


**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES
JUVENILE INSTITUTIONS**

Subject: Youth Visitation		Policy Number: 3	
Number of Pages: 4		Section: XV	
Attachments		Related Standards & References	
A. Visitation Schedule B. Youth Visitation Form C. Visitation Rules and Regulations D. Visitor Dress Code		ACA 3-JTS-5H-12 ACA 3-JTS-5H-13 ACA 3-JTS-5H-15 ACA 3-JTS-5H-16	
Effective Date: May 11, 2007 Revised: August 28, 2008		Approved:  _____ Kathy Pittman, Director	

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services, that each youth be allowed regular visitation with their family, attorney, and other pertinent individuals, so that the practice of building relationships can be fostered during their stay at a DYS facility, and most importantly carried over, and implemented in their home communities. In order to encourage contact between youth and their families and other significant individuals, each facility shall provide opportunity and make accommodations within reason for visitation. Visitation shall not be permanently denied but may be temporarily limited due to overriding security considerations.

II. DEFINITIONS

As used in this policy and procedure, the following definitions apply:

- A. **Visitation Log** – A bound logbook used to maintain a record of all individuals visiting youth at a DYS facility.
- B. **Authorized Visitor** - Any person approved and/or listed by the youth's Community Services Counselor as approved.
- C. **Restricted Visitor** - Any person who the Facility Administrator or Community Counselor determines cannot visit due to current or prior safety and security concerns.
- D. **Contraband** - Any item(s) introduced or found in the facility, including improperly possessed drugs (whether illegal or legal) and weapons, that are expressly prohibited by those legally charged with the responsibility for the administration and/or operation of the facility.
- E. **Frisk search** - To search one's person for something concealed by passing the hands quickly over clothes and/or through pockets.

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III. PROCEDURE

- A. All youth shall be informed during Orientation of the rules and regulations governing visitation. As well each youth shall receive a copy of the rules and regulations, which are outlined in the Student handbook. (see policy XIII.1: Admission, Intake and Orientation) Parents shall be informed of visitation rules and guidelines in writing.
- B. Youth in confinement shall be eligible to receive visitors unless there is a compelling risk to the safety of other youth, staff, or visitors or to the security of the facility. Regular visitation is not a privilege that can be restricted for disciplinary reasons.
- C. Only those individuals identified as authorized visitors by the youth's Community Services Counselor or Facility Administrator shall be provided access to a DYS Facility. A limit of four (4) individuals shall be imposed per visitation period. Youth may be visited by the following person(s), under the following conditions only:
 - 1. Parents and/or legal guardians with proper picture identification.
 - 2. Grandparents with proper picture identification.
 - 3. Siblings of all ages, however those over 16 must provide proper picture identification.
 - 4. Spouses with proper picture identification and marriage certificate.
 - 5. Children of youth, accompanied by an approved visitor.
 - 6. Youth's Attorney with proper picture identification.
 - 7. Clergy (from youth's home community) with proper picture identification.
 - 8. Religious groups must have pre-authorization through the Facility Administrator and must coordinate visits through the Campus Chaplain.

NOTE: No other Visitors shall be permitted to enter the premises without the express authorization of the Facility Administrator.

- D. The above listed individuals may visit a youth according to the established Visitation Schedule (Attachment A). All visits that fall outside of the timeframes established in the schedule must first be authorized by the Facility Administrator.
 - 1. Authorized visitors may request a special one (1) hour visit during non school hours by contacting the Facility Administrator.
 - 2. Special provisions may be made for persons traveling long distances, making visits to hospitalized youth, making visits to youth under disciplinary sanction, and attorneys visiting clients. (ACA 3-JTS-5H-15)

