I. AUTHORITY	The Director of Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA, or Agency) adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency's mission and all applicable federal and District of Columbia laws, rules, and regulations, including the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and its implementing regulations, as well as the applicable provisions of Title 4 (Chapter 13) and Title 16 (Chapter 23) of the DC Code, and the *LaShawn A. v. Gray* Implementation and Exit Plan.
II. APPLICABILITY	All CFSA and contracted agency staff.
III. RATIONALE	Studies indicate that children who enter the child welfare system may be more prone to run away or be otherwise missing than those who are not in care. As a result, the child welfare community works to prevent the circumstances that may lead to children running away or being otherwise missing. Such efforts, however, are not always successful. CFSA must have clearly outlined reporting procedures as well as access to resources that can assist in locating children who are missing or who have absconded. Timing is also an important factor because missing/absconded children are at great risk of victimization, exploitation, injury, and even death.
IV. POLICY	It is CFSA's policy to establish requirements and provide instructions for the Agency and contracted agency staff to respond when children who are involved with CFSA are reported or believed to be missing/absconded. It is further the policy of CFSA that when a child is missing/absconded, the resource provider and assigned social worker shall notify the individuals, agencies, and organizations described in the procedures provided in this document. Immediate notification to the law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction in which the child is placed (hereafter referred to as the local law enforcement agency) and the CFSA Absconder Unit is mandatory and critical. The Absconder Unit shall support the social workers' efforts to locate and return the child. CFSA has developed this policy to provide social workers and resource providers with guidelines for responding to reports of missing/absconded children. For purposes of this policy, the term "child" includes both infants and youth, as applicable.

V. **CONTENTS**	**A.** Reporting Requirements for Resource Providers and Caregivers **B.** Reporting Requirements for the On-Going Social Worker **C.** Requirements for Supervisors **D.** The Role of the Child Location and Support Unit for Missing/Absconded Children **E.** Social Worker's Tasks When a Missing/Absconded Child is Located
VI. ATTACHMENTS	**A.** Definitions **B.** Unusual Incident Form **C.** Request for Issuance of a Custody Order Form **D.** Request for Withdrawal of Custody Order Form **E.** Monthly Case Summary Form
	Procedure A: Reporting Requirements for Resource Providers and Caregivers In the event that a child is believed to be missing/absconded, to have been abducted, or to have run away, the resource provider or caregiver shall take these steps in the following order: 1. Make reasonable efforts to locate the missing/absconded child (e.g., contact neighbors, the school, and the missing/absconded child's friends). *Note: In instances where a child's whereabouts are known, immediately make reasonable efforts to return the child home. In instances where efforts to return the child home fail, follow items 2 through 5 below.* 2. If a child is deemed to be missing/absconded, file a police report with the local law enforcement agency (in the jurisdiction where the home or facility is located or where the youth was last seen) within 1 hour from the time the child is missing/absconded. *Note: Group home providers that are located in the District of Columbia shall make an electronic report to the Telephone Reporting Unit (a Division of the Metropolitan Police Department at http://311.dc.gov/ within 1 hour from the time the youth is deemed missing/absconded, unless the youth is identified as being high risk (see Attachment A, Definitions). If the missing child is deemed high risk, District of Columbia group home providers shall file a police report with the local law enforcement via 911.* 3. Ensure receipt of the police report number. *Note: In instances where a police report number is not obtained or provided, the resource provider or caregiver shall obtain the name of the police officer who received the call and the reason the call was not accepted. The resource provider shall provide that information to the social worker, who shall document this information in FACES.NET.* 4. Immediately report the missing/absconded child to the CFSA Hotline (202-671-SAFE), the assigned social worker, and provide both the Hotline, and the social worker with the police report number.

