

YOUTH SERVICES POLICY

Title: Electronic Signatures	Type: A. Administrative Sub Type: 1. General Number: A.1.15
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References: La. R.S. 9.2605, 9.2607, 9:2609 and 9:2618; ACA Standard 2-CO-1B-05 (Administration of Correctional Agencies)	
STATUS: Approved	
Approved By: <i>Otha "Curtis" Nelson, Jr., Deputy Secretary</i>	Date of Approval: 10/23/2023

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 Office of Juvenile Justice’s (OJJ) and OJJ’s Office of Management and Finance’s (OMF) position to adopting electronic signature technology and best practices to ensure electronic signatures applied to official OJJ documents are legally valid and enforceable.

Electronic signatures are valid wherever a traditional ink signature by the same signer would be valid, except in those cases where another authority governs another aspect of the transaction, and such authority does not accept electronic signatures.

III. APPLICABILITY:

All YS employees, contract personnel and volunteers.

IV. DEFINITIONS:

Electronic Signature – A digital version of a conventional handwritten signature that enables signatories to approve or agree with the terms of a document. An electronic signature also is a process that uses computers to authenticate the signatory and certify the integrity of the document. An electronic signature can

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provide the same legal commitment as a handwritten signature if it meets certain criteria.

YS Employee – For the purposes of this policy, a YS employee includes employees, contract providers, visitors, volunteers or interns.

V. POLICY:

It is the Deputy Secretary's policy that since many internal agency processes require OJJ employees, contractors, volunteers and other authorized agents to sign documents in order to signify knowledge, approval, acceptance, obligation, or intent by the identified signatory, use of electronic signature technology will result in reductions in costs and other efficiencies.

VI. GENERAL GUIDELINES:

A. State Statute RS 9:2618 allows each governmental agency to establish its own policy of use of electronic records and electronic signature, giving due consideration to security:

1. The manner and format in which the electronic records must be created, generated, sent, communicated, received, and stored and the systems established for those purposes.
2. The electronic records must be signed by electronic means, the type of electronic signature required, the manner and format in which the electronic signature must be affixed to the electronic record, and the identity of, or criteria that must be met by, any third party used by a person filing a document to facilitate the process.
3. Control processes and procedures as appropriate to ensure adequate preservation, disposition, integrity, security, confidentiality, and audit ability of electronic records.
4. Any other required attributes for electronic records which are specified for corresponding non-electronic records or reasonably necessary under the circumstances.

B. OJJ OMF will accept electronic signatures in the following forms:

1. A scanned ink signature;
2. A signature captured using a digital pen or pad;
3. A signature created by the fill & sign tool of an e-signature program or comparable software;
4. A signature applied by a third-party web platform (such as VeriSign).

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- C. OJJ OMF accepts electronic signatures interchangeably and consistently with how it accepts traditional ink signatures.
- D. OJJ OMF will not accept an electronic signature in the form of a typewritten name, regardless of font, that has not been verified by secure software.
- E. Standard record retention requirements apply to electronically signed documents.
- F. OJJ OMF personnel shall follow the following steps in regards to electronically signed documents:
 - 1. OJJ OMF personnel shall review the content of the Document (contract, claim, amendment, LaCarte statement, Expense Account, Reimbursement requests, Petty Cash Reimbursements, Credit Card Refund requests, etc.) with the same level of attention as would normally apply to a traditional paper routing sheet.
 - 2. OJJ OMF personnel shall verify that other DPS personnel and third party have submitted, if applicable, appropriate signature authorization.
 - 3. In response to follow up requests from OJJ OMF, OJJ personnel shall ensure that the Document is in PDF format, scanning paper to PDF or printing/exporting other file types to PDF as needed. Other attachments which will not be signed and which would normally be provided in non-PDF formats do not have to be converted.
 - 4. If OJJ OMF personnel recommends signing the Document, other OJJ personnel and the third party shall attach the Document, supporting documentation and any other attachments to an email (either a new email or preferably the original thread). Please note that LaCarte statements are still required to be mailed to DPS with all original documentation. However, electronic signature either by the cardholder or the approver will be accepted.
 - 5. In response to follow up requests from OJJ OMF, OJJ personnel and the third party shall provide in the body of the email the same type and level of detailed recommendation and information that would typically accompany a traditional paper routing sheet.
 - 6. OJJ OMF personnel shall send the email to the person to whom he or she would typically route a traditional paper routing sheet (typically the Supervisor).
 - 7. The Supervisor shall review, and then forward the email with Document and attachments to the appropriate next-level reviewer with any notes and recommendation in the email body, CCing the originator.
 - 8. All emails shall remain in the same email chain.

9. The Deputy Secretary or other designated signer shall affix their signature to the Document PDF using any authorized means.
 10. The physical copy of the electronic signed document along with the approval chain email is forwarded to OJJ OMF.
 11. The signer shall then attach the signed Document in a reply email to OJJ OMF and copy everyone in the approval chain.
 12. OJJ OMF and personnel shall distribute the signed Document as appropriate.
 13. OJJ OMF and personnel shall keep records in electronic format in a secure file for audit trail, following the state standard record retention requirements.
- G. All Electronic Records with Electronic Signatures shall be retained for the same period of time as required for paper records as required by YS Policy A.1.9.

VII. STAFF DEVELOPMENT:

- A. All staff shall be trained in the Electronic Signature procedures and the contents of this policy at the beginning of their employment.
- B. Training shall be documented on an attendance training roster and entered in the "Louisiana Employees Online" (LEO)/SuccessFactors database by designated unit staff.
- C. Training documentation shall be maintained on file at the units.

Previous Regulation/Policy Number: N/A
Previous Effective Date: N/A
Attachments/References: