



# Cheyenne Police Department

415 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001  
<http://www.cheyennepd.org>



*Protecting the legend...*

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Cheyenne Police Address Recent Questions Involving Runaway Juveniles**

CHEYENNE, Wy — The Cheyenne Police Department's (CPD) active use of social media has raised some questions regarding the frequency of runaway juveniles. The CPD has increased the use of social media because of its immediacy and effectiveness in reporting runaways and missing juveniles to the public. While this may make it appear that the rate of runaway juveniles has increased, the numbers have remained consistent annually.

This year, the CPD has received 56 reports of runaway juveniles. In 2020, the CPD received 115 runaway cases total and all of the individuals were recovered.

“It is the policy of the CPD to thoroughly investigate all reports of runaway juveniles and missing persons,” said Police Chief Mark Francisco. “Social media has been a very effective tool allowing us to locate missing juveniles as quickly as possible during a time where they may be vulnerable.”

Minors run away for complex reasons and each case varies. The following factors may put youth at an increased risk of running away or becoming homeless:

- Feeling unsafe at home
- Abuse
- Family conflict
- Lack of acceptance of gender identity and/or sexual orientation
- Struggling to manage mental health
- Pregnancy
- Online enticement
- To be with a friend, romantic partner, or biological family

Police officers say it is important to understand the definitions surrounding these issues. “When a juvenile runs away, they have left home or a court-ordered facility without the permission of parents or legal guardian,” explained Juvenile Diversion Officer Allen. “Kidnapping, on the other hand, is the physical taking or removal of a person from his or her home by the use of force, fraud, or coercion.”



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Kidnappings by strangers on the street or online are rare in Cheyenne. Usually, this crime is committed by a person the child knows – such as a relative without custody.

The CPD reports 0 kidnapping cases in 2021 and 1 juvenile kidnapping case in 2020 which involved interference with custody.

If the child's whereabouts are unknown to his or her parent or guardian, the CPD recommends the following immediate steps:

- Conduct a preliminary search for the child.
- Contact law enforcement to report the child missing.
- Call the child's friends, school, relatives or anyone else who may have information regarding his/her whereabouts.
- Check places the child likes to spend time, including shopping centers, parks, athletic facilities, clubs and neighborhoods.
- Share the child's picture on social media or pass out flyers with the child's picture.

“We want to thank the public for their engagement on our social media channels regarding this issue,” said Chief Francisco. “Our community partnerships play an important role in keeping the citizens of Cheyenne safe.”