	5. If the child returns home, immediately notify the local law enforcement agency, CFSA's Hotline, the assigned social worker, and other relevant parties who may have been notified that the child was missing/absconded.
	Procedure B: Reporting Requirements for the Social Worker 1. When a social worker learns that a child is missing/absconded, the social worker shall immediately complete the following steps: a. Contact the resource provider or caregiver to confirm the report and to verify whether or not the missing/absconded child has returned. i. If the child has returned, the social worker shall follow the steps outlined in *Procedure E* of this policy. ii. In instances where the child's whereabouts are known, the social worker shall make immediate efforts to return the child home. The social worker shall documents these efforts in FACES.NET. iii. If the child has not returned, the social worker shall verify that the resource provider or caregiver has filed a police report with the local law enforcement agency. The social worker shall also document the police report number in FACES.NET. iv. If the report was not made, the social worker shall contact the law enforcement agency in the missing/absconded child's jurisdiction to make the report. The social worker shall ensure receipt of a police report number. b. Immediately provide verbal notification (and when appropriate, provide written notification by email or letter) to the following individuals that the child is missing/absconded: i. CFSA Hotline (if the resource provider or caregiver has not already alerted the Hotline) ii. Supervisory social worker iii. Missing/absconded child's parents or legal guardians and significant relatives (e.g., relatives who may have been involved in case planning, and with whom the child has frequent contact or a meaningful relationship) • When contacting the missing/absconded child's parent or legal guardians and significant relatives the social worker shall advise them to contact the Agency if any information regarding the child's whereabouts is known. iv. Family Court (child's neglect judge) v. Assistant Attorney General (AAG) vi. Guardian ad litem (GAL) vii. Other appropriate members of the child's case planning team

	2. The social worker shall use reasonable efforts to try and locate the missing/absconded child within 24 hours from receipt of notice that the child is missing. These efforts may include, but are not limited to contacting the following entities or individuals: a. The local law enforcement agency (to verify that the child is not in their custody) b. Local emergency shelters, local hospitals, and homeless youth programs c. Most recent resource provider and any other resource providers with whom the child is known to have now or has had a close or long term relationship d. Relatives, including the child's parents and siblings e. Neighbors and landlord of the child's last known address f. Teachers, counselors, and other personnel from the school that the child last attended, or other schools the child attended if there is knowledge that the child had a close relationship with persons at that school g. Probation or parole officer, if applicable h. Juvenile and adult detention centers, if applicable 3. Social workers shall follow up on all leads by telephone and/or home visits as new information is received regarding the location of a missing/absconded child. 4. If the child is located upon completion of the social worker's search, he or she shall follow the steps outlined in *Procedure E*. 5. If the missing/absconded child is in the legal custody of CFSA and efforts to locate him or her are unsuccessful, the social worker shall immediately request assistance from the CFSA Absconder Unit to locate the missing/absconded child. To initiate this request, the social worker shall complete a request for a custody order through FACES.NET and complete the following additional tasks: a. Follow-up with the CFSA Absconder Unit to review the FACES.NET request for a custody order and ensure it is accurate and complete. b. Upon receipt, sign the *Request for the Issuance of a Custody Order Form* (*Attachment C*) that is generated by the court absconder specialist and forward the form to the supervisory social worker for review and signature. Return the form to the court absconder specialist within the same business day of receipt. *Note: A custody order shall not be requested in instances where a warrant has been issued for the child. The Agency shall defer to the arrest warrant.*

	6. If the missing/absconded child is identified as being at high-risk, the social worker shall initiate a Child Locator Staffing. The social worker shall consult with the supervisory social worker to determine the timeframe to conduct the staffing, which should take place as soon as possible, but no later than 7 days. a. The Child Locator Staffing shall include the following individuals: i. The child's family, if deemed clinically appropriate by the social worker ii. The on-going social worker or supervisory social worker iii. Child Locator and CFSA Absconder Unit staff (i.e., the court absconder specialist and the unit's team of absconder workers) iv. The child or youth's resource provider v. The assigned AAG and the GAL vi. Placement Services Administration (PSA) vii. Other relevant parties that impact the case b. The Child Locator Staffing shall discuss why the child or youth has been identified as being at "high-risk". c. A written plan shall be developed to locate the child or youth. Responsibility for each action step in the plan will be designated during the meeting. *Note: The Child Locator Staffing shall determine the need for the social worker to contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 1-800-843-5678.* d. A plan that is developed at the child locator staffing shall supersede any other plan. 7. The social worker shall document in FACES.NET all attempts to locate the missing/absconded child.
	Procedure C: Requirements for Supervisory Social Workers Upon notification by the social worker that a child is missing/absconded, the supervisory social worker shall complete the following tasks: 1. Confirm that the social worker has completed the requirements listed in *Procedure B* of this policy. 2. Assist the social worker in developing and implementing a plan that includes specific strategies to locate the missing/absconded child and assure his or her safety. 3. When appropriate, review and sign the *Request for the Issuance of Custody Order Form* (*Attachment C*) and ensure submission to the Child Absconder Unit within 1 business day from the time of signature.

