A. **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish responsibilities and guidelines for this agency’s response to reports of missing children.

B. **Policy**

It is the policy of this agency to expeditiously respond to and thoroughly investigate all reports of missing children. A child who is missing under “unusual circumstances” shall be considered “at risk” until sufficient information to the contrary is confirmed. (CAECA 41.2.6.a)

C. **Definitions** (CAECA 41.2.6.a)

**Missing Child:** This term refers to a person who is (a) younger than eighteen years of age and (b) whose whereabouts is unknown to his or her parents, guardian or responsible party under circumstances that are uncustomory for the child or that would cause reasonable concern.

**Unusual Circumstances:** For the purposes of this policy, the term “unusual circumstances” refers to a missing child who is thirteen years of age or younger, or whose disappearance involves circumstance that would cause a reasonable person to conclude that the child should be considered at risk. Those circumstances could include the child being:
- out of the zone of safety for his or her age and developmental stage;
- mentally incapacitated (e.g., developmentally disabled or emotionally disturbed);
- medically dependent (e.g., insulin dependent);
- drug involved;
- a potential victim of foul play or sexual exploitation;
- in a life threatening situation;
- reported to a law enforcement agency as missing after a delay on the part of the parents, guardians, or other responsible person;
- believed to be with adults or older juveniles who could endanger his or her welfare; and/or
- absent under circumstances inconsistent with established patterns of behavior.

Zone of Safety: The distance a child could travel from the location where last seen before he or she would most likely be at risk of injury or exploitation based on the child’s age, developmental stage, and related matters.

D. Procedure

If a complaint is made to this office, comply with the following:

1. Responsibilities of the Call Taker: (CALEA 41.2.6.e)

   The call taker who receives the report of a missing child is responsible for ensuring that appropriate information collected to assist the responding officers. This includes but may not be limited to the following:

   a. Determine if the circumstances of the report meet the definition of a missing child as set forth in section C of this policy. Notify the Duty Supervisor and Duty Investigator. (CALEA 41.2.6.b).

      1) If the missing child is missing from a location other than MUSC or MUSC affiliated property, immediately transfer the complainant to the proper agency having jurisdiction.

      2) Relay all information obtained prior to the transfer and offer assistance as needed to the agency.

   b. Prioritize the call based on the factors determining “unusual circumstances” and dispatch officers accordingly.

   c. Collect essential information from the caller to transmit appropriate radio alerts providing descriptive information about the child, where the child was last seen, and any information concerning potential abductors and their patterns of behavior.
d. Inform the parent or guardian that they should not disturb or tamper with the home, school, or location where the child might have been or any of the child’s belongings.

e. Safeguard all pertinent records for future investigative reference, to include communications related to the incident, written notes, radio broadcasts, and all subsequent notifications.

f. Where unusual circumstances exist, issue a radio alert to all agency personnel and enter alert on the statewide telecommunications system.

g. Ask the parents to stay in place until police personnel arrive.

h. When directed by the Supervisor, make notifications in accordance with attachment “3”.

2. The First Responder: (CALEA 41.2.6.c and .e)

The officer assigned as a first responder to the incident should prioritize and perform as appropriate the following tasks.

a. Unless acting in direct response to the child’s safety, respond directly and promptly to the individual who made the initial report.

b. Irrespective of any search that may have been conducted previously by parents or others, verify that the child is missing by conducting a consensual search of the house/building and grounds to include places where a child could be hiding, trapped or asleep.

c. Conduct interviews with parents or other persons who made the initial report in order to gain insight into the circumstances surrounding the disappearance and gather other information needed to conduct an initial assessment of the case.

d. Obtain a detailed description of the missing child, several recent photographs, and any recent videotapes as available and forward to communications.

e. Confirm the child’s custody status, whether a custody dispute or similar problem exists between the parents, whether a restraining order is in effect, or if the child has expressed an interest in living with the non-custodial parent.
f. Determine when, where and by whom the child was last seen; interview those who last saw the child and treat the location as a crime scene.

