

Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services

Chapter 2: Professional Practices	Policy # 2.7	Page: 1 of 4
Subject: Media and Public Information	Standards: ACA: 4-JCF6G-03, 04 3-JDF-1A-31, DSCYF #115	
Effective Date: 12/15/08	Revised Date: 6/27/14	

- I. PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to ensure access to information from and about the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services is well coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the media and the public.

- II. POLICY: All staff members shall strive to maintain integrity and credibility with the general public and with those persons and organizations legitimately involved with Division programs and facilities.

- III. PROCEDURES:
 - A. Media Relations: All issues related to the media and contacts from their representatives (reporters, producers, editors, etc.) including phone calls, emails, text messages or communication through social media must immediately be referred to the Director's Office. The Director or his/her designee will address all media issues in consultation with the Department's Community Relations Coordinator, Office of the Secretary.

 - B. News Media Visits: Visits from the news media are permitted and shall be handled directly through the Office of the Director. The Director or designee shall:
 1. Notify the Department's Community Relations Coordinator.
 2. Allow media access to program areas of Division facilities and programs as long as access does not compromise safety, security or confidentiality of youth.
 3. Escort media whenever in a DYRS facility.
 4. Preserve the youth's individual right to privacy and confidentiality.
 5. Portray a factual picture of the Division facilities and/or programs.
 6. Ensure that representatives of the news media are aware of security restrictions.

 - C. Media Statements: News statements on legislation or government policy affecting DYRS, any of its units, programs, services policies or any other aspect of the Department are the responsibility of the Department. All interviews or statements to the media regarding secure care or community services programs MUST be pre-approved by the Division Director or designee. No person may speak to the media about Division programs, policy, units or facilities without prior approval from the Division Director or designee.

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D. Reporting Possible Media Exposure: All DYRS staff are required to contact the Director or designee of any incidents that may be picked up by the media which is specifically outlined in the DYRS Policy on Reportable Events. This includes incidences involving youth currently in our care, incidences in which youth previously not in our care have been taken into state custody, or stories involving a DSCYF worker, foster care/adoption parent, contracted service provider or child care provider. If it is an emergency situation (i.e. critical incident or child death) the Director should be notified immediately. The Director will notify the Department's Community Relations Coordinator.

E. Communication Standards:

1. DYRS welcomes media inquiries and responds to them in an accurate, thorough and timely manner. All media requests MUST be forwarded to the Director's Office. The Director or designee will determine who can best fulfill the request and notify the Department's Community Relations Coordinator.
2. Youth may not be interviewed or photographed for news coverage connected with their delinquency charges.
3. Youth may be interviewed or photographed for news coverage of the facility programs, with the signed consent of the youth and his/her parent/guardian and/or attorney.
4. No information on youth or their charges may be given to the media.

F. Contact with the Public: Staff contact with the public is expected to be conducted with professionalism. All staff shall receive special training to ensure prompt, courteous and correct responses to inquiries. This training shall include:

1. Confidentiality.
2. Public information legislation.
3. Approved telephone procedures.
4. Basic instruction in policies relating to contact with the public.
5. Instruction on how to respond to questions or complaints from the public regarding issues of concern, suggestions for improvement, policy and practices.

G. Public Access to Facilities: In accordance with the established policy, the following specific procedures are required for public access:

1. Approval shall be given by the Superintendent/Administrator.
2. A designated staff person will conduct approved tours.
3. Request for tours must be in writing, including a specific date and time, listing the first and last names of all participants, and stating the reason for the request.

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4. Tours will be limited to a schedule that provides the least interference to the operations of the Division facilities.
- H. Release of Official Information: Individual staff members receiving requests for release of information from groups mentioned in this policy statement shall forward all such requests to the Director.
1. All official information and press releases referring to DSCYF, the Division and program or facility policy, programming or conditions shall be issued only by DSCYF or a person specifically authorized by DSCYF.
- I. Confidentiality of Clients: Federal and State Laws, as well as Department policy, require that all client information be kept confidential. Therefore, DYRS staff cannot confirm nor deny any child is in our care. Question from media or members of the public about cases in which the Department might be involved with should be forwarded to the Division Director or designee.
- J. News Releases: DYRS issues many different forms of news releases to help keep Delawareans and others aware of the activities and accomplishments within its programs. All ideas for possible media coverage should be forwarded to the Director or designee at least seven (7) days prior to the event.
- K. Photo/Video Policies: Each facility and Community Services unit has a digital camera. In order to use one of the cameras, it is important to complete a sign in/sign out sheet to accurately track usage of the cameras. The pictures should be downloaded and deleted from the camera. A copy of the pictures/video should be sent to the Department's Community Relations Coordinator for archiving and possible use in external communication materials.
- DYRS respects the confidentiality of its clients. If you are taking pictures/video of youth, you must shoot from the neck down or from behind. If it is imperative to take head shots of youth, you must get written permission from parents (consent forms are available) and the Director or designee.
- L. Website Updates/Maintenance: It is important that all the information available to the public online is current and up-to-date. At a minimum, each facility and Community Services should review and update any materials online every six months. Of course, updates can be made at any time throughout the year.

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To update, remove or add something to the DSCYF internet or extranet web sites, you must first get approval from the Director or designee. The materials must then be emailed electronically to the Director or designee for approval by the Community Relations Coordinator. Once approved, the Community Relations Coordinator will forward the requests to the DSCYF webmasters and CC the requestor to notify them that their request has been approved and will be added in no more than five days.

Review Date:	Reviewed By:
6/27/14	Nancy S. Dutz