	4. Review and, if necessary, revise the plan with the social worker during supervision, or as necessary to ensure progress is made toward locating the missing/absconded child. 5. Inform all staffing members of any revisions to the plan.
	Procedure D: The Role of the CFSA Absconder Unit The CFSA Absconder Unit is responsible for searching for missing/absconded children who are in the legal custody of CFSA. The CFSA Absconder Unit works collaboratively with the District's Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) as well as other community agencies to help locate missing/absconded children and return them to CFSA's care. 1. Upon receipt of the *Request for the Issuance of a Custody Order Form (Attachment C)* from the social worker, the court absconder specialist shall submit the form to the Juvenile Clerk's office for processing. 2. Once the custody order is issued by the judge, and forwarded to the court absconder specialist, he or she shall assign the case to an absconder worker for review and follow-up within 24 hours. • The CFSA Absconder Unit will not conduct a search for the missing/absconded child until a custody order is issued and received by the court absconder specialist. 3. The assigned court absconder worker shall contact the social worker within 24 hours of receiving the signed custody order. 4. The absconder worker shall use reasonable efforts to locate the missing/absconded child. Such efforts may include but are not limited to contacting the following individuals or entities, and completing any associated steps towards locating the child: a. The assigned social worker • The absconder worker shall obtain relevant information from the social worker regarding the child and where s/he may be located. b. All known family members of the missing/absconded child c. Teachers, counselors, and other personnel at the school where the child is known to have last attended, as well as any previous school where the child is known to have maintained close relationships with any personnel • The CFSA absconder worker shall also visit the neighborhood where the school is located, as well as the neighborhood where the child has been known to frequent.

d. The local law enforcement agency, emergency shelters, and homeless youth programs (to verify that the child is not in their custody or care)

- The CFSA absconder worker shall also review the Washington Area Law Enforcement System and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database for any leads.

e. Most recent resource provider and any other resource providers with whom the child is known to have now or has had a close or long term relationship

f. Neighbors or the landlord of the missing/absconded child's last known address

g. Friends and classmates of the child, including any known boyfriends, girlfriends, or anyone else in the community with whom the child may have developed a significant relationship

h. Juvenile and adult detention centers, or the missing/absconded child's parole/probation officer, if applicable

Note: Cases involving youth who are missing or have absconded from a group home located in the District of Columbia shall be re-assessed after 72 hours by the CFSA absconder specialist in conjunction with the social worker to determine (based on information gathered during that period) if an additional police report is required. Any additional reporting shall be initiated by the absconder specialist.

5. The absconder worker shall maintain open communication with the social worker requesting the search to obtain needed information and provide updates on efforts made to locate the missing/absconded child. The absconder worker shall provide a written summary of all efforts made to locate the missing/absconded child using the *Case Summary Update Form* (*see Attachment E*), on a monthly basis.

6. If the child is missing or has absconded for over a month, or s/he is believed to be outside of the Metropolitan area, the absconder worker may recommend that the social worker contact the NCMEC at 1-800-843-5678 for assistance.

7. If the missing/absconded child is located by the absconder worker, he or she shall complete the following tasks:

   a. Immediately notify the social worker and return the missing/absconded child to CFSA.

   b. Forward (via fax) the *Request for the Withdrawal of Custody Order Form* (*see Attachment D*) to the Juvenile Clerk's Office for review and processing.