g. Secure and safeguard the incident scene or place last seen as a potential crime scene. Where possible, take photographs and/or videotape of the incident scene and ensure that personnel do not tamper with potential evidence.

h. Identify any areas of the incident scene or the home that have been disrupted since the child’s disappearance. In particular, the child’s bedroom, bed clothing, and related areas and items should be secured and protected until evidence and identification material such as hair, fingerprints, or bite marks can be collected.

i. Identify the zone of safety for the child’s age and developmental stage.

j. Based on available information, make an initial determination of the type of case, the need for additional resources, and whether the incident should be initially classified as “unusual” as defined in this policy.

k. If the child was abducted, obtain a description of the abductors if available, the mode of travel, vehicle description, and related information and transmit to communications. If the abductor is a family member, obtain photographs of the suspect.

l. Determine the correct NCIC Missing Person File category - disability, endangered, involuntary, juvenile, other or catastrophe - and request that communications or other authorized personnel promptly enter this into the NCIC file. Family abductions are normally entered as “involuntary,” and non-family abductions are entered as “endangered.”

m. Fully identify and separately interview anyone at the scene of the disappearance.

n. A thorough home search should be conducted even if the child’s disappearance occurred elsewhere. Obtain written permission to conduct the search and, with the assistance of additional personnel, search the residence, out building, and other structures, vehicles, and related property.

o. Provide parents with any documentation that is required by the state missing childrens clearinghouse and tell them to include a photograph of the missing child.
p. Prepare a chronological account of actions taken and information obtained from point of contact to relief.

3. Supervisors Responsibilities: (CALEA 41.2.6.e)

Where a child is missing under unusual circumstances, a supervisor will ensure that the following measures are taken.

a. Obtain a briefing from the first responder and other agency personnel at the scene sufficient to determine the scope and complexity of the case and develop an appropriate response. Conduct the briefing away from the family, friends, and other involved individuals.

b. Ensure that first responder responsibilities, as outlined in the foregoing section, have been fully and properly carried out.

c. Direct Dispatch to making notifications in accordance with Attachment “3”.

d. Determine if additional personnel and resources are needed to assist in the investigation to include activation of interagency response protocols or, if necessary, turning the investigation and/or search over to a larger agency that can bring greater resources to bear on the investigation. (CALEA 41.2.6.c)

e. If necessary, establish a command post (away from the child’s residence) to assist in field management of the search and investigation.

f. Appoint a search operations coordinator to organize search efforts. Determine whether tracking dogs are available and if they are appropriate for use under the immediate circumstances.

g. Appoint a media liaison officer if not yet on hand to assist University Public Relations with media inquiries and, if deemed appropriate, solicit medial assistance in locating the missing child.

h. Ensure that all required notifications have been made to include, where appropriate, officers and investigative units of the agency, other law enforcement agencies, and available community resources. (CALEA 41.2.6.c)

I. Establish a liaison with the family who can explain police efforts and work with the family to uncover any information useful to the investigation.

j. Assess the need for additional services and contact the state clearinghouse
and the NCMEC to determine what services if any can be provided. 
(CALEA 41.2.6.c)

k. Assess the situation and determine whether it meets the AMBER Alert 
Criteria contained in section 6 of this policy, and make recommendations to 
Department authorized personnel of system activation.

4. Investigator’s Responsibilities: (CALEA 41.2.6.e and .f)

Where a case involves unusual circumstances as defined in this policy, the assigned 
police investigator shall ensure that the following measures are taken.

a. Obtain a briefing from agency personnel at the scene.

b. Verify the accuracy of all descriptive information concerning the child, 
being alert to facts or statements that may conflict with those obtained by 
the first responder or supervisor.

c. Canvas the neighborhood as soon as possible to identify and interview 
residents and others within the “abduction zone.” Identify all vehicles 
parked within the neighborhood.

d. Obtain a general history of recent dynamics from family members, 
neighbors, classmates, teachers, school counselors, and other persons who 
may have had close personal interaction with the child and / or family.

e. Where possible and appropriate, search police agency records for 
information that may facilitate the search and investigation. These include 
but are not limited to records that establish whether incidents have been 
reported in the vicinity that may have some bearing on the case, including 
but not limited to:

1) complaints of attempted abductions, prowlers, public lewdness, and 
suspicious persons.

