

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services  
(CCDCFS)  
Policy Statement**

**Policy Chapter:** Substitute Care  
**Policy Number:** 6.01.13  
**Policy Name:** Youth Awaiting Placement

**Original Effective Date:** 07/31/2023  
**Revision Date(s):**  
**Current Revision Date:**  
**Approved By:** Jacqueline M. Fletcher

**PURPOSE:** There are standard operating procedures for any individual entering a County building. These include metal detection and scanning of items as deemed necessary. However, for the safety and protection of youth under our care, staff, and visitors, this policy offers guidance regarding the inventory and retention of a youth's personal items and the expectations for youth while at Jane Edna Hunter (JEH) building awaiting placement.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) staff and youth, under our care, awaiting placement.

### **POLICY**

CCDCFS is cognizant of the importance of and the need for personal safety for all staff and visitors and ensures safety precautions are provided at all times, especially in matters involving a youth awaiting placement.

### **PROCEDURES**

#### **A. Youth Entering the Building**

1. Youth arriving at the Jane Edna Hunter building who may spend time in the childcare room will be asked to place their belongings, including all cell phones, in a tray before entering the back security area. Prior to entering the security area and placing their belongings in the tray, CCDCFS staff will inform youth they will not have access to their cell phone until a placement has been located in accordance with Section A(5) below. After placing items in the tray, youth will then go through a metal detector and their belongings will be searched. Their belongings, including all cell phones, will be inventoried and placed into a bag, and securely stored in a locker by DCFS staff. Youth may be permitted by

staff, on a case-by-case basis, to retain safe and reasonable therapeutic items, comfort items, etc.

2. Youth will be asked to sign an inventory list of their possessions that will be retained by the agency. The checklist will be placed in the bag with the possessions and a copy will be given to the Worker of Record (WOR) and the youth.
3. An approved contact list (i.e., attorney, GAL, custodian, service provider, etc.) will be jointly developed between the youth and WOR. Youth will be permitted to contact these individuals while they await placement via agency phone. Staff shall initiate dialing the phone number.
4. The storage lockers used to store youths' personal items are the property of CCDCFS. The lockers and the contents of all the lockers are subject to random search at any time without regard to whether there is a reasonable suspicion that any locker or its contents contain evidence of a violation of a criminal statute, building rule or CCDCFS policy.
5. When a placement is identified, personal items that are allowable to the placement provider will be returned to the youth to take to placement and the applicable inventory list shall be updated accordingly.
6. The items that are not allowable at the placement setting, including cell phones, will remain secured in a locker until the time that a youth is allowed by a provider, or parent upon reunification, to have their items in their possession. At that time, the WOR will return the items to youth and will have the youth review the inventory list and sign to verify that all items were returned.
7. For youth arriving at JEH pursuant to Juvenile Rule 6, CCDCFS staff shall confirm with the police officer transporting the youth that the youth was searched prior to entering the building. If the youth was not searched, CCDCFS staff will ask the police officer to conduct a search prior to transferring custody of the youth to CCDCFS.

## **B. After Inventory and Retention of Belongings**

1. Youth is entered into the Child Care Room Tracking System.
2. CCDCFS Staff will review the "Expectations for Youth" document with school aged youth and the youth will be provided a copy. This document outlines the expectations for them as they await placement.

3. Health screening questions will be asked of all youth by childcare staff to determine the need for follow up testing or treatment and will dictate next steps of childcare staff.
4. If a youth presents with a symptom of a communicable illness, they will be asked to wear a mask and may be separated from other youth if deemed necessary. (*Childcare staff will utilize CDC guidance*). Childcare staff will make the WOR aware of the location of the youth at the number provided on the log in sheet if separation is deemed necessary.
5. Immediately following the health screening questions, the WOR will complete a "Care Information Sheet." The Care Information Sheet will gather the information about the youth that is critical to his/her well-being during their time in the building. As new information is learned, the assigned worker will share this information with the childcare supervisor.
6. On occasion, youth do leave the childcare room without permission, and enter the bay or other areas of the building. Childcare staff, or those providing coverage, will monitor these youth, while redirecting them, to ensure their safety. They will seek assistance from Protective Service, the on-site Sheriff's deputy, and/or other law enforcement when necessary.
7. If a youth has a history of being AWOL or a history of, or suspicion of being a victim of, human trafficking, he or she will be placed in a room separate from other youth until placement is located, if possible. If a youth goes AWOL from the building, the AWOL protocol described in CCDCFS Policy 6.06.03 (Missing, Abducted or Runaway Youth in Care) will immediately be started, including notifying the local police department.
8. If the youth is taking prescribed medication, a plan will be put in place to ensure that correct dosages are provided at the correct times. The WOR will ensure that the child has an ample supply of the necessary medication(s). A youth's assigned worker may be asked to provide assistance with distributing their youth's medication(s) and/or ensuring the dosages and times to be provided are accurate. (Please refer to CCDCFS Policy 9.04.03 Psychotropic and Opiate Medication for guidance on these types of medications).

**SEE ALSO:**

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services Policies and Procedures Manual**

Policy 6.06.03 Missing, Abducted or Runaway Youth in Care

**FORMS:**

Expectations for Youth

Care Information Sheet

Approved Contact List Form