8. The court absconder specialist shall contact MPD to close out the police report.

	Procedure E: Social Worker's Tasks When a Missing/Absconded Child is Located Once a child is located, it is imperative that the social worker engage the child to determine why the child was missing/absconded and to prevent further disruptions. The social worker shall complete the following tasks upon the child's return: 1. Immediately asses the child's safety. 2. Notify the following parties of the child's return: a. Court absconder specialist b. Local law enforcement agency c. The child's parents, resource provider, and other relatives, as appropriate d. Family Court e. AAG f. The GAL g. Other relevant parties who may have been notified that the child was missing/absconded 3. Complete and submit the *Request for the Withdrawal of Custody Order Form* (*see Attachment D*) and to the CFSA Absconder Unit for review. 4. The social worker shall document all tasks completed upon the missing/absconded child's return in FACES.NET. 5. Determine the most appropriate placement for the child based on his or her safety and well-being and the circumstances which led to the child being missing/absconding.

Definitions

1. **Abducted** - A child or youth in CFSA custody or who has an open in-home case whose whereabouts are unknown and it is known or suspected that the child or youth has been taken from his or her placement (or home) or other location by a person or persons either known or unknown to the child or youth, in violation of a valid court order regarding the child/youth's custody status.

2. **Abscondence** - a child or youth who is willfully and knowingly absent from his or her place of residence without the knowledge or consent of the person(s) responsible for the child's welfare.

3. **Child/Youth:** a person age birth up to age twenty-one (21).

4. **High Risk Child-** a child or youth who is missing or has absconded and whose safety is compromised for one or more of the following reasons:
   a. The child is age 12 or younger.
   b. The child has one or more serious health conditions that require treatment or ongoing care (including prescription medications) that without would cause serious harm to the child.
   c. The child is pregnant and there is a concern that the unborn child or children in her care may be at risk.
   d. The child is parenting and the infant/child is believed to be with him or her and there are concerns regarding the safety of the infant child.
   e. The child has emotional problems that require treatment and without treatment the child is believed to be a danger to themselves or others.
   f. The child has a developmental disability that impairs the child's ability to care for her/himself.
   g. The child has a serious documented alcohol and/or substance abuse problem and could be a danger to self or others.
   h. The child is absent under circumstances inconsistent with his or her established patterns of behavior and this absence cannot be readily explained (i.e., is believed to have been abducted).

6. **Missing Child** - a child or youth under 21 years of age who is absent from his or her place of residence without the knowledge and/or consent of the child's resource provider or CFSA.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency

Child and Youth-Related Unusual Incident Reporting Form

DISCLOSURE WARNING - The information inside in this form may contain electronic protected health information ("ephi") which is confidential *and protected from unauthorized dis*closure by federal confidentiality laws. If transmitting this form electronically, please ensure that data is secure both in transmission and upon delivery to the intended recipient. Transmission of this document via open networks and unsecure networks is strictly prohibited.

I. Demographic Information

Children Name(s) Involved in Incident	Race	DOB	Gender

Nature/Type of Unusual Incident (check box)	Death of a facility staff member/ resource parent/any person where child is placed ☐ Attempted suicide, specify _____ ☐ School expulsion ☐ Missing child or youth ☐ Child/youth's alleged delinquent/criminal behavior (including possession or use of controlled substances) ☐ Child/youth is victim of alleged delinquent/criminal behavior ☐ Facility staff 's actual/alleged possession or use of controlled substances while on duty or at facility ☐ Facility staff's misconduct or fraud ☐ Injury, trauma or illness of child/youth requiring treatment at hospital ☐ Any use of restraint ☐ Sexual contact ☐ Outbreak of Communicable Disease ☐ An Incident requiring intervention by the fire or police department ☐ Automobile accident involving residents or facility staff on duty ☐ Loss of any utilities that impacts the safety, health, and/or well-being of a child or youth ☐ Any condition resulting in closing of a facility or foster home ☐
Name of Agency (if applicable)	

Date of Unusual Incident:	Time of Unusual Incident:
Facility Name/Location/Place of Incident:	
Individual Making Report (Name and Title):	Relationship to Child:
Person Reporting Incident to (Name, Title, Date Reported)	Telephone Number: Time Contacted:
Program Director Receiving Report (Name, Title, Date Reported)	Telephone Number: Time Contacted:
Person (s) Involved:	
CCN # if applicable:	
Date of Police Notification if applicable:	
Child is/was hospitalized because of this incident? ☐ Yes ☐ No	