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3. Special visits shall not substitute for a youth's normal availability or allocation of scheduled visiting time.
 4. Attorney/youth visits shall be held in privacy, so that confidentiality may be preserved. (ACA 3-JTS-5H-13)
- E. All visitors must sign in on the Visitation Logbook, which shall at minimum notate the visitor's name, name of youth, relationship to youth, date and time of entry. Upon exit each visitor shall note time of departure in the visitation Logbook.
- F. As well they must sign the Youth Visitation Form (Attachment B) acknowledging that they understand and will abide by the established facility visitation rules and guidelines. (ACA 3-JTS-5H-16) Any visitor refusing to sign the Visitation form shall be denied visitation.
- G. Visitors may not bring food to the campus. Students shall eat in the cafeteria on the day(s) of visitation as scheduled.
- H. All visitors shall be provided a means of identification that will be worn conspicuously for the duration of the visit.
- I. Searches (ACA 3-JTS-5H-16)
1. Visitors are subject to the search (frisk) of their person, if and when there is reason to believe that the individual is attempting to give unauthorized items to a youth.
 2. The property and vehicle of those visiting the campus are subject to search at any time.
 3. Any unauthorized item identified as contraband shall be confiscated and returned to the individual upon departure from the campus. Exceptions being items prohibited by law; such items shall be surrendered to the proper Authorities.
- J. The following guidelines are to be observed by visitors. The facility rules and regulations governing visitation shall be published and made available to staff, youth and visitors. (ACA 3-JTS-5H-12)
1. Cameras are not permitted on campus.
 2. Persons suspected to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs shall be denied visits and shall be reported to local authorities.
 3. DYS reserves the right to inspect all vehicles entering DYS property. Law Enforcement shall be notified if contraband or weapons are suspected or found.

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4. Visitors displaying rude, aggressive, profane or other unacceptable behavior shall not be allowed to visit.
 5. This is a smoke-free campus: Smoking is not permitted. Any visitor found giving youth tobacco products or flame producing devices of any type shall have their visitation time temporarily or permanently discontinued.
 6. DYS reserves the right to terminate a visit at any time as determined by the Facility Administrator or designee.
 7. Visitors wearing gang related or other inappropriate clothing and/or using gang related gestures shall not be permitted to visit. The visitor dress code must be followed at all times (Attachment D).
 8. Visitors may not directly give or exchange any items with youth during visitation; including but not limited to money, medication, packages, food, or clothing.
 9. Youth are not permitted to have any type of medication in their possession. All prescriptions shall be handled by the facility Medical Staff. Visitors shall not give medication of any kind directly to youth.
 10. Violations of the visitation rules may result in temporary or permanent visitation restrictions.
- K. The visitation area shall permit communication, including the opportunity for acceptable levels of physical contact. Surroundings should have the surveillance necessary to allow for the availability of privacy while assuring appropriate security.
- L. A denial of visitation may be made when staff has reason to believe that the safety and security of the youth, staff, general public, or the facility/program may be in jeopardy. The Facility Administrator shall approve a denial of visitation as follows:
1. A decision to deny visitation shall be given to the youth, in writing, and shall include, at a minimum, the name of the restricted visitor, the time and date of the denial of visitation, the reasons for the limitation, the name of the person making the decision, and the right of the youth to appeal the decision to the Institutions Director.
 2. A legal custodian seeking to block visitation by a family member shall be required to obtain a court order that shall be honored by the facility.
 3. The youth's Community Counselor shall be notified of the denial of visitation, the name of the restricted visitor(s) and the reason for the limitation.
 4. Youth shall not be required to visit with individuals that they do not wish to see; however, the youth may be requested, but not required, to put his/her reason for refusing the visit in writing. A copy shall be forwarded to

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the Facility Administrator and the youth's Community Counselor.

- M. In order to ensure that contact between male and female youth is prevented at all times including during designated visitation times, separate visitation areas/rooms shall be designated by the Facility Administrator. As well, the doors to such areas shall remain staff secure at all times and staff shall take precautions to monitor the flow and traffic to and from these designated areas. When movement of male or female youth for visitation purposes is taking place, staff should be careful to prevent youth from being within reach of one another and having contact. (i.e., staff moving male youth should temporarily halt movement by remaining in place until the movement of female youth is complete or is no longer taking place in the same general area.)