2) residents in the vicinity of the missing child’s home or place last 
seen who are designated as sexual predators;

3) history of household abuse or domestic violence calls;

4) criminal history of family members or others at the child’s home 
address;

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5) runaway reports on the child or siblings; and

6) juvenile delinquency reports of the child or siblings.

f. Conduct in-depth fact-finding interviews with all witnesses, friends or relatives of the missing child, teachers, classmates, or others who knew and/or routinely interacted with the child, placing particular emphasis on identifying any conflicting information offered by these or other individuals.

g. Review any records generated about the family or child from the police agency, social service agencies, schools, and related organizations or agencies.

h. Implement an agency system or other authorized means to record, cross reference, and retrieve information generated through the investigation.

i. Reassess the need for additional resources and specialized services to include specialized search and rescue operations, state resources (e.g., state missing children’s clearinghouses), and federal agencies such as the FBI and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. (CALEA 41.2.6.c)

j. If the case is not resolved promptly, update descriptive records and those entered into state and federal missing persons database to include dental characteristics, scars, marks and tattoos, fingerprints, and additional articles of clothing, jewelry, or possessions not previously itemized.

k. Determine whether a polygraph examination is warranted and request such an examination where indicated for parents, guardians, or other persons as appropriate.

l. Monitor media relations to include review of all agency releases to the media to ensure that information is not released that will compromise the investigation.

m. Provide the family with whatever support is possible and appropriate. Provide them with a copy of the Family Survival Guide prepared by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (located in the Department Library) or contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to have one sent to them via overnight mail.

n. Assess the situation and determine whether it meets the AMBER Alert Criteria contained in section 6 of this policy, and make recommendations to...
Department authorized personnel of system activation.

5. Unidentified Children: (CALEA 41.2.6.c)

An officer who is assigned to the report of an unidentified person who appears to be a child, whether living or deceased, is responsible for completion of the following tasks, among other responsibilities.

a. Obtain a complete description of the individual using standardized information gathering forms designated by this agency (or others such as the NCIC Unidentified Person File Worksheet).

b. Enter the child’s description into the NCIC Unidentified Person File.

c. Utilize available resources to identify the child, to include:

* the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children;
* state missing and exploited children clearinghouses; and
* state medical examiner’s offices and organizations.

d. Once identification has been made, cancel all notifications.

6. Amber Alert (CALEA 41.2.6.d)

a. Criteria for the South Carolina AMBER Alert.

1) The law enforcement agency believes that the child has been abducted (taken from their environment unlawfully, without authority of law, and without permission from the child’s parent or legal guardian).

2) The child is 17 years old or younger, and the law enforcement agency believes the child is in immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death; or if the individual is 18 years old or older, and the law enforcement agency believes the individual is at a greater risk for immediate danger of serious bodily harm or death because the individual possesses a proven physical or mental disability.

3) All other possibilities for the victim’s disappearance have been reasonably excluded.

4) There is sufficient information available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the victim, suspect, or vehicle used in the abduction.
*Note: Do **NOT** send an AMBER Alert if the response to any of the above criteria is negative.

The initiating law enforcement agency must have the missing individual’s name and supporting information entered into NCIC.

After the missing individual is found the initiating law enforcement agency must take the missing individual’s name and supporting information out of NCIC.

b. How to Activate the South Carolina AMBER Alert.

1) Only personnel having the authority to evaluate the investigating officer’s reports regarding the abduction can activate the system. The personnel are designated in the Collateral Duties Listing/General Order..

2) When one of the above designated personnel determines that the case meets the criteria for activation of the South Carolina AMBER Alert plan, he/she will call the South Carolina Clearinghouse at (800) 322-445 or Sled Headquarters and report the abduction (only AMBER Alert designated officers may activate the plan). *(CALEA 41.2.6.c)*

3) The designate personnel will fax the completed South Carolina AMBER Alert Notification Form and a photograph of the victim to (803) 896-7041.

c. What will result upon activation.

