

Frequently Asked Questions

Missing Children in Care Response Plan and Procedure

Preamble

The Missing Children in Care Procedure is a joint response plan to be implemented consistently across the province of Manitoba to increase the safety of children in care in both rural and urban settings. An individualized response plan will be created for all youth in care aged 12 years and older for the purpose of communication between agencies, caregivers, and supports. The youth-specific plan can be shared with law enforcement across the province, including RCMP, WPS, Special Constables on and off reserve, and any other law enforcement officials deemed to be relevant to the youth and/or their location, if there are concerns about the whereabouts of the youth. Each response plan will be reviewed every 90 days at minimum to ensure the information remains current and accurate.

When is the Missing CIC Response Plan to be filled out?

The first time the form should be filled out is within 30 days of the child first entering agency care and/or once a child in care reaches the age of 12.

A form should be completed for any current child over the age of 12 whom is currently in care of CFS regardless of their legal status.

How often should the form be reviewed/updated?

The form is required to be reviewed every 90 days during the CIC 90 day review (may be known as Quarterly Review in group care settings). The form may not require updating at this time if no information has changed, but requires a review for continued accuracy.

The form must be updated if any of the following criteria apply:

- Significant change to the youth's description/appearance or identifying factors
- New or invalid address locations and/or contacts including a change to safety risk
- New or no longer valid risk factors including a significant change to medication and diagnosis
- Addition of any valid warrants, court orders and/or conditions
- Any change in role and responsibilities under the plan

- Change in placement

When updated, the Missing CIC Response Plan should include date of revision and renewed signatures of relevant parties.

Who is responsible for completing the form?

The form is to be completed by the assigned ongoing worker. Information to complete the form should be compiled in partnership with the responding agencies/organizations such as outreach, probation, law enforcement and placement. Placement and/or StreetReach may be primary contributors to the plan if applicable.

Who can the form be shared with?

A copy of the form is required to be provided to the child's placement whether they are placed in group care, foster care or in a POS. A copy of the form is to remain on the CIC physical file, and posted to CFSIS. When a missing person's report is filed with police, a copy of the form can be shared with law enforcement as it contains all information required to file a missing person report and for law enforcement to appropriately assess their level of response.

**Anytime the form is updated, all parties that have listed responsibilities should receive an updated copy, and the updated form should be posted to CFSIS.*

What is the difference between a missing child and an unplanned absent child?

An unplanned absent child is when the child is not at placement (such as past curfew) but the location of the child is known. Case planning should occur to determine if it is appropriate to file a missing persons report with law enforcement. Case planning should reflect how to respond and whether the known location is a safe environment for the child to remain at until the assigned agency can follow-up. *Note: if the child's location is known, but the location is deemed to be unsafe for the child to remain at until further planning can occur, law enforcement should be notified.*

Missing youth is when the location of the youth is not known, or the child is suspected to be in an unsafe environment. Law enforcement is to be notified in these matters.

What should be included under roles and responsibilities?

This section is to clearly outline who is responsible for portions of the plan. Any primary organization that is involved with the child should be identified with their responsibilities outlined.

The Missing CIC Response Plan should outline who will do the following tasks:

- Contact phone numbers of potential locations of the youth
- Complete a social media search for the youth
- Do a physical proximity check around placement or site of the youth's last known location
- Conduct address checks to the provided lists
- Identify the options of transporting the child back to placement if located
 - Agency, foster parent, placement, taxi, outreach, after hours
 - Police should only be contacted to assist if the situation is unsafe for the youth and/or responding staff
- Address any additional steps required specific to the youth such as accessing the crisis unit, notification to probations, need for medical assessment or request to access an intoxicated detention person's act bed

What about youth in our care under Agreements with Young Adults?

AYA's are contracts made with young adults, 18 years of age or older. Regardless of their placement status, they are to be considered as adults by the agency and law enforcement as it relates to absences from placement and missing person status.

In the case of AYAs living in group care, the responsibility remains for workers and group care staff to engage in planning around the safety and well-being of the young adult. This includes the need for an assessment of their risks and vulnerabilities, as well as an understanding of who their contacts are and where they are likely to go in the community. Conversations should be had with young adults about placement expectations and responsibilities around checking in with care providers and providing contact information for likely whereabouts.

Youth under AYA should participate in the completion of the Missing CIC Response Plan and an understanding should be shared among parties in regards to if and when collateral supports should be contacted and/or a report to law enforcement would be required.