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| GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE | Transmittal # 26-2 | Policy # 8.8 |
| Applicability: <input type="checkbox"/> All DJJ Users <input type="checkbox"/> Administration <input type="checkbox"/> Community Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secure Facilities | Related Standards & References: O.C.G.A. §§ 49-4A-7, 49-4A-8, 42-1-11.3 ACA Standards: 3-JDF-3C-06, 07, 11, 3-JDF-3E-04, 05, 4-JCF-3B-10, 4-JCF-3C-01, 4-JCF-3C-03, 4-JCF-3C-04, 4-JCF-4C-46 DJJ 8.5, 8.20, 16.3 | |
| Chapter 8: SAFETY, SECURITY, AND CONTROL | Effective Date: 1/29/26 Scheduled Review Date: 1/29/27 | |
| Subject: USE OF SEPARATION | Replaces: 11/8/21 | |
| Attachments: A – Cooling Off Form B – Steps to Success Plan Template | APPROVED:  <hr/> Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb, Commissioner | |

POLICY:

The Department of Juvenile Justice does not use the separation of youth as a disciplinary sanction. When separation of a youth is required to maintain safety and security of the facility, it will be time-limited and only for as long as necessary to restore order.

II. DEFINITIONS:

Approving Authority: The Approving Authority is the Facility Director, the Assistant Director, or the Administrative Duty Officer (ADO) designated by the Facility Director to authorize placement, extension, or release of youth in separation.

Behavior of Concern: A non-compliant behavior that needs to be further assessed to identify effective prevention and intervention strategies.

Cooling Off Period: A non-punitive positive behavior strategy that includes removal of the youth from programming for up to 60 minutes, with the goal of providing an opportunity for the youth to correct their behavior of concern.

Immediate Postpartum Period: The six-week period following childbirth unless extended by a physician due to complications.

Pregnant Youth: For purposes of this policy, a youth whose pregnancy has been verified by a pregnancy test or through a medical examination conducted by a physician.

Protective Measures: Actions implemented to address the needs of youth who may require protection due to perceived risk of harm from others.

| Chapter | Subject | Policy # | Page |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------|--------|
| SAFETY, SECURITY, AND CONTROL | USE OF SEPARATION | 8.8 | 2 of 7 |

Separation: Removal from general population that is involuntary and is in an area where the youth is without contact with other youth and unable to leave the room. This does not include situations such as regularly scheduled bed-time hours and medically ordered isolation.

Steps to Success (STS) Plan: An individualized written plan with targeted interventions developed to assist the youth’s transition back to general population.

III. PROCEDURES FOR USE OF SEPARATION:

A. GENERAL PROCEDURES

1. Prior to separating a youth, staff will utilize positive, corrective interventions and ensure every least-restrictive measure has been considered to allow the youth to regain composure and self-control without resorting to using separation.
2. The reasons and the behaviors leading to the use of separation must be explained to the youth.
3. Pregnant youth or youth in immediate postpartum period shall not be placed in separation. This provision does not apply to placing pregnant youth in a room by herself.
4. The youth will be removed from separation once they have demonstrated emotional and behavioral control and are assessed as being able to reenter population or once the condition requiring separation has been resolved.
5. All paperwork and supporting documentation associated with the use of separation will be maintained together and filed by month and calendar year.

B. PROTECTIVE MEASURES

1. Upon admission to a secure facility, all youth will be made aware of the process by which they may notify staff that they believe that they are at risk of harm from others in the facility. This will include the process for requesting voluntary protective measures.
2. A staff member may refer a youth for involuntary protective measures if they are aware of an imminent risk to the youth.
3. The staff member with first-hand knowledge of a voluntary protective measures request will ask the youth what they think will assure safety. The staff will then notify the Shift Supervisor of the request and complete a Special Incident Report (SIR).

| Chapter | Subject | Policy # | Page |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------|--------|
| SAFETY, SECURITY, AND CONTROL | USE OF SEPARATION | 8.8 | 3 of 7 |

4. The Shift Supervisor will notify the Director or ADO of the request. The Director or ADO will determine if protective measures and/or separation will be required to assure the youth's safety.
5. An STS Plan will be developed for youth requiring protective measures and/or separation.
6. If the protective measures require separation, the STS Plan will be developed and implemented within 4 hours of placement. The plan shall ensure at least 1 hour of out-of-room activity with others for every 5-hour period outside of sleeping hours.
7. An STS Plan for protective measures, which includes separation, must be approved by the facility Director after 24 hours of placement and every 24 hours thereafter.
8. The goal of separation as a protective measure is to resolve the reasons for separation as quickly as possible and to end the use of separation as soon as possible.
9. Youth who requested and voluntarily entered separation as a protective measure may request, at any time, to be released.

C. COOLING OFF

1. A cooling off period, not to exceed 60 minutes, may be used to temporarily remove youth from programming and provide them an opportunity to correct behaviors of concern. The cooling off period will end as soon as the youth demonstrates compliance with the rules.
2. The youth will only be placed in a sleeping room or holding cell for cooling off as a last resort and will be visually checked at least every 15 minutes. The Cooling Off Form (Attachment A) will be used when the youth is placed in a room for cooling off.
3. If the behavior of concern continues beyond the initial 60 minutes, the separation process will be initiated.

