

**Policy 6.21– Facilitating Visitation for JR Youth  
Summary**

- Establishes expectations for facilitating visitation for youth to strengthen family ties

**Background:**

The new policy was drafted to support family visitation as a critical component of youth development and treatment for youth in JR, and to establish broad expectations for how visitation will be facilitated across the continuum. During drafting, the Policy Committee identified research and national standards relating to visitation and discussed the best way to implement them in JR.

**Policy Summary**

The policy addresses the need to develop of visitation schedules that support youth and family needs, the requirement that staff inform youth and visitors about visitation rules, and the expectation that facilities will establish and post visiting hours. The policy includes requirements for visiting areas, outlines requirements for approved visitors (including documentation of approved visitors), monitoring visits, and restricting visitation, including termination of visits. Specific requirements are included for community facilities, and exceptions to policy are outlined.

**Changes from Current Practice**

- The policy clarifies expectations about how JR will facilitate visitation for youth and families and should not significantly alter JR practice.

Training Required: No

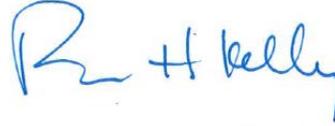
*Policy Effective Date: July 31, 2018*

**POLICY 6.21 FACILITATING VISITATION FOR JR YOUTH**

**Policy Committee Chair**

Lori Kesl  
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**Approved**



Rebecca Kelly, Acting Assistant Secretary  
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7/24/2018

**Authorizing Sources**

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**Effective Date** (*Technical Edit 12/12/19*)<sup>1</sup>  
**7/31/2018**

**Sunset Review Date**  
**7/31/2022**

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**I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

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JR believes family visitation is a critical component of development and treatment of youth in our facilities. JR supports the philosophy that families and other sources of support are critical to the success of youth. Research suggests visitation and positive family involvement are associated with better youth behavior and improved academic progress. JR will support and facilitate visitation to develop, strengthen, and maintain family and pro-social relationships to promote successful reentry to family and community.

All staff, contractors, volunteers, and interns working in or for Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) are responsible for reviewing and complying with JR policies.

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**II. POLICY**

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- 1. Staff will develop and support visitation schedules and structures best matched to a youth and their family’s needs to facilitate reunification, transition, positive bonding and communication.**
- 2. Staff must inform youth and visitors of applicable visiting rules, policies and protocols prior to allowing visitors entry into JR facilities.**
  - 2.1. Parents or guardians will receive notification at initial placement in an institution and when youth is moved to a new placement in the continuum. Notification may be done verbally or in writing.
  - 2.2. Information will be placed into youth handbooks at each facility.
- 3. Visiting hours established by each facility will be posted in a visible area in living units, general areas and visiting areas.**

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<sup>1</sup> 12/12/19 Technical Edit: Updated DSHS references to DCYF.

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- 4. The visitation areas will provide for informal communication, including opportunity for physical contact, except in instances of substantiated and documented security risks. (ACA 4-JCF-3A-20)**
  - 4.1. Sexual behavior or sexual contact is prohibited during visitation.
- 5. Each facility must have a location available for legal visits, as needed.**
  - 5.1. Attorney-client privilege will be honored for youth meeting with a youth's attorney of record or JR Legal Services.
- 6. Each facility must have a location available which is appropriate for small children or younger visitors, as needed.**
  - 6.1. JR will provide family friendly activities for young visitors, and will supply materials to support engagement, including but not limited to books, games, and interactive toys.

**APPROVED VISITORS**

- 7. Visitors should be integral to the youth's case plan. Those persons include the following:**
  - 7.1. Family members, including but not limited to: parents, siblings, children of youth, the other parent of the youth's child, legal guardians, members of stepfamilies, surrogate parents, or extended family members;
  - 7.2. Youth's assigned attorney;
  - 7.3. Persons involved in treatment planning, including but not limited to mentors, transition resources, placement options, or representatives of tribal governments; and
  - 7.4. Other persons, including non-family community members and identified natural supports, as approved on a case-by-case basis by the youth's case manager and reviewed with final approval by a facility administrator or designee.
- 8. Youth who have children will be encouraged and allowed to visit with their child.**
- 9. Youth may receive visits from approved children under age 18.**
  - 9.1. Children under 18 must be supervised directly during visitation by an approved adult.
  - 9.2. Children under 18 must have parent or guardian permission in order to visit.
- 10. Visitors will be reviewed and approved by the case manager and facility administrator or designee.**
  - 10.1. Approved visitors will be documented and maintained in the Client Relationship Manager in ACT.
- 11. All visitors will be screened consistent with local protocols.**
- 12. All visitors will register upon entry into the facility. (ACA 4-JCF-3A-19)**
  - 12.1. Approved visitors will sign the facility's Visitation Expectations/Guidelines.
- 13. All adult visitors will be required to show a picture ID prior to entry.**

