

Missing Children & Covid-19 Restrictions

The COVID-19 Pandemic has significantly disrupted the lives of young people. The routines and boundaries for many young people will have been significantly altered due to the lockdown measures that have been in place.

As we move in to a further national lockdown it is vital that parents and carers continue to report their child as missing if their whereabouts are unknown. It is appropriate to take steps to locate a missing child despite the current restrictions.

Reporting a Child as Missing – A Message from Cheshire Police

Reporting a child as missing is a necessary step to take to ensure that a child can be effectively safeguarded.

The police are entitled to expect parents and carers to accept normal parenting responsibilities and undertake reasonable actions to try and establish the whereabouts of the individual. This includes:

- Make attempts to contact them
- Call friends or family
- Visiting areas they frequent
- Visit place known to be attending (for example friend's house or party)
- Checking to see if any items are missing from the home.

Once those enquiries have been completed, it may be appropriate to record the child as missing and take actions set out in national police guidance.

Children who are breaching parental discipline should not be dealt with by police unless there are other risks.

Increased Risks during COVID-19 and Parent Resources

Young people are spending more time online during the COVID-19 Pandemic as a means of staying in touch with friends, entertainment and for education. While the internet can be a positive tool to support young people during this period, they can be targeted by perpetrators and exploited. It is essential that young people are effectively monitored and supported.

Online safety support for parents & carers can be found here:

- www.nationalonlinesafety.com
- www.o2.co.uk/help/nspcc/resources
- www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Support-tools