1) The Chief of SLED or his designee will fax and e-mail the South Carolina AMBER Alert Information to radio and television stations designated by the South Carolina Broadcasters Association.

2) The Associated Press Control Bureau for South Carolina will be asked to provide this information for their broadcast wires in North Carolina & Georgia.

3) SLED will notify all South Carolina law enforcement agencies via BOLO. SLED will contact via telephone DPS, DOT, and FBI. *(CALEA 41.2.6.c)*
4) Following this activation process, the public will be notified by the news media of the South Carolina AMBER Alert every fifteen minutes for the next three hours.

5) After eight hours from the time the alert begins, any updates/cancellations should be made directly to the South Carolina Clearinghouse at 1-800-322-4453.

6) In the event a citizen sees the child, abductor, and/or vehicle fitting the South Carolina AMBER Alert description, they should immediately call 911 with that information and location. The agency receiving this information will then contact the initiating agency with this citizen-supplied information.

7) At the conclusion of an AMBER Alert, the Chief of SLED or his designee will:

   a) Fax and e-mail a formal termination of the alert to all radio and television stations and the Associated Press Control Bureau for South Carolina.

   b) Notify all South Carolina law enforcement agencies via BOLO.

   c) Will contact via telephone the DPS, DOT, and FBI.

d. After-Action Review

   Upon conclusion of a South Carolina AMBER Alert (within one week), the standing South Carolina AMBER Alert Review Committee, as well as the initiating law enforcement agency, shall review the operational efficiencies of the Alert to determine if any systematic changes are needed.

e. Conclusion

   It is vital that all Department personnel know when and how to activate the South Carolina AMBER Alert and what will transpire as a result of the activation. Because time is of the essence, you must know what is expected from you. Remember, 74 percent of the children who were kidnapped and later found murdered were killed in the first three hours after being taken.
f. Websites
   1) www.missingkids.com
   2) www.sled.state.sc.us

7. Recovery and / or Case Closure: (CALEA 41.2.6.f)

   An officer assigned to the recovery or return of a missing child shall complete the following tasks, among his or her other responsibilities.

   a. Verify the identity of the returned child as the missing child while assessing the child’s safety and gathering available information about possible predators.

   b. During the verification process, determine whether intervention services are needed to ensure that the child can safely remain in the home and ensure that arrangements are made for delivery of these services. These include but are not limited to mental health and / or physical health examinations and arrangements for family counseling.

   c. Complete designated supplemental reports and cancel all outstanding notifications to include any NCIC Missing Person File entry and the state clearinghouse. Supplemental reports should describe the child’s activities while missing and circumstances of the recovery / return.

Attachments:
Attachment #1 - SLED Missing Person Information Center Report
Attachment #2 - Missing Person Report For NCIC Record Entry
Attachment #3 - Notification List
South Carolina Law Enforcement Division
Missing Person Information Center Report

