human services

When to contact After Hours Child Protection Emergency Service

Contact AHCPES when (outside business hours) a child/young person:

- displays behaviour placing themselves at risk of immediate harm
- requires medical attention resulting from substance misuse, self harm or risk taking behaviour
- discloses sexual or physical assault
- displays significant signs of emotional trauma
- is missing **AND**
  - *there are immediate and significant concerns for the child/young person's safety*
  - *it is out of character for the child/young person*
  - *circumstances surrounding the disappearance cause significant concern*
- requires medical consent (out of home care provider is not authorised to give this consent or parents are unavailable, unable or unwilling to give consent)
- needs an urgent decision where the delegation/decision making authority rests with Child Protection (SWS, legal action, warrants etc).

Don't contact AHCPES when a child/young person:

- is not at immediate or significant risk of harm
- has breached curfew
- displays difficult to manage behaviour
- requires transport to return to placement
- requires approval for leave or access
- is missing from placement (except as above)
- has breached bail conditions

* When decision making authority rests with the out of home care provider, do not contact AHCPES.

Out of home care providers should manage these situations via on call arrangements and should advise regional Child Protection on the next working day where appropriate

Role of out of home care on call

- Contact agency on call arrangements prior to contacting AHCPES
- On call manager to determine need to contact AHCPES - is an immediate response required or can communication be to the regional Child Protection service the next day?
- The agency will be responsible for its own internal communication following contact with AHCPES.
- If a review of AHCPES decision is requested, then On Call will contact AHCPES.

Crisis Management Plans

Crisis management plans and AHCPES possible contacts need to be consistent with the above guidelines.

Department of Human Services

State Government Victoria