

**Windsor County Youth Services  
Sample Policies & Procedures for Shelter**

**REFERRAL/ADMISSION PROCESS**

**507** WCYS shall accept a child/youth into care only when a current intake evaluation has been completed. The evaluation shall include information and assessments regarding the family, the child/youth's developmental, social, behavioral, psychological, and medical histories, allergies and any special needs.

**508** WCYS shall accept and serve only those children/youth whose needs can be met by the services provided by the program.

**509** WCYS shall have written referral and admission policies and procedures.

**510** WCYS shall ensure that the child/youth, his/her parent(s) and custodian are provided reasonable opportunity to participate in the admission process and decisions, and that due consideration is given to any questions/concerns.

**511** WCYS shall provide children/youth, families, and custodians upon placement a clear and simple written statement that includes:

- The procedure to report complaints or grievances, including timelines and accessible reporting formats;
- Assurance that the complaint may be submitted to someone other than the individual named in the complaint;
- Assurance that retaliation will not be tolerated;
- An opportunity for the child/youth, family member, custodian or staff member to present his or her version of events and present witnesses;
- A process for informing the complainant of the results;
- A process for appeal;
- Contact information for the licensing authority
- Contact information for the State-designated protection and advocacy system.

**512** WCYS shall ensure that upon placement, each child/youth is asked if he/she has any physical complaints and is checked for obvious signs or illness, fever, rashes, bruises and injury. The results of this interview shall be documented and kept in the child/youth's record.

**513** Depending on the age, gender and needs of the child/youth an inventory and/or search of a child/youth's belongings as part of the admission process activity will be conducted by a same gender staff person as the child/youth being admitted and in child/youth's presence.

**514** WCYS shall obtain the written informed consent of a child/youth, their parent(s) and custodian before the child/youth is photographed and/or recorded for research and/or program publicity purposes.

**515** WCYS shall assign a staff member to orient the child/youth and his/her parent(s) and custodian, to life at the program; including a verbal review of emergency evacuation procedures and the child/youth's rights and program expectations.

**516** WCYS shall make available to each child/youth, parent(s), and custodian, a simply written list of rules and expectations governing child/youth's behavior.

**517** WCYS will inform the child/youth, parent(s) and custodian of the policies and procedures regarding the use of restraint and seclusion. While this orientation will include the following content, the mode of delivery is dependent on the population served.

- Explanation of de-escalation techniques staff members may employ to defuse the situation in an attempt to avoid the use of restraint or seclusion;
- Description of situations and criteria for the use of restraint or seclusion;
- Who is authorized to approve and initiate the use of restraint or seclusion.
- A description of the restraint techniques authorized for use;
- A viewing of the rooms used for seclusion;
- The protocol for the monitoring of the child/youth's health and well-being during the restraint, including time frames;
- The protocol for supervision and monitoring of the child/youth's health and well-being while secluded, including time frames;
- The decision making process used by staff for the discontinuation of the use of restraint or seclusion;
- The internal grievance procedure to report inappropriate use restraint or seclusion;
- Contact information for the Licensing Authority.

**518** WCYS will obtain written acknowledgment from the child/youth's parent(s) and custodian that they have been informed of the program's policies and procedures regarding the use of restraint and seclusion.

**519** WCYS if using restraint or seclusion shall offer the child/youth, parent(s) and custodian the opportunity to provide information about the child/youth that may help prevent the use of restraint and seclusion.

**520** WCYS shall gather and assess the following information to develop an individualized de-escalation plan for each child/youth to avoid the use of restraint and seclusion.

- The child/youth's history of violence
- The child/youth's history of suicidal ideation attempts;
- Events that may trigger aggressive or suicidal behavior;
- Techniques to regain control, self-regulate, self-soothe that have been successful in the past;
- Preexisting medical conditions or physical disabilities that place the child/youth at increased risk of harm;
- History of trauma that places the child/youth at increased risk of psychological harm if he/she is restrained or secluded.

## **180 Intake Procedures**

Effective Date: 10/21/1999

Revision Date: 7/14/2004

Intake is open to all youth ages 13 to 18 who seek the services of the project.

Service is available 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

The person on duty will interview the youth when he or she arrives. This person will get basic background and identify any emergency needs.

The counselor explains the services of the shelter and the requirements for participation.

If there appears to be a concern or a problem the Executive Director or the Program Director should be consulted. This includes any of the questions on the intake form which deal with aggression, sex offense, and mental health / suicidal talk.

A supervisor must be consulted prior to giving an okay to admit a potential resident to the program. Usually youth with severe emotional disturbance, a history of violent behavior, a history of sexual misconduct, or imminent danger of suicide cannot be adequately cared for by shelter staff. Referrals will be made for these teens.

Upon admission each client is asked to leave all money and valuables in the office closet which remains locked at all times.

Each client is shown a list of shelter rules, these rules are explained and clients are reminded of the importance of the rules of the house.

### **Drug and Alcohol Screening**

After the client intake is completed, make a note in the client chart regarding initial finding on drug and/or alcohol screening.

## **181 Parental Notifications**

Effective Date: 10/24/1999

Revision Date: 7/14/2004

The parents of all youth who arrive at the shelter are notified as soon as possible of the youth's whereabouts, preferable within 24 hours. In all cases, this is only done with the agreement and approval of the youth.

If the youth is at risk for any reason, the shelter staff shall delay the notification process; the safety of the youth shall always be given the highest priority.

In all cases, notification to parents or appropriate authorities shall take place within 72 hours of the youth's arrival at the shelter.

