



Successful Youth • Strong Leaders • Safer Communities

# MARYLAND Department of Juvenile Services

## POLICY

**SUBJECT: Interaction with Public, Media, and External Entities**

**NUMBER: MGT-606-13**

**APPLICABLE TO: All DJS Employees**

**APPROVED:** \_\_\_\_\_ /s/ signature on original

**Sam Abed, Secretary**

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ 8/21/13

### **I. POLICY**

The Department of Juvenile Services (DJS or Department) Director of Communications/ Public Information Officer (PIO) or the Secretary's designee serves as the Department's sole source of official media communication and shall respond in a timely manner to all requests for information consistent with all statutory and regulatory limitations on the dissemination of information. All official public statements by DJS staff are approved by the Secretary and is consistent with the Department's policies and positions.

DJS employees may disseminate information regarding official business only to those for whom it is intended in accordance with established departmental procedures or to authorized persons as provided by law. Employees may not give official opinions or otherwise make official statements on behalf of DJS unless appropriately authorized by the Secretary or the Secretary's designee.

All DJS employees shall strive to maintain integrity, professionalism, and credibility with the general public and with those persons and organizations involved with the Department. DJS staff shall disclose juvenile case information only as permitted by applicable laws, regulations, and DJS policies.

### **II. AUTHORITY**

- A. MD. CODE ANN., HUM. SERVS., §§9-203, -204.
- B. MD. CODE ANN., CTS. & JUD. PROC., §3-8A-27.
- C. Maryland Rule 11-121.
- D. Md. Code Ann., GEN. PROVISIONS., §§4-101 to -601.
- E. Md. Department of Juvenile Justice Standards of Conduct and Disciplinary Process §2.6

### **III. DIRECTIVES/POLICIES RESCINDED**

- A. Relationships with Public, Media and Other Agencies Policy, 01.01.11
- B. News Media Access, 01.13.03
- C. Communication with Public and Media Policy, MGT-606-13

**IV. FAILURE TO COMPLY**

Failure to comply with the Department's Policy and Procedures shall be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

**V. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

Standard operating procedures (SOP) have been developed and are attached to this policy. The SOP for this policy provides guidelines for handling media requests.

**VI. REVISION HISTORY**

DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	DATE OF REVISION
New policy issued.	8/21/13
Revised procedures issued, including provisions for communicating confidentiality rules; procedures for Departmental letters of support and memoranda of understanding; use of official letterhead and business cards; e-mail signature lines, and staff voicemail requirements.	4/1/2019



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# MARYLAND Department of Juvenile Services

## PROCEDURES

**SUBJECT: Interaction with Public, Media, and External Entities**

**NUMBER: MGT-606-13**

**APPLICABLE TO: All Employees**

**APPROVED:** \_\_\_\_\_ /s/ signature on original

**Lynette Holmes, Deputy Secretary**

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ 4/1/19

### I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of these procedures is to:

- Identify the Public Information Officer (PIO) as the sole source of official communications to the public, media and other external organizations, unless another employee has been so designated;
- Ensure all official public statements made by DJS staff are approved by the Secretary;
- Ensure all information regarding official business is disseminated only to those for whom it is intended; and
- Provide guidelines for employees given approval to communicate with the public, media and other external organizations.

### II. DEFINITIONS:

*E-mail signature* means the text and/or images that are automatically inserted into outgoing e-mail messages.

*Site Inquiry* means a request directed to a facility, office or program that may or may not involve a tour of the facility, office or program, or a request to interview individual youths.

*Tour* means an escorted, on-site presentation of a facility, office or program.

*Media Entity* means an organization whose purpose is the public dissemination of information. This may include traditional media such as newspapers, radio and broadcast news. This definition also includes non-traditional media including, but not limited to, news websites, blogs, videography, student media and publications, and social media.

### III. PROCEDURES:

#### A. Coordination of Communication

1. The PIO shall, in coordination with the responsible Deputy Secretary and with approval from the Secretary, deliver the Department's official responses to all information requests and site inquiries from the public, non-criminal justice agencies and representatives of the news media.
2. Staff shall respond to inquiries from legislative bodies, the Governor's administration, prospective researchers, and Public Information Act requests pursuant to these procedures. **See Handling Requests from External Entities: Staff Quick Reference, Appendix 2.**
3. The DJS PIO or designee shall approve and manage the content of the DJS internet and intranet sites and social media sites.