MISSING PERSON'S INFORMATION

NAME __________________________ DATE OF BIRTH ___________ AGE ________

ADDRESS ______________________ RACE __________ HEIGHT __________ WEIGHT ________

HAIR COLOR __________________ HAIR STYLE __________ SKIN TONE __________ EYE COLOR ________

SSN __________________ DRIVER'S LICENSE NO./STATE ________

DATE LAST SEEN __________________________

LOCATION LAST SEEN _______________________

IN THE COMPANY OF ________________________

CREDIT CARDS _____________________________

BANK ACCOUNTS ___________________________

TEETH DESCRIPTION: ______ NORMAL ______ GAPS ______ BRACES ______ CAPS ______ MISSING TEETH ______

CLOTHING/JEWELRY WORN WHEN LAST SEEN: __________________________

SCARS/MARKS/TATTOOS __________________________

POSSIBLE DESTINATION ______________________

VEHICLES INVOLVED ________________________

LICENSE NUMBER ____________________________ MAKE ______ MODEL ______ YEAR ______

COLOR __________________ STYLE __________ HOLDER OF LIEN ______

INSURANCE COMPANY ________________________ PHONE NUMBER __________

REPORTING AGENCY ________________________ PHONE NUMBER __________

OFFICER ASSIGNED ________________________ DATE OF REPORT ______

COMPLAINANT'S NAME ______________________ ADDRESS __________________

PHONE NUMBER __________________ RELATIONSHIP TO MISSING PERSON __________

Attachment #1

POLICY AND PROCEDURE # 104 Missing Children
The undersigned, hereby requests that the name, age, photograph or other information pertinent to the disappearance of the missing person and deemed appropriate for release by the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) be published or circulated by any method subscribed by SLED. I understand this information may be available to the public, media, other law enforcement agencies, hospitals, social service agencies, shelters, medical examiners and/or other private or public agencies or organizations involved with missing persons. I understand that SLED may also use this information and photograph for age enhancement when deemed appropriate. I understand and authorize the information and photograph concerning the missing person to be published as deemed appropriate by SLED on internet websites designated by SLED. I understand that once the photograph and information is released on the internet neither SLED nor any other agency hosting the website will have control over unauthorized use by others of the information and/or photograph.

It is further understood and agreed that any and all information supplied by me shall be truthful, and I agree to hold harmless SLED and any other agency or department for any errors of omission or commission occasioned by misinformation I may supply.

The undersigned individual(s) agrees to indemnify and hold harmless SLED, and any and all Law Enforcement Agencies or other agencies, organizations and/or individuals, contacts or sources of information, for or on account of any legal liability for suits, actions, claims, damages or unauthorized use from release of the information, to include the internet, that the reported missing person might prosecute against the aforesaid persons and entities and or individuals, whether successful, including defendant's costs sustained. I further agree that a photostatic or facsimile copy of this authorization shall have the same force and effect as the original.

WITNESS: ________________________________  SIGNED: ________________________________
DATED: ________________________________  DATED: ________________________________

Complete form and send to:
S.C. Law Enforcement Division
Missing Person Information Center
P.O Box 21398
Columbia, SC 29221-1398

Please enclose recent photo. The photo will be returned only upon request. For further information, call the MPIC at either (803) 737-9010 or 1-800-322-4453.

Attachment #1
POLICY AND PROCEDURE # 104 Missing Children

Attachment #2
NOTIFICATION LIST

Director
a. 2-6789

Deputy Chief
a. 2-6207

Captain-Operations Commander
a. 2-3767

Vice Director of Emergency Services (notify only if casualties are anticipated)

George S. Bryan, MD
a. 2-9705
b. pager - 14454

On-Call Investigator
a. 
b.

Risk Management

Wayne Brannan
a. 2-3055

Jennifer Taylor
a. 2-0757

Safety & Security Coordinator (notify only if casualties are anticipated or hospital facilities are involved)

Kevin Boyd, MUH Safety & Security Manager
a. 2-4831
b. pager - 13080

Hospital Service Coordinator (HSC) notify only if casualties are anticipated or hospital facilities are involved

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a. 2-2123 (paging operator)
   1. Ask to have the on-call HSC paged

**MUSC Occupational Safety and Health**

a. 0800 - 1600, Monday thru Friday **2-3604**
b. After hours pager 17930

**PHYSICAL PLANT** DURING NORMAL WORKING HOURS

Bruce Mills

a. 2-4666
b. pager - 11677

IN THE EVENT THAT BRUCE MILLS CAN NOT BE CONTACTED, CONTACT:

John Wilson

a. 2-2725
b. pager - 12302

After hours and in the event that the above individuals can not be contacted, contact the “help desk” for assistance.

a. 2-4119
b. on - call cell phone 906-1456

**CCIT**

Melissa Forinash (notify when directed by the Incident Commander)

a. 2-4175
b. pager - none

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Sharlene Atkins

a. 2-7426
b. pager - 12176

**CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER**

POLICY AND PROCEDURE # 104 Missing Children
Stewart Mixon (notify when directed by the Incident Commander)
a. 2-0888

VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION
Lisa Montgomery (notify when directed by the Incident Commander)
a. 2-5050

PRESIDENT
Dr. David Cole (Notify when directed by the Director)
a. 2-9005

Attachment #3