

# YOUTH SERVICES POLICY

<b>Title:</b> Escorted Absence	<b>Type:</b> C. Field Operations
<b>Next Annual Review Date:</b> 12/18/2016	<b>Sub Type:</b> 4. Juvenile Institutions
	<b>Number:</b> C.4.7
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<b>References:</b> ACA Standards 4-JCF-2A-05, and 54-JCF-5I-05 (Performance Based Standards For Juvenile Correctional Facilities); YS Policy Nos. A.1.14 "Unusual Occurrence Reports", B.2.1 "Assignment, Reassignment, Release and Discharge Youth", B.2.14 "Secure Care SAVRY", B.2.20 "Non-Discriminatory Services to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Questioning (LGBTIQ), and Nonconforming Youth", B.3.1 "Composition/Location/Retention of Active and Inactive Secure Care Youth Records", B.5.1 "Youth Code of Conduct – Secure Care", B.7.2 "Programs for Post-Secondary Education and Skills Building Incentives ", C.2.1 "Escapes, Runaways, Apprehensions and Reporting", C.2.3 "Searches of Youth", C.2.6 "Use of Interventions - Secure Care", C.2.7 "Youth Drug/Alcohol Testing", and C.2.24 "Electronic Monitoring Program (EMP)"	
<b>STATUS: Approved</b>	
<b>Approved By:</b> <i>Mary L. Livers, Deputy Secretary</i>	<b>Date of Approval:</b> 12/18/2015

**I. AUTHORITY:**

Deputy Secretary of Youth Services (YS) as contained in La. R.S. 36:405. Deviation from this policy must be approved by the Deputy Secretary.

**II. PURPOSE:**

To establish the Deputy Secretary's policy regarding escorted leave for therapeutic purposes.

**III. APPLICABILITY:**

Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Undersecretary, Deputy Undersecretary, Chief of Operations, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Regional Directors, Facility Directors, Regional Managers, Contracted Health Care Provider (CHP), and Intensive Residential Contract Providers.

Facility Directors are responsible for compliance with the established guidelines outlined in this policy.

**IV. POLICY:**

It is the policy of the Deputy Secretary that escorted leave may be approved by the Facility Director, and granted to a youth for a therapeutic purpose, including the opportunity to visit with family before the release date to set realistic goals and expectations; to show youth acceptable and socially appropriate behavior, allow youth to participate in work/training opportunities, and to participate in special events in the community. Family emergency absences are permitted for visits of dying family or attendance at the wake of a family member.

V. **DEFINITIONS:**

***Electronic Monitoring Program (EMP)*** - The use of electronic technology to monitor the movements of a youth.

***Escorted Absence*** - A temporary absence authorized by the Facility Director, in which a youth is escorted off-campus by qualified personnel for a therapeutic purpose.

***Family Emergency Absence*** - An escorted absence prompted by the death or life-threatening illness or injury of a family member or legal custodian which is beneficial in meeting the needs of the youth and family.

***Individualized Service/Reintegration Plan (ISRP)*** – An *initial ISRP* shall be developed within 48 hours of a youth’s arrival to the intake unit at a secure care facility. The *initial ISRP* specifies problem areas already identified by the initial or latest SAVRY reassessment conducted by CBS. The goals, objectives, and the method used to attain them while the youth is in secure care shall be updated during intake, including the role of the youth and staff. Development of this plan is accomplished through review of the youth’s SAVRY, the youth’s record, and is a collaborative effort between the intake Case Manager and the youth.

The *formal ISRP* is further developed by the assigned Case Manager within seven (7) working days of receipt of the contracted health care provider’s Psychological Evaluation. The treatment needs are prioritized based upon a review of the youth’s SAVRY dynamic risk factors rated “High”, and in some cases “moderate”, the youth’s record, and any additional recommendations made by the Psychological Evaluation. The *formal ISRP* is modified throughout the youth’s stay as need areas are identified, partly based on the dynamic SAVRY risk/need factors. The *formal ISRP* also identifies follow-up services needed by the youth upon release to facilitate a successful transition and reintegration back into the community. The plan is coordinated with CBS and shall be used when completing the aftercare plan.

***Juvenile Electronic Tracking System (JETS)*** - The centralized database utilized to track all youth under OJJ supervision or in OJJ custody and to record all case record activity.

***Juvenile Justice Specialists (JJS)*** – Provide security of youth and assist in application of clinical treatment in accomplishing the overall goal of evaluation and/or treatment of individuals placed in a YS secure care facility.

***Qualified Personnel*** - Employees approved by the Facility Director who have completed safety training provided by OJJ Staff Development personnel, including at a minimum, State Travel Guidelines, Defensive Driving, Supervision of Juveniles and Safe Crisis Management. An employee who has not completed these classes shall not be allowed to escort youth off campus.

