

## Further support

**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.

[www.childrensociety.org.uk](http://www.childrensociety.org.uk)

[www.makerunawayssafe.org.uk](http://www.makerunawayssafe.org.uk)

[www.missingpeople.org.uk](http://www.missingpeople.org.uk)

**24 hour confidential helpline on 0500 700 700**

**or email [services@missingpeople.org.uk](mailto:services@missingpeople.org.uk)**

**Childline 0800 1111**



## About us

**The Children's Society** wants to create a society where children and young people are valued, respected and happy. We are committed to helping vulnerable and disadvantage young people, including children in care and young runaways. We give a voice to disabled children, help young refugees to rebuild their lives and provide relief for young carers. Through our campaigns and research, we seek to influence policy and perceptions so that young people have a better chance in life.

Children are at the heart of all we do. That's why we want to build a better childhood – for every child.



Missing from Home Programme  
Manchester, Salford and Oldham



# What to do if your child goes missing

## Practical advice for parents and carers

If you don't know where your child is and you can't contact them, take action.



## Contact us

Missing From Home Programme in  
Manchester, Salford and Oldham  
The Children's Society  
Zion Community Resource Centre  
339 Stretford Road, Hulme  
Manchester M15 4ZY

Telephone: 0161 868 0382  
Email: [scm@childrensociety.org.uk](mailto:scm@childrensociety.org.uk)

Parents of children who have had experience of the issues raised have contributed to the development of this leaflet.



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A better childhood. For every child.

A better childhood. For every child.

[www.childrensociety.org.uk](http://www.childrensociety.org.uk)

## Before contacting the police

- 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(s).
- 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.
- Try to contact your child directly via mobile phone, text, or social networking sites (such as BBM, Twitter, Facebook, etc).
- If you know where your child is and you are still concerned for their safety (for example, 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 999 or 101 or your local police telephone number** once you have carried out the above checks, and still suspect that your child has disappeared.
- You do not need to wait for 24 hours, report straight away.
- When you first contact the police record the FWIN (a Greater Manchester Police crime report number) or log number. When an officer attends record their name, badge number and telephone number. Ask who will follow up the initial investigation.



### 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(s) which they may need immediately?

Further questions may be asked at this time depending on the circumstances.

Your child will then be classified as either MISSING or ABSENT and the call taker will explain the next steps. This is likely to include police officers attending your home to take a formal detailed Missing Person Report.



## 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 special possessions of sentimental value?
- Find out if any of your child's friends are missing.
- Check home computers for leads such as online contacts and details of planned meetings.
- 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, as this may be the only way your child knows how to reach you.
- Close the door to your child's room and don't touch anything in there.
- 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.

**Be happy that your child is 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:** Visit 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 your child, you 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 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 develop and gain independence, and to develop appropriate relationships with others.

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

*continued overleaf >*