

# YOUTH SERVICES POLICY

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| <b>Title:</b> Escorted Absence  | <b>Type:</b> C. Field Operations<br><b>Sub Type:</b> 4. Juvenile Institutions<br><b>Number:</b> C.4.7 |
| <b>Page 1 of 11</b>   |   |
| <b>References:</b><br>ACA Standards 4-JCF-2A-05, and 4-JCF-5I-05 (Performance Based Standards For Juvenile Correctional Facilities); YS Policy Nos. A.1.14 "Unusual Occurrence Reports", B.2.1 "Assignment, Reassignment, and Release of Youth", B.2.7 "LAMOD Program and Youth Stage Procedures", 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 "Secure Care Youth Records; Composition and Maintenance", B.5.1 "Youth Code of Conduct – Secure Care", B.7.2 "Programs for Post-Secondary Education - Secure Care ", B.7.3 "Work Details and Skills Building Incentives – Secure Care", 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", C.2.24 "Electronic Monitoring Program (EMP)" |   |
| <b>STATUS: Approved</b>   |   |
| <b>Approved By:</b> Otha "Curtis" Nelson, Jr., Deputy Secretary   | <b>Date of Approval:</b> 10/18/2023   |

**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 Deputy Secretary's policy regarding escorted leave for therapeutic purposes and incentive based rewards for youth.

**III. APPLICABILITY:**

Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Undersecretary, Deputy Undersecretary, Chief of Operations, Probation and Parole Director - Juvenile, Youth Facilities Director - Statewide, Executive Management Advisor, Regional Administrators, 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 and/or an incentive based reward, 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 training opportunities; and to participate in special events in the community. Family emergency absences are permitted for visits of terminally ill family or attendance for special, private family viewing and/or visitation of a deceased family member. The Assistant Secretary may grant special permission for a youth to attend funeral services.

**V. DEFINITIONS:**

***Detainer*** – A warrant placed against a person in a federal, state, or local correctional facility that notifies the holding authority of the intention of another jurisdiction to take custody of that individual when he or she is released.

***Escorted Absence*** - A temporary absence authorized by the Facility Director, in which a youth is escorted outside the secure perimeter by qualified employees for a therapeutic purpose.

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

***Individualized Intervention Plan (IIP) - Initial and Formal*** – A statement of goals, objectives, and methods used to obtain them that is created for each youth in secure care. The IIP is dynamic and is updated depending on the identified needs and specialized treatment required while in secure care. The IIP also identifies follow-up services needed by the youth on release and is coordinated with Community Based Services to provide the proper level of aftercare.

***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 judicially remanded to a YS secure care facility.

***LAMOD***- A holistic therapeutic approach to how we engage, work with and treat youth, staff, families and communities.

***Qualified Employees*** - 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 outside the secure perimeter.

***Therapeutic Purposes*** - Educational, recreational, training, religious, special events, family reintegration or to serve as an incentive (refer to YS Policy No. B.2.7). Escorted absences for family reintegration allows a youth to meet with family prior to release, and 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. Escorted absences may also serve as an incentive for compliance with treatment goals and also to encourage positive behavior as outlined in the LAMOD program (refer to YS Policy No. B. 2.7).

***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 for a special, private viewing with the family 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)]. If permission is granted, necessary security precautions will be taken, which may include the use of handcuffs and shackles.

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

A. Family Reintegration Visits

Criteria:

1. Current SAVRY Risk Rating of “Low” or “Moderate”; and
2. Youth must be appropriately participating in all programming (housing unit, school, treatment, mental health, medical or specialized treatment programs). This must be confirmed by the facility treatment team, group leader, educational staff and MHTP/QMHP (if applicable).

3. Per the LAMOD Youth Manual, the youth must be on the Adaptation or Transformation State of LAMOD or higher to participate in Escorted Absences.
4. Youth who have a “High” risk rating and meet the criteria, and are otherwise eligible, may be allowed to participate in an escorted absence for family reintegration purposes. The “Escorted Absence Request Form” must be reviewed and approved by the Regional Manager, the youth’s Probation and Parole Officer/Juvenile (PPO/J), the Probation and Parole Officer/Supervisor (PPS), in addition to the required facility approvals.

Exclusionary Criteria:

1. A youth, who within the last 30 days received one of the following Code of Conduct Violations and was found guilty by the Code of Conduct Committee, is not eligible:
  - A code of conduct violation for Youth/Youth assault with injury;
  - A code of conduct violation for Youth/Staff assault with injury;
  - A contraband violation involving a positive drug screen, cell phone, or weapon; and/or
  - Is currently on a behavioral intervention plan due to ongoing and chronic behavioral issues. The youth shall be eligible once he is no longer on a behavioral intervention plan.
2. Youth with one (1) escape within 90 days prior to the proposed escorted absence shall not be considered.
3. Youth with a detainer are not eligible to participate in escorted absences.

