

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
JUVENILE JUSTICE SERVICES
POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policy No.: 04-03 Subject: Resident Mail	Effective: 08/11/04	Revision Date: 06/02/2021
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I. Policy Statement

Minors in Division facilities/programs shall have the right to communicate through written correspondence with members of their family, legal counsel, and other persons and organizations, subject to the limitations necessary to maintain order and security of the facility or program.

II. Rationale

To provide an opportunity for minors to maintain a relationship with family members and other supportive persons and organizations, and to allow for legally required communication.

III. Definitions

“Contraband” items are those for which possession by a minor is either illegal by federal or state law or prohibited by Division policy 05-10 or a Division facility/program operation manual.

“Correspondence” is any mail or written communication to or from minors, including letters, postcards, and greeting cards.

“Parcel” is a package that contains more than written correspondence.

“Privileged mail” is correspondence that is legally protected from disclosure. It is between the minor and their attorney, judge, rape crisis counselor or clergy (as defined in Policy 04-02 Religious Programs).

IV. Procedures

A. Outgoing Mail

1. Minors shall be permitted to send letters subject to the limitations necessary to maintain order and security of the facility or program.
2. There is not a limit to the volume of mail a minor may send, as long as it does not interfere with facility security, programming or treatment needs of

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minors. Any need to limit outgoing mail shall be documented by the Assistant Program Director (APD).

3. All outgoing correspondence shall be clearly addressed. There shall not be any drawings, symbols or words on the outside of the envelope that interfere with facility security, programming or treatment needs of minors.

B. Incoming Mail

1. During the minor's stay at a Division facility/program, they will not be allowed to subscribe to magazines, record clubs, book clubs or other organizations.
2. Incoming correspondence shall be clearly addressed. Any incoming correspondence with drawings, symbols or words on the outside of the envelope that interfere with facility security, programming or treatment needs of minors will be returned to the post office. The exterior of the envelope shall not contain any ink stamps, stickers or be discolored.
3. Mail without a return address will be returned to the post office.
4. The number of letters a minor may have in their individual room may be restricted for safety and security reasons. Minors shall be advised of these restrictions upon admittance to the program/facility.
5. Staff shall distribute mail daily, except on Sundays and holidays.
6. If mail is determined to be inappropriate, it will not be delivered to the minor. The minor will be verbally notified and the mail held for five (5) business days pending a grievance. If no grievance is filed in five (5) business days, the mail will be returned to the post office.
 - a. Returned correspondence will be documented by the facility/program APD or their designee. Documentation will include the names of the sender, intended receiver, photo of the correspondence and the reason returned.
 - b. The regular grievance procedure shall be followed in accordance with Division Policy 04-08.
7. Any correspondence not allowed in a minor's room shall be held with other personal items for safekeeping, and returned upon release from the facility, or given to the parent/legal guardian.
8. Incoming mail shall be opened in the presence of two staff and shaken out to check for contraband. Staff shall visually scan mail for overtly inappropriate text or drawings, hate, gang or drug speech, or threats to the facility, an unknown person, or ongoing criminal activity.
9. If any of these elements are discovered, the letter and its contents shall be given to the appropriate supervisor for further action.

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10. Parcels will be opened in the presence of two staff. The contents shall be inventoried and documented according to the facility/program operations manual. Items not allowed in a minor's room shall be held with other personal items for safekeeping, and returned upon release, or given to the parent/legal guardian.
11. Parcels that cannot be held in the minor's designated locker/storage area due to size or quantity will be returned to the sender, and the minor will be notified.

C. Reading Incoming or Outgoing Mail

1. Mail may be read by the facility/program supervisor or APD if contraband, overtly inappropriate text or drawings, hate, gang or drug speech, or threats to the facility, an unknown person, or ongoing criminal activity are discovered.
2. Staff shall not read a minor's incoming or outgoing mail at the time it is received, or at any time thereafter, unless directed by the facility APD or supervisor.
3. Minors shall be notified at the time of admission to the facility, as a routine part of the orientation process, that under specific circumstances (excluding legal correspondence) the facility/program supervisor or APD may read the mail.
4. In cases where there is documentation to justify reading a minor's mail, the minor shall be notified and the mail is to be referred to the facility/program supervisor or APD to be read. The APD may delegate the screening of mail to the parent/legal guardian when it is in the best interest of the minor's safety and well-being.
5. The facility/program supervisor or APD must document any mail that is read and clearly outline the rationale.

- D. Minors are not allowed to send or receive mail from residents or inmates in prisons or other correctional settings, with the exception of parent(s), legal guardian(s), sibling(s) or others as approved by court order or APD or APD designee. Correspondence arriving from other minors in Division custody, or other correctional facilities, will be returned unopened to the post office and the minor will be notified.

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V. Continuous Renewal

This policy shall be reviewed every three (3) years to determine its effectiveness and appropriateness. This policy may be reviewed before that time to reflect substantive change.

This policy has been reviewed by the Division of Juvenile Justice Services Executive Management Team, and is approved upon the signature of the director.



Brett M. Peterson, Director
Division of Juvenile Justice Services

06/02/2021
Signature Date