
Confidentiality and Release of Information

958.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose is to establish and implement written policy and procedures for maintaining confidentiality and for the appropriate release of information. This policy applies to all juvenile facility staff.

958.2 AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES

- Board of State and Community Corrections Title 15 § 1362;
- Juvenile Facility Services Policy: Confidentiality;
- Media and Public Relations Policy;
- Welfare and Institutions Code § 827.

958.3 POLICY

Records of youth shall be safeguarded from unauthorized and improper disclosure and shall be treated as confidential information.

958.4 CONFIDENTIALITY

Only information that is considered relevant and necessary, and contributes to the accuracy and utility of the youth's record shall be collected and/or contained in the file. Probation department records, legal files, and juvenile facility records are confidential and shall not be given to or discussed with anyone by juvenile facility staff, except with persons who have an official right and need to know such information in the performance of their duties, i.e., probation officers, the court, law enforcement or others by court order. Refer to Section 827 of the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC).

Youth shall only have access to their own file or electronic records.

Staff shall not take any juvenile facility records off the premises without prior authorization from the facility manager(s).

It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that all records are handled and stored in a secure manner which protects the records from theft, loss, and destruction.

Any written entry into the youth's record shall be dated and signed or initialed by the staff making the entry.

Youth housed in juvenile facilities are entitled to anonymity. Discussion of youth outside the juvenile facility or with any person(s) not entitled to the information is prohibited.

All photography of youth must be approved by the facility manager(s). Photographs taken within the facility in which the youth's identity is apparent shall not be shown to any person who does not have an official right and need to know.

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Youth or parents requesting information about a psychological evaluation shall be referred to the supervising probation officer (SPO) or the deputy probation officer handling the youth's case.

Volunteers, unless assigned record-keeping responsibilities, shall not have access to daily or behavior logs, caseworker notes, legal or juvenile facility files. They shall be notified regarding the need for confidentiality and that in terms of confidentiality, they are obligated in the same manner as staff.

958.5 PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS

Parents/legal guardians are entitled to information regarding their youth's behavior and progress in the program. All telephonic inquiries from parents/legal guardians shall be directed to the duty officer (DO) or unit SPO who shall secure the needed information from juvenile facility staff, school or vocational personnel. Inquiries at the time of visiting, if not adequately answered by staff, shall be referred to the DO/SPO.

958.6 PRESS/PUBLIC

Any information given to the press or public shall be provided or approved at the administrative level per Media and Public Relations Policy.

958.7 MEDICAL CONFIDENTIALITY

Questions of a medical nature, including those from parents/legal guardians, shall be referred to on-site health care staff, or in their absence, a DO/SPO. Refer to Juvenile Facility Services Policy: Confidentiality.

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