Sites for Family Reintegration Visits:

1. Only one youth shall be allowed on an Family Reintegration visit at the same time/location. The only exception is siblings assigned to the same facility who both meet the criteria for an escorted absence may participate in the Family Reintegration visit at the same time/location.
2. Escorted absences shall be held at locations such as, but not limited to, restaurants, local parks and churches.

3. Reintegration visits shall be limited to two parent(s) / legal guardian(s) and siblings approved by the Facility Director/designee. If anyone arrives who was not previously approved in writing by the Facility Director, the leave shall be terminated and the youth immediately returned to the facility.
4. The Case Manager/designee shall accompany the youth for Family Reintegration Visits.

B. Group Escorted Absences

Facilities shall be allowed to escort youth in groups to participate in community service/restorative justice projects, educational visits, positive behavior incentive rewards, or reintegration activities according to the following mandatory guidelines:

Criteria:

1. Current SAVRY Summary Risk Rating of “Low” or “Moderate”; and
2. Youth must be appropriately participating in all programming (housing unit, school, treatment, mental health, medical or specialized treatment programs). This must be confirmed by the facility treatment team, group leader, educational staff and MHTP/QMHP (if applicable); and
3. Per the LAMOD Youth Manual, the youth must be on the Adaptation or Transformation Stage of LAMOD or higher to participate in off-campus Group Escorted Absences.

Exclusionary Criteria:

1. A youth, who within the last 30 days received one of the following Code of Conduct Violations and was found guilty by the Code of Conduct Committee, is not eligible:
  - A code of conduct violation for Youth/Youth assault with injury;
  - A code of conduct violation for Youth/Staff assault with injury;
  - A contraband violation involving a positive drug screen, cell phone, or weapon; and/or
  - Is currently on a behavioral intervention plan due to ongoing and chronic behavioral issues. The youth shall be eligible once he is no longer on a behavioral intervention plan; and/or

2. Youth with one (1) escape within the last 90 days prior to the proposed escorted absence shall not be considered; and/or
3. Youth with a detainer are not eligible to participate in group off-campus activities.

**Sites for Group Escorted Absences:**

1. If a crowded large venue is selected for the visit, the location's security staff must be informed of the visit two (2) days prior to arrival, and a time for the activity should be selected when crowds will not be heavy. The group should also be limited to six (6) youth for this type of setting.
2. Examples of appropriate small group LAMOD incentive activities include: outings to movie theatres (not in mall locations) during the day hours, outings to restaurants during the day hours, outings to local civic organizations or restorative justice community activities.
3. Large group activities may include: organized facility team sporting events, family fun day related activities, fishing trips.
4. The Facility Director or a high-level administrator shall accompany the group.
5. Public safety is always the first priority when considering off-campus activities.

**D. Required Staffing Ratios**

The chart below must be adhered to during group escorted absences. Any deviation must be approved by the Youth Facilities Director -Statewide.

| <b># of Youth</b> | <b># of JJS</b> | <b># of Other Staff</b> | <b>Requirements</b> |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1-2               | 1               | 1                       | 1 same sex          |
| 2-3               | 2               | 1                       | 1 same sex          |
| 4-5               | 2               | 1                       | 1 same sex          |
| 6-7               | 2               | 1                       | 1 same sex          |
| 8-9               | 2               | 1                       | 1 same sex          |
| 10-11             | 3               | 3                       | 2 same sex          |
| 12+               | 3               | 3                       | 2 same sex          |

## VIII. PROCEDURE FOR ESCORTED ABSENCE APPROVAL

### A. Initiation of Escorted Absence Process

1. The youth's Case Manager or any facility 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. The Case Manager shall review the request to ensure the youth's meets the escorted absence criteria prior to moving forward.
2. The Case Manager and Group Leader shall discuss the Escorted Absence request at the next Weekly Team Meeting. Staff should discuss any factors relevant to the escorted absence, including but not limited to, the youth's risk to public safety.
3. If the Team approves the request, the Case Manager and Group Leader shall sign his/her portion of the "Escorted Absence Request Form".
4. If the youth is participating in specialized services, the "Escorted Absence Request Form" shall be submitted to the specialized treatment provider for review and signed approval.
5. When a Family Reintegration escort is requested for a youth with a current "High" SAVRY rating, the Case Manager shall forward the "Escorted Absence Request Form" to the Regional Manager, Probation and Parole Officer/Juvenile (PPO/J), and Probation and Parole Officer/Supervisor (PPS) for review and signed approval.
6. The Case Manager shall then bring the request to the appropriate school Principal and Facility Treatment Director for review and signed 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 the Unit Management Team. If there is disagreement between the Unit Management Team and the Facility Director/designee regarding a youth's

eligibility to participate in a group escorted absence activity, the “Escorted Absence Request Form” and all pertinent information should be sent to the Program Manager 4 at Central Office within 24 hours.