II. Narrative Description of the Child and Youth-related Unusual Incident (What Happened- What, When, How, Why):

III. ACTIONS TAKEN/UPDATES (By Whom)- *Provide Full Name & Title of ALL persons contacted/faxed, i.e. House Manager; Director; Social Worker, Contract Monitor;, Inspector, Police's name, badge & report #; Hotline, Guardian Ad Litem, etc*

Staff Reporting Incident/Title/Date

Program Director/House Manager Reviewing Incident/Date

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency

Request for the Issuance of a Custody Order for a Neglect/Abuse Missing/Absconded Child

D.C. Superior Court **Juvenile Neglect Clerk** **500 Indiana Ave, N.W., Room 4310** **Washington, D.C. 20001** **Phone: (202) 879-1319** **Fax: (202) 879-0099; Backup Fax : (202) 737-0807**		Date: Time:		
Respondent's Name (Last, First, Middle Initial)	Docket Number	Social File Number	Race: DOB:	Height: Weight:
Respondent's Home Address and Telephone Number:				
Parent(s)/Guardian's Name, Address and Telephone Number:				
Name, Address, and Telephone Number of Facility From Which Respondent Went Missing/absconded:				
Date and Time of Occurrence:				
Circumstances Surrounding Occurrence:				
Is the Respondent a Suicide Risk? _____ Yes _____ No: If Yes Please Explain:				
Does the Respondent Have Any Health Problems? _____ Yes _____ No Is the Respondent Taking Any Medication? _____ Yes _____ No If the Answer to Any of These Questions is Yes , Please Explain:				
Special Instructions: (Places Frequented; Regular Companions; boyfriend/girlfriend; Visible Scars; etc.)				
Name Address, and Telephone Number of Respondent's Attorney:				
Custody Order Request By: Printed Name: Signature: Phone Number: Date:				
Supervisor of Requester: Printed Name: Signature: Phone Number: Date:				
RESPONDENT IS NOT TO BE TREATED AS AN OFFENDER; THE ABOVE NAME RESPONDENT IS A NEGLECTED/ABUSED CHILD. AFTER CHILD IS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY, BRING CHILD TO THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY: **ADDRESS: 400 – 6th Street S.W., Washington D.C. 20024**				
Fax to Assistant Attorney General at (202) 727-3737				

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency

Request for the Withdrawal of Custody Order for a Juvenile/Neglect Missing/Absconded Child Or Youth

To: Superior Court of the District of Columbia
Family Division
Juvenile/Neglect Branch
Room 4310
FAX: (202) 879-0099; BACKUP: (202) 737-0807
Date: _____

Respondent's Name (Last, First, Middle Initial)	Docket Number	Social File Number	Date of Birth

Date Custody Order Issued**:**

Facility Requesting the Withdrawal of the Custody Order: **Child and Family Services Agency Child Locator and Support Services**

Address of Facility: **400 – 6th Street, SW**

Telephone Number of Facility: **(202) 727-7321**

Circumstances Surrounding Reason for the Withdrawal:

Name and Telephone Number of Social Worker**:**

Name and Telephone Number of Respondent's Attorney**:**

Withdrawal of Custody Order Request By:
Printed Name: Signature: Phone Number: Date:

Supervisor of Requester
Printed Name: Signature: Phone Number: Date:

☐ **Please present the child for a hearing before me on** _____ at _____ A.M./P.M.

☐ **Quash Custody Order; no hearing necessary**

_____
JUDGE'S SIGNATURE

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency

CFSA Abscondence Unit
Community Outreach Worker (CORW)
Case Summary Update/ Closeout Sheet

Case Name: _____ First Action Date: _____

List of contacts: _____

_____

Action Taken: _____

_____

_____

Reason for Abscondence: Recommendations/Closing Summary: _____

_____

_____

Monthly Numbers

Phone Calls for Month: _____ Field Visits for Month: _____

Physical Contacts Made with Youth: _____

Accumulative Numbers

Number of Phone Calls since this Order for Custody was issued: _____

Field Visits since this Order for Custody was issued: _____

Number of Contacts since this Order for Custody was issued: _____

Please Place an (X) Where Appropriate

Case is still active and will be revisited: _____

Case needs police attention and should be referred: _____

Report received of child's return to CFSA on: _____

Child returned to CFSA custody by CORW on: _____

CFSA Absconder Staff: _____ Date: _____