***Therapeutic Purposes*** - Educational, recreational, work training, religious, special events, family reintegration or to serve as an incentive (refer to YS Policy No. B.7.2). Escorted absences for family reintegration allow a youth to meet with family prior to release, to set goals for return to the community. Educational escorted absences may be used for such activities as school trips or testing. Youth are escorted to participate in sports events at OJJ facilities. Youth attend church services at various churches, sometimes singing in the choir. Work and work training prepare youth for jobs upon release. Escorted absences may also serve as an incentive to encourage good behavior.

***Unit Management Team*** - The team of individuals, i.e. Group Leader, Juvenile Justice Specialist, etc. assigned to the youth's housing unit.

***Unusual Occurrence Report (UOR)*** – A document that must be completed by staff to report incidents or observations of events that may have an impact on any aspect of the agency. UOR forms shall be made available to all employees, working all areas at all times. Employees must complete and submit a UOR prior to the end of their tour of duty on the day the incident was observed or comes to the employee's attention in any way. If a UOR form is not available, the employee must use any paper available to report the pertinent information. UORs may also be submitted by email. (Refer to YS Policy No. A.1.14)

## **VI. FAMILY EMERGENCY ESCORTED ABSENCES:**

This type of escorted absence may be granted to a youth by the Facility Director in the event of a death or a life-threatening illness or injury to a family member or legal custodian. The information concerning the emergency must be confirmed by staff. The family emergency escorted absence assists the youth and family in meeting their needs in times of crisis.

In the event of a death, the Facility Director may grant approval for attendance to the wake only. Exceptions for special consideration shall require approval of the Assistant Secretary in order for the youth to attend the funeral services, which shall be documented on the "Escorted Absence Request Form" [see Attachment C.4.7 (a)].

## **VII. ESCORTED ABSENCE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA; EXCLUSIONARY CRITERIA; PROCEDURE:**

### **A. Eligibility Criteria**

1. Youth must be on a "Low" or "Moderate" Custody Level; and
2. Youth must be participating in all programming (housing unit, school, counseling, mental health, medical or specialized treatment programs).

### **B. Exclusionary Criteria**

1. Youth must have no Code of Conduct violations within 30 days of the proposed escorted absence;

2. Youth with two (2) or more runaways/escapes, or one (1) escape within 12 months prior to the proposed escorted absence shall not be considered; and
3. Youth who are considered a high risk to public safety shall be excluded from consideration. All information known about a youth must be taken into consideration when staff members involved in the approval process are making this determination.

**C. Exceptions**

“High” risk youth who meet the above criteria, except for the custody and risk considerations, may be allowed to participate in an escorted absence for family reintegration purposes if the “Escorted Absence Request Form” is reviewed and approved by the Unit Management Team, the Regional Manager, the youth’s Probation and Parole Officer/Juvenile (PPO/J), the Probation and Parole Officer/Supervisor (PPS), and the Facility Director/designee.

The Electronic Monitoring Program (EMP) shall be utilized to monitor youth who are considered “high” risk for runaway or escape as described in YS Policy No. C.2.24.

**D. Limitations/Sites**

**1. Family Reintegration visits**

- a. Only one youth shall be allowed on an escorted absence to the same site. The only exception is that siblings at the same facility who both meet the criteria for an escorted leave may participate in the leave at the same time.
- b. Escorted absences shall be held at locations such as, but not limited to, restaurants, local parks and churches.
- c. These absences shall be limited to two (2) family members who have been approved by the Facility Director/ designee. If more than two (2) family members arrive for the visit, or if one (1) or both relatives have not been previously approved in writing by the Facility Director, the leave shall be terminated and the youth immediately returned to the facility.

**2. Group Escorted Absences**

Facilities shall be allowed to escort youth in groups to participate in community activities according to the following guidelines:

- a. Group escorted absences shall not be held at shopping malls or other public places where large numbers of people may be present.

- b. If a large venue is selected for the visit, the location’s security staff must be informed of the visit two (2) days prior to arrival.
  - c. The Facility Director or a high-level administrator shall accompany the group.
3. Required Staffing Ratios
- The chart below must be adhered to during escorted absences. Any deviation must be approved by the Regional Director.

# of Youth	# of JJS	# of Other Staff	Requirements
1-2	1	N/A	same sex
2-3	2	N/A	1 same sex
4-5	1	1 SS	1 same sex
6-7	2	1 SS	1 same sex
8-9	2	1 SS	1 same sex
10-11	2	2 SS	1 same sex
12+	2	2 SS	1 same sex

**VIII. PROCEDURE FOR PRE-ESCORTED ABSENCE APPROVAL**

- A. Initiation of Escorted Absence Process
  - 1. Any staff member may request an escorted absence for a youth by filling out the top portion of the “Escorted Absence Request Form” and providing the request to the youth’s Case Manager.
  - 2. The Case Manager shall bring the request to the housing unit’s Group Leader.
  - 3. The Group Leader shall discuss the request with the Unit Management Team staff during the Weekly Team Meeting. Staff should discuss any factor relevant to the escorted absence, including but not limited to, the youth’s risk to public safety, including the probability of the use of EMP due to escape/runaway history, pursuant to YS Policy No. C.2.24.
  - 4. If the Group Leader approves the request, the Case Manager shall complete his/her portion of the “Escorted Absence Request Form”.