A committee shall be convened with the Program Manager 4, the Director of Treatment for facilities and the Assistant Secretary in order to make a determination if the youth will participate in the escorted absence activity.

Further, the Deputy Secretary or his designee further reserves the right to cancel a youth’s participation in a group activity at any time based upon information that the youth may be a significant behavioral problem or a high public safety risk.

The “Escorted Absence Request Form” with the Facility Director’s or designee signature shall be filed under Clip VII of the Master Record.

**C. Cancelling an Approved Escorted Absence**

The Facility Director shall have the sole authority to cancel an approved escorted absence. The Facility Director shall carefully vet the reason(s) for the cancelling of any approved escorted absences, especially within 5 days or less from the approved date of the escorted absence. An approved Family Reintegration visit shall not be canceled for minor offenses such as failure to follow staff directives, out of area, or other similar types of incidents.

**D. Cancelling a Positive Behavior Incentive Escorted Absence**

Where escorted absences are the result of a positive behavior incentive either for a group of youth or for an individual youth, it shall not be canceled if the group or individual youth have met the behavioral expectation.

The only exception would be if the youth received or engaged in any of the following instances 48 hours prior to the date of the approved escorted absences:

1. A code of conduct violation for Youth/Youth assault with injury;
2. A code of conduct violation for Youth/Staff assault with injury.

**E. 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 48 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 handcuffs with them on all escorted absences. Handcuffs shall remain in staff's possession at all times for immediate use if needed. Occasions when restraints may be used include, but are not limited to:

1. Youth is found with contraband; and/or
2. Engages in self-harming behavior or exhibits other types of behavior problems; and/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 absence 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. 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. Filing of criminal charges for escape and/or related charges
- b. 90 days in YS custody before eligible for another escorted absence, furlough, or early release consideration.

2. Positive Drug Screen
    - a. Code of Conduct violation for intoxication and/or contraband;
    - b. 90 days in YS custody prior to requesting a furlough or escorted absence; and
    - c. Individualized Intervention Plan (IIP) shall be modified to include substance abuse treatment (refer to YS Policy No, B.2.1).
  3. Commission of any Crime
    - a. Filing of criminal charges
- B. 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:** 10/14/2022

**Attachments/References:** C.4.7 (a) Escorted Absence Request Form. September 2019

### ESCORTED ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

TYPE OF ESCORTED ABSENCE REQUESTED (check one)

**Family Emergency**  **Family Reintegration Visit**  **Group Escorted Absence**

Date of Request: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time of Escorted Absence: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Youth: \_\_\_\_\_ Client ID # \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Admission: \_\_\_\_\_

Committing Court: \_\_\_\_\_ Judge(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Committing Offense(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Full-Term Date: \_\_\_\_\_ SAVRY Risk Rating: \_\_\_\_\_

Pending Charges: \_\_\_\_\_ Detainers: \_\_\_\_\_

Youth LAMOD Stage:  Orientation  Emerging  Adaptation  Transformation

**Family Emergency**  **Special Family Viewing**  **Funeral (\*requires approval of DAS)**

Verified by: \_\_\_\_\_ Nature of emergency: \_\_\_\_\_

**Family Reintegration (If High Risk requires approval of RM, PPS/J, and PPO/J)**

Name(s) and relationship of two (2) participating family members: \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Escorted Absence**

Facility Director or designated Administrator Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Family Reintegration/Group Escort

- 1. The youth is on Adaptation or Transformation LAMOD stage  Yes  No
- 2. The youth has been found guilty by the Code of Conduct Committee within the last 30 days of Youth/Youth assault with injury; Youth/Staff assault with injury; Contraband involving positive drug screen, cell phone or weapon  Yes  No
- 3. The youth has been found guilty by the Code of Conduct Committee within the last 90 days of escape  Yes  No
- 4. The youth is currently on a Behavior Intervention Plan  Yes  No
- 5. The youth currently has a detainer  Yes  No

#### Required Signatures

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Case Manager Group Leader

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
School Principal Specialized Treatment Provider

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Specialized Treatment Provider Facility Treatment Director

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Manager Probation Officer and Supervisor

Facility Director:  Approved  Denied \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Facility Director

Funeral Attendance:  Approved  Denied \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Assistant Secretary