## **182 Referrals**

Effective Date: 10/24/1999

Revision Date: 7/14/2004

Residents can walk-in, call, or be referred to the shelter.

- 1) Listen attentively and actively. Remember that the youth is in crisis and may have a hard time discussing his or her situation
- 2) Find out if the youth is presently safe. If the youth needs transportation call the crisis team (phone numbers are contained in an Emergency Manual located at both facilities). If not safe call the police.
- 3) Make all notes on all pertinent information received; include names, dates and other facts.

## **282 Suicidal Youth**

Effective Date: 10/24/1999

Revision Date: 7/14/2004

If a staff member suspects a resident of having suicidal thoughts the staff member should spend some time with the youth discussing what is going on. **DO NOT LEAVE THE RESIDENT ALONE** if you suspect that he or she may make an attempt. Emergency services should be called for a consultation or to make a referral.

## **284 Supervision of Youth**

Effective Date: 10/24/1999

Revision Date: 2/23/2009

WCYS requires at least one staff person on duty at all times. The staff to client ratio for shelter clients should not exceed 4 clients per staff. This ensures proper supervision of residents at all times, and ensures 24-hour availability of services to all youth.

One person will be on call at all times to answer any kind of emergency. In the event that there is a particularly difficult resident an extra staff person will be put on duty.

## **286 Medical Procedures**

Effective Date: 10/25/1999

Revision Date: 7/14/2004

All medicine, both prescription and non-prescription, is kept locked in the medicine cabinet in the office at all times.

Prescription medications are to be administered to residents **ONLY** when authorized by their physician

Medications are administered to residents by the staff member on duty, then recorded in the

## Medication Log.

If a resident needs immediate medical attention contact Springfield Hospital's emergency room.

If a doctor needs to see a resident we can use Ludlow Family Medicine.

WCYS staff will immediately notify the child's guardian, and their DCF caseworker (if they are not already their guardian), of any serious illness, bodily injury, or severe psychiatric episode.

The medication log will contain the following information:

Name of the resident receiving the medication.

Name of medication and dosage information

Date and time that the medication was administered

Initials of the staff member administering the medication.

## **880 Youth Accepted In Program**

Effective Date: 10/20/1999

Revision Date: 7/14/2004

Help youth to feel comfortable (e.g. if youth has been on the run, he or she may want something to eat or drink or get cleaned up).

Give the youth your immediate attention.

Go over and explain the rules, then have youth sign them. If the youth is accompanied by a parent or DCF worker, make sure the rules are agreed upon prior to their leaving the youth in our care.

Staff person will fill out the intake forms. Obtain necessary permissions if possible. Fill out the inventory sheet. Do the client ID page and take the clients picture.

## **882 Residential Services**

Effective Date: 10/24/1999

Revision Date: 07/14/2004

Mountainside House/House at 20 Mile stream:

1. Designed to provide shelter to a maximum of 16 youths (8 at Mountainside and 8 at 20 Milestream) at any one time.
2. A Resident is provided with food, clothing, bed space and personal hygiene items.
3. Resident is provided three balanced meals and two snacks per day. Withholding of a youth's meal is prohibited and cannot be part of a disciplinary action.
4. Clients have the use of a washing machine and dryer. Bed linens are washed weekly (with obvious exceptions).
5. Transportation is provided or arranged, when necessary, for residential clients.
6. Temporary shelter shall be for a 60 day maximum. Any exception to this rule will require a

team decision. This would have to be for a valid reason.

7. The shelter shall be in compliance with state and local licensing requirements.
8. WCYS staff is a mandatory reporter of any suspected child abuse or neglect. There is zero-tolerance for sexual abuse and as such will be reported. Staff will report to supervisory staff and then to the appropriate DCF district for investigation.
9. If an external investigation is required, said employee will be suspended with pay pending outcome/decision.

#### **884 Family Counseling and Aftercare**

Effective Date: 10/24/1999

Revision Date: 07/14/2004

1. Family counseling is necessary to help stabilize an otherwise disoriented family situation, and the supportive work of the counselor helps the family receive the youth back into the home.
2. Family counseling is made available to the parents of all clients.
3. Family counseling helps make the family aware that changes have to be made on both sides.
4. Weekly conferences between the counselors and Program Director serve to ensure that each youth receives the maximum benefit from the shelter's program.
5. Counseling is provided to youth and their families on a follow-up basis after residential services have been terminated. Youth are encouraged to continue counseling for a period of time after they have left the shelter. Follow up sessions are usually held once a week.
6. Follow up and aftercare counseling services are supervised by the Program Director. The continuing care agreement is supervised by the Program Director.
7. In all cases, active participation of the youth, parent and staff are encouraged to promote the best interest of the youth.
8. Youth are encouraged to drop-in or call for services if needed.
9. After care and follow-up are offered to all clients. The after care plan is completed by the primary counselor with agreement from the youth and family.

#### **994 Release Procedures**

Effective Date: 10/21/1999

Revision Date: 07/14/2004

Clients are released to parents or legal guardian upon the decision that residential services are no longer necessary.

Upon termination of residential services, the counselor is required to complete a discharge summary to be put in the client's chart. A phone call will be made within 12 hours to confirm that the client arrived safely.

#### **995 Running Away From Program**

Effective Date: 10/25/1999

Revision Date: 7/14/2004

1. Each resident has a runaway notice in his/her file. Follow these directions for initial action.

2. Log the incident in the general log as well as completing a Runaway Procedure Form.
3. Fill out an incident report.

**IF RESIDENT RETURNS:**

Cancel runaway report.

Notify legal guardian/ Parents unless permission has not been granted by the legal guardian.