

Question on Notice
No. 219
Asked on Wednesday, 27 February 2008.

MR CHRIS FOLEY asked the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Women (MRS KEECH) -

QUESTION:

“With reference to any child who has been awarded care by the State and leaves this care by their own choice and places themselves somewhere else —
What steps or procedures are in place by her department to return them to care by the State?”

ANSWER:

The safety of children in care is a priority for the Bligh Government.

When the Department of Child Safety becomes aware a child/young person has left a placement and self-places with their parents, the Department is responsible for immediately undertaking a safety assessment to determine if there are any immediate harm indicators present in the household.

If the outcome of the safety assessment is ‘unsafe’, the child/young person must be removed immediately to a safe placement. If it is assessed that a safety plan is required for the child/young person, that plan will be developed collaboratively with the family and the young person to manage any identified harms.

In circumstances where a young person self-places with another family member, a family friend or other friend or acquaintance, an assessment of the person as a kinship carer will be undertaken. The young person can only remain in the placement if the carer is deemed to be a suitable carer.

If the young person is at risk of harm or in an unsuitable placement, departmental officers will work with the young person to look at protective options. Departmental officers are responsible for providing support and assistance to the young person to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Departmental officers will work with the support and coordination of other departments, including the Queensland Police Service and non-government organisations, to address the specific needs of the young person.

Every case is assessed individually as to and whether the young person is:

- living in a safe place;
- able to look after themselves and have food, clothing, money and access to essential services;
- keeping out of trouble with the law;
- attending school, training or work; and
- at risk of physical, emotional or sexual harm.