities are taking place) you can ask the police to carry out a welfare check on that house or location.



CONTACTING THE POLICE

- **Ring 612612 (or 999 in an emergency) once you have carried out the previous checks and you have still not found your child.**
- You do not need to wait for 24 hours. Report your child as missing straight away.

You will then be asked the following questions:

When and where was your child last seen? By who?

When and where did you last see your child?

What were they doing when last seen?

What are your most pressing worries and why?

Are these circumstances out of character for your child?

Are they taking any medication which they may need immediately?

Further questions may be asked at this time depending on the circumstances, or an officer could be directed to attend your home address. If an officer attends, record their name, badge number and telephone number.

Ask who will follow up the initial investigation.



Other things you can do

- Think about what your child was wearing when you last saw them. Have they taken any extra clothes?
- What have they taken with them, eg mobile phone, money, bank cards, any items of sentimental value?
- Check your home computers for any leads such as online contacts or details of planned meetings.
- If your child has a smartphone, you may be able to track their location.
- After you have completed the above checks, close the door to your child's room and don't touch anything in there.
- Find out if any of your child's friends are missing.
- Have a recent photograph available (the police may need it).
- Keep a record of everyone you contact, including the date and time, the name of person and/or organisation, and any phone numbers received.
- Keep your phone on and keep a record of any calls; this may be the only way your child can reach you.
- Check telephone bills for the past few months for any unfamiliar calls.

When YOUR CHILD RETURNS HOME

Make follow-up phone calls:

Let all your contacts know that your child has returned home, including the police. The police may need to speak or meet with your child to ensure they have returned safe and well.

Show your child that you're happy to have them back home:

Many children fear the initial meeting with their parents. Remain calm, express relief and tell your child you love them and that together you will solve any problems.

Allow time to settle in:

Your child may need a shower, a meal, clean clothes, or to go to sleep.

Get medical attention:

Bring your child to your family doctor to address any medical concerns.

Talk with your child:

Discuss how you can work together to prevent them from leaving again. Acknowledge that some problems take time and effort to resolve.

Get assistance and support:

An independent organisation may follow-up with your child to see if they need more support. It is important to reach out and take advantage of any support available to you, your child and your family. Asking for help is a sign of strength and shows you are taking the issue seriously.



Why do young people run away?

Children leave home for a wide variety of reasons, including trouble at school or arguments within the family. They may leave on impulse following a family quarrel, or in protest over a rule or an isolated incident. Sometimes they may be drawn away by something outside of the home such as older friends.

If you're concerned that your child might be thinking about running away, try taking the following steps.

Talk to your children openly and honestly.

Listen to them when they talk about their concerns, feelings and any difficulties they may be facing.

Respect their emotional responses in every situation.

Encourage them to succeed and to work through their differences and struggles.

Support your children's need to gain independence, and develop appropriate relationships with others.

Create opportunities for them to learn how to make positive decisions in their lives.

Teach your children to be accountable for their actions.

Protect them from feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Provide a place of safety for your children, both emotionally and physically.

Defend them openly against harassment or verbal abuse of any kind.

Make your home a place of trust and support that meets their needs.

FURTHER information and SUPPORT



YES offers FREE confidential advice and information to anyone aged 14-25 and can also offer guidance to parents and carers.

YES - Youth Enquiry Service

T. 01534 280530 E. yes@yes.je

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The police can be contacted 24hrs a day and their enquiry desk is open from 7am till 10pm.

The States of Jersey Police

T. 01534 612612

E. soj@jersey.pnn.police.uk

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MASH is an organisation set up to oversee safeguarding concerns for children and young people in Jersey.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

T. 01534 519000

E. enquiries-MASH@gov.je

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Offers positive support to all parents/carers with the challenges of family life.

Parenting Support Services

T. 01534 449481

www.gov.je/parentsupport

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missing people

Support and advice if a friend or relative has gone missing.

Missing People

Call or text 116 000

E. 116000@missingpeople.org.uk

Missing People's helpline 116 000 is free, confidential and available 24/7.