



Creating a safer  
**Cambridgeshire**

# What to do if your child goes missing

Advice for Parents and Carers

# What to do when your child is missing

- Call the police on 101 or call 999 if you think someone is in immediate danger. Tell them you are reporting your child as missing and give any other information you have about any recent concerns.
- Check your house, garage and any outdoor spaces. Ask friends or family if anyone knows where they are.
- Call, text and message your child via mobile, social media or apps. Stay calm, show them you're concerned and just want them home safe.

## **You do not need to wait 24 hours, report your child as missing immediately**

- The police will provide you with an incident number and an officer will be sent out to your home address to take a missing persons report Record their name, collar number and ask for the details of who will be dealing with the matter.
- Check to see if your child has taken anything like their phone, money or clothes. Look on their tablet, social media and laptop to see if there is any helpful information or if they have had any contact with people recently. See if any of their friends have also gone missing. Share any new information with the police
- The police will come out and take a full report, asking for details about your child, a recent photo and information like when they were last seen and if there are any reasons why your child has left.
- Keep your phone close to you in case they contact you and check any other ways they may get a message to you e.g. apps, social media. Make sure someone stays at the house in case they come back.

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

If your child is found by family or friends it is their responsibility to return them to the home address. Parents and carers must inform the police when a child returns of their own accord.

The police may become involved in assisting to recover a child/young person where there is a substantial risk in doing so.

## What you can do when your child returns

- Show your child that you're happy to have them back home. Remain calm, express relief and tell your child you love them
- Allow your child to settle in. They may need to have a shower, something to eat or drink, clean clothes or some sleep. Offering these basic things can be a powerful message that you care.
- Let the police know your child has returned. If you have any concerns that a crime has been committed, report it.
- Make follow up calls to friends and family that your child has returned home.
- Calmly talk to your child about where they have been and the reasons they went missing. Let them know that you were worried and care about them and you want to work through any problems together. Try and create an environment where they feel listened to and supported. Make a note of any information they tell you for the police.
- Get medical attention if they need it. Bring your child to your family doctor to address any medical concerns.
- Within a couple of days of your child returning home, someone will come to visit them and/or you. They may offer support with any on-going issues you and your child may have.

**Get to know friends of your children. If they say they are staying over at a friend's house ensure that you contact the parent of that child and confirm that it is OK. Ensure that you are happy that the address they are staying is suitable.**

If you are concerned that your child is being exploited there are useful ways that parents can work with the police and other services to help keep your child safe.

Make a note of:

1. any times your child goes missing
2. Names, nicknames, ages and descriptions about people who concern you
3. Car registrations, make, model, colour that may have been seen dropping off or collecting your child
4. Phone numbers, profiles, user names that your child is being contacted by on phones, apps, social media or games consoles.
5. Places your child talks about going to
6. Dates and times when the things above may be happening

**Remember, there are other people who can help!**

 Important contact numbers

Cambridgeshire Constabulary — 101 (or if in immediate danger call 999)

Children Social Care:

Peterborough: (Mon—Fri 9am—5pm) 01733 864170 or 864180.

Cambridgeshire: (Mon—Fri 8am - 6pm) 0345 045 5203.

Out of Hours Emergencies — 01733 234724

NSPCC — 0800 800 5000

Childline—0800 1111

**To get further information on Safeguarding Children visit**

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/lscb/>  
[www.safeguardingpeterborough.org.uk](http://www.safeguardingpeterborough.org.uk)



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