5. If the youth is participating in specialized services, the specialized treatment provider shall complete the appropriate portion of the "Escorted Absence Request Form".
6. The Case Manager shall then bring the request to the appropriate Unit Management Team members (i.e. school Principal, Treatment Director) for approval.
7. The Case Manager shall then forward the youth's name to medical via email or hard copy for physical and mental health clearance. The response by medical shall be retained by the Case Manager.
8. Once the "Escorted Absence Request Form" is completed and signed, and the youth has been cleared by Medical, the Case Manager shall bring the request to the Facility Director for review and approval.

**B. Director's Approval**

The Director/designee shall give final approval/disapproval of an "Escorted Absence Request Form" after fully considering the information provided by staff. The "Escorted Absence Request Form" with the Facility Director's signature shall be filed under Clip VII of the Master Record.

**C. Case Manager Contacts**

For purposes of family reintegration, the youth's Case Manager must contact the involved family members 48 hours prior to the escorted absence to explain the rules and expectations for the visit.

The Case Manager shall also notify the Regional Manager, PPO/J and PPS, via email, at least 24 hours in advance that the youth will be on an escorted absence to allow the PPO/J to participate, if possible. If the PPO/J is not available to participate in person, he shall indicate knowledge of the escort in a Case Narrative in JETS.

**IX. PROCEDURES WHILE on ESCORTED ABSENCE:**

**A. Mechanical Restraints**

Staff shall have belts and cuffs with them on any type of escorted absence. Occasions when restraints may be used include, but are not limited to:

1. Youth is found with contraband;
2. Engages in self-harming behavior or exhibits other types of behavior problems; or
3. Attempts to escape or escapes and is recaptured, or the visit is unexpectedly terminated.

When restraints are used, the procedures outlined in YS Policy C.2.6 shall be followed.

**B. Proximity to Youth**

Staff shall be no more than 3 feet away from the youth and in the line of sight of the youth they are supervising at all times. Youth shall be escorted and supervised on bathroom visits by a staff member of the same gender.

**C. Food**

Food consumed during the escorted absence shall be purchased at the time of the visit.

**X. POST ESCORTED ABSENCE PROCEDURES:**

**A. Purchased Items; Contraband**

Youth shall not be allowed to return to the facility with unauthorized items purchased or given to them during an escorted absence. Staff shall ensure that youth have no contraband or unauthorized items before returning to the facility.

**B. Strip Searches**

Upon return to the facility, youth shall be strip searched pursuant to the guidelines established in YS Policy No. C.2.3.

The specific guidelines established in YS Policy No. C.2.3 must be adhered to for cross-gender and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, questioning (LGBTIQ), or nonconforming youth (refer to YS Policy No. B.2.20).

**C. Drug/Alcohol Testing**

Youth returning from an escorted off-campus activity may be required to submit to drug and/or alcohol testing, pursuant to YS Policy No. C.2.7.

**D. Review by Medical**

A medical examination following an escorted absence is not required. However, immediate medical attention shall be provided if there is a visual indication of an injury or illness or if the youth or escorting staff identifies a specific medical complaint.

If the youth is examined by Medical, all escorting staff shall complete an Unusual Occurrence Report (UOR) and turn it in to their supervisor prior to the end of their tour of duty (refer to YS Policy No. A.1.14).

**XI. GUIDELINES FOR HOLDING YOUTH ACCOUNTABLE FOR A CODE OF CONDUCT VIOLATION DURING AN ESCORTED ABSENCE:**

**A. General**

The sanctions listed below are to be used as guidelines to aid facility staff. Each case shall be decided based on its individual facts.

Types of violations:

1. Escape

- a. Code of Conduct violation for escape;
- b. Twelve (12) months in YS custody prior to requesting a furlough;
- c. Six (6) months prior to approving another escorted absence; and
- d. Filing of criminal charges for escape and/or related charges.

2. Positive Drug Screen

- a. Code of Conduct violation for intoxication and/or contraband;
- b. Six (6) months in YS custody prior to requesting a furlough;
- c. Three (3) months prior to approving another escorted absence; and
- d. Individualized Service/Reintegration Plan (ISRP) shall be modified to include substance abuse treatment (refer to YS Policy No, B.2.1).

3. Commission of any Crime

- a. Twelve (12) months in YS custody prior to requesting a furlough;
- b. Nine (9) months prior to approving another escorted absence; and
- c. Recommendation for referral to an appropriate treatment program.

C. Documentation of Code of Conduct Violations

- 1. Documentation of a Code of Conduct Violation shall be reported on a UOR, with a copy sent to the appropriate Regional Office.
- 2. UORs shall also be written by the employee who discovers the violation, and all other staff who accompanied the escorted absence.
- 3. A Code of Conduct Violation Report shall be completed.

**Previous Regulation/Policy Number:** C.4.7

**Previous Effective Date:** 10/12/2015

**Attachments/References:**