D. SEPARATION

1. When a youth has been placed on separation, staff must notify the Approving Authority within 30 minutes of placement. The Approving Authority must then authorize placement of the youth within 15 minutes of notification.

| Chapter | Subject | Policy # | Page |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------|--------|
| SAFETY, SECURITY, AND CONTROL | USE OF SEPARATION | 8.8 | 4 of 7 |

2. The Approving Authority will approve the initial use of separation for up to two (2) hours.
3. When youth are initially placed in separation, a Separation Screening will be completed in accordance with DJJ Policy 12.26, Separation Screening and Monitoring.
4. If the screening tool identifies risk factors, mental health staff will be contacted immediately to:
 - a) Describe circumstances of the separation episode;
 - b) Discuss results of the screening tool; and
 - c) Receive and implement instructions for suicide/self-harm precautions, if applicable.
5. If the screening tool identifies no risk factors, mental health staff will be notified if the youth remains in separation for two (2) hours or if risk factors emerge at any point during the separation episode.
6. Any extension of the separation period will require authorization of the Approving Authority or other required staff 15 minutes prior to the end of the currently approved separation period.
7. Separation periods will be extended in 2-hour blocks.
8. If separation is continued beyond four (4) hours, a review will occur with attempts to safely return the youth to general population at least every two (2) hours thereafter.
9. Any extension of separation that will cause the separation period to exceed 8 hours will be approved by the respective Regional Administrator.
10. Youth in separation beyond a scheduled sleep period will be assessed the following morning to determine the need for continued separation.
11. Notification to medical services staff regarding youth's placement in separation:
 - a) When the youth requires separation, a medical services staff shall be notified as soon as possible, but always within 30 minutes of approval of separation. Notification will include an assessment of the youth to medical services staff.

| Chapter | Subject | Policy # | Page |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------|--------|
| SAFETY, SECURITY, AND CONTROL | USE OF SEPARATION | 8.8 | 5 of 7 |

- b) Based on the assessment received, the medical service staff will determine what steps will be needed for further evaluation. If the youth is placed in STS with separation, medical services staff will complete a visual assessment.
- c) If the health authority determines that a full medical assessment is required, then the youth must be examined fully in the medical unit in privacy and the examination documented using the Report of Youth Injuries Addendum (DJJ 8.5, Special Incident Reporting).

12. Any staff member (with exception of JCO cadets, volunteers, and interns) may remove a youth from separation with approval from the Approving Authority within the facility. This decision will be based on the staff member's evaluation that the youth has regained self-control and no longer displays disruptive, threatening, or dangerous behavior.
13. A medical professional or Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP) may recommend to the Approving Authority that a youth be released from separation based on clinical concerns. If the Approving Authority has concerns regarding the release, they will work with medical/behavioral health staff to develop alternate plans to address the safety concerns without use of separation.
14. If the youth has been unable to de-escalate and regroup after 24 hours of separation, to include sleep hours, or it is determined that continued separation is necessary, the youth will be recommended for a Steps to Success (STS) Plan.
15. Separation in excess of 24 hours will only be authorized by the respective Assistant Deputy Commissioner.

E. STEPS TO SUCCESS (STS)

1. STS allows youth in extended separation to:
 - a) Participate in programs, services, and activities within a controlled setting;
 - b) Receive, complete, and process individual interventions for making a change, if applicable; and/or,
 - c) Make a gradual stepdown to general population, programs, services, or activities while returning to separation at other times.

| Chapter | Subject | Policy # | Page |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------|--------|
| SAFETY, SECURITY, AND CONTROL | USE OF SEPARATION | 8.8 | 6 of 7 |

2. In consultation with security, programs, medical, behavioral health, education, recreation, and/or other facility staff, as needed, the Approving Authority shall lead the development of an STS Plan.
3. As part of the plan, youth are expected to participate in intervention(s) to help them evaluate the situation(s) that led to placement on STS.
4. All STS Plans will be approved by the respective Regional Administrator. Any STS Plans which require separation more than 8 continuous hours will be approved by the respective Assistant Deputy Commissioner prior to implementation.
5. Once the STS Plan is approved, reviews shall be conducted every 24 hours to assess the youth's behavior and continued need for STS with the goal being to return youth to general population by gradual step-down or immediate release, as soon as they are able and approved.
6. Youth who remain on STS will have their plan modified and adjusted as needed.
7. The Multidisciplinary Team will conduct a review for youth placed on an STS Plan.

F. MONITORING OF SEPARATED YOUTH

1. Separation Alerts
 - A. In all instances when a youth has been placed on separation for any amount of time, the Approving Authority will ensure that the separation period is properly documented using the Guard1 system.
 - B. The separation alert must be set within 30 minutes of the youth being separated and placed in their room, ensuring the actual time of separation is documented.
 - C. The separation alert must be closed within 30 minutes of the youth being returned to general population, ensuring that the actual time of release is documented.
2. Youth in separation will receive at least one (1) visit daily from a qualified health care professional, or health-trained staff member (Behavioral Health or Medical) – unless medical/behavioral health attention is needed more frequently.

| Chapter | Subject | Policy # | Page |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------|--------|
| SAFETY, SECURITY, AND CONTROL | USE OF SEPARATION | 8.8 | 7 of 7 |

3. Youth in separation during scheduled school periods will be visited by education two (2) times per day to provide classroom assignments and to allow for questions regarding the assignments.
4. Youth in separation who are placed in their room or otherwise placed in a secured room will be observed, and behaviors documented, at irregular 15-minute intervals or in accordance with any suicide precautions that are in place for the youth.

LOCAL OPERATING PROCEDURES REQUIRED: YES

- Describe the process for STS Plan Development
- Identify location and staff responsible for maintaining separation documentation