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**MONITORING VISITS**

**14. Staff will ensure that their conduct is appropriate during visitation, in alignment with Policy 1.20, *Establishing Standards of Conduct for Staff*.**

14.1. Staff must treat youth and families with respect, courtesy, and dignity while in the visiting room.

14.2. Staff must behave in a professional manner during visitation.

14.3. Staff will use respectful and non-judgmental language when interacting with youth and families.

**15. Staff will supervise all visits in person.**

15.1. Cameras may not be used to replace in-person supervision by staff.

**16. Each facility will document visits that occur for each youth.**

**17. Youth searches may be conducted after a visit in accordance with Policy 5.70, *Conducting Searches*.**

**18. Visitors and their belongings may be subject to search prior to the visit in accordance with Policy 5.70, *Conducting Searches*.**

**RESTRICTING VISITATION**

**19. Visitation may be restricted for the following reasons:**

19.1. The visitor has violated JR rules, policies or procedures;

19.2. The court or DOC has ordered that the person not visit;

19.3. There is substantiated, documented evidence that the visitor poses a threat to the safety of the juvenile or the security of the facility (ACA 4-JCF-3A-19)

19.4. The youth or the youth's parent or legal guardian has requested that the person not visit.

**20. Restriction or denial of visitation must not be used as a delayed consequence for a youth's behavior.**

20.1. If there is an immediate or current threat of harm to self or others or to the facility, then a planned visit may be canceled. The cancellation must be documented in an Incident Report in ACT.

**21. Youth may terminate a visit at any time.**

**22. Staff will have the discretion to terminate a visit if there is:**

22.1. Inappropriate physical contact, including violation of PREA standards

22.2. Possession of contraband

22.3. Behavior by anyone during the visit that may cause harm to the visitor, youth, staff, or others in the area.

**23. If a visit is terminated, staff must notify the Officer of the Day (OD) and provide a reason for the termination. Staff must document the justification on an incident report prior to leaving shift.**

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**24. JR will inform youth and visitors verbally and in writing when a decision is made to restrict visitation. Notification of restriction will include reason, type, time frames (if known), and information about the appeal process. (ACA 4-JCF-3A-09)**

**25. Youth and other individuals may appeal restriction of visitation. (ACA 4-JCF-3A-09)**

25.1. Youth may appeal restricted visitation by using Policy 2.10, *Handling Youth Complaints*.

25.2. Family members or others who are restricted from visitation with youth may appeal the restriction.

25.2.1. Appeals must be in writing to the Superintendent, Regional Administrator, or designee.

25.2.2. If the response is unsatisfactory, the decision may be further appealed in writing to the Director or designee. The Director's or designee's decision is final.

**COMMUNITY FACILITY**

**26. Each CF will have a local protocol for allowing items to be brought into the program.**

**27. Drop-in visits are not encouraged, and may be restricted due to program activities.**

**EXCEPTIONS**

**28. Each facility must make arrangements to accommodate visits occurring outside of specified visiting hours for families who have barriers to visits during those hours. Visits outside of specified hours will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis.**

**29. Each institution and community facility must facilitate visits for families who do not currently visit due to barriers such as transportation, and may use DCYF-approved technology such as videoconferencing to do so.**

29.1. If families do not have access to technology, families may use the resources of the local JR office with approval from the Superintendent, Regional Administrator or designee.

29.2. Facility case managers will collaborate with families and parole staff to schedule the visit at the respective local JR office.

29.3. Parole staff will be present to facilitate approved use of DCYF technology.

29.4. Staff will not use personal phones for facilitated visitation.

**30. Families who do not speak English as their first language must be accommodated to support visitation.**

30.1. Information about visitation must be translated to a family's primary language in accordance with Policy 2.50, *Accessing Interpreter and Translation Services For Youth & Families*.

30.2. Staff must arrange for a translator to support communication between the family and staff during the visit. Staff may use DCYF phone translation services as needed.

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III. DEFINITIONS

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**Contraband:** An article or item which a residential youth is prohibited from obtaining or possessing by statute, rule, regulation, policy or order of a court, including items altered by the youth without authorization.

**Restricted Property:** Items which may jeopardize the safety, health, security, or treatment of youth, staff, visitors or of a facility. Restricted property may include contraband, but not all restricted property is contraband.

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IV. REFERENCES

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ACA Standards

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V. RELATED JR POLICIES

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Policy 1.20 – Establishing Standards of Conduct for Staff

Policy 5.70 – Conducting Searches

Policy 2.10 – Handling Youth Complaints

Policy 6.20 – Managing Residential Youth Communications

Policy 2.50 – Accessing Interpreter and Translation Services For Youth & Families

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