#### B. Release of Information

1. When employees receive a request for information or material that has been publicly disseminated (*e.g.*, DJS publications, mission statements, facility addresses, regional office addresses and phone numbers, etc.), staff may produce that information or material to any requestor.
2. All press releases issued by the Department or its facilities shall be forwarded to the PIO prior to distribution to ensure that correct and appropriate information is provided. The PIO may enlist the assistance of other staff to prepare, review and approve information to be released to the public or media.

#### C. Contact and Correspondence with the Public

1. All employees may communicate with the general public. An employee whose duties involve contact with the public shall be courteous and conduct him or herself in a businesslike and dignified manner.
2. Staff shall only utilize current Department-approved agency letterhead (including documents generated on ASSIST and official letterhead available on the DJS intranet) and official business cards procured by the Department.
3. Unless otherwise approved by the PIO, staff using DJS e-mail systems for business purposes shall include an e-mail signature in all e-mail transmissions consisting of **only** the following components:
  - a. name;
  - b. DJS position title;
  - c. agency name;
  - d. assigned DJS office or facility address(es);
  - e. assigned DJS phone and fax numbers;
  - f. assigned DJS e-mail address;
  - g. DJS logo (or vision statement; and
  - h. the following confidentiality message:
    - 1) *"This electronic transmission may contain confidential or*

*privileged information. If you believe that you have received this message in error, please notify the sender by reply transmission and delete the message without copying or disclosing it. Thank you.*

4. Unless otherwise approved by the PIO, staff using voicemail systems in conjunction with cellular and office telephones provided by the Department shall record a voicemail greeting as follows:
  - a. for normal day to day operations: *“You have reached [your name], [your title], with the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services. At this time, I cannot answer your call, but please speak clearly and leave your name, phone number, and reason for calling at the sound of the tone and I will return your call as soon as possible.”*
    - 1) ***If you have been issued a DJS cellular telephone, include the following:*** *“You can also try to reach me on my cell phone at [cell phone number]”*
  - b. if you are on vacation or otherwise on leave, provide the date you will return and an alternate contact during your absence.
5. Staff shall return voicemails and phone calls within 24 hours where possible.
6. Staff shall monitor voicemail accounts regularly and delete messages as needed to avoid full voicemail boxes.

**D. Responding to Site Inquiries by Public or Media Entities**

1. DJS staff shall immediately, via the appropriate chain of command, notify the PIO of any site inquiries by public or media entities.
2. DJS staff shall present information that is truthful, objective and in accordance with existing rules and regulations.
3. Employees may not represent themselves as an official spokesperson for the Department or communicate an official departmental position unless specifically authorized to do so by the Secretary or the Secretary’s designee.
4. DJS staff members who are contacted by the media during scheduled work hours regarding any official business or position of the Department shall take the following steps:
  - a. Without giving out information, staff shall advise the caller that they will take basic questions and have someone return his/her call as soon as possible. At that time, staff should ask for the following information:
    - 1) name of caller;
    - 2) name of the media entity;
    - 3) deadline, if any;
    - 4) telephone number; and
    - 5) subject matter or concern.Employees shall inform the PIO via the appropriate chain of command and forward the above information immediately.

5. The PIO or designee shall handle any further contact with the requestor, including requiring the requestor to submit the request in writing.

**E. Tours and Youth Interviews**

1. Media representatives must make advance arrangements for facility or program site visits or tours.
2. Employees shall immediately notify the PIO of any request for tours or youth interviews.
3. The PIO or designee, with approval from the responsible Deputy Secretary, shall authorize or deny all tours and requests for youth interviews in consultation with the respective Facility Administrator or Regional Director within two business days.
  - a. Specific reasons for any denial of tours or youth interviews shall be documented by the Facility Administrator or Regional Director and the PIO as appropriate.
  - b. Requests for youth interviews may be denied for any of the following reasons:
    - 1) Refusal or failure to adhere to any conditions set forth in DJS policy or procedures;
    - 2) The youth to be interviewed is physically or mentally unable to participate. This shall be substantiated by Behavioral Health staff in writing and a copy placed in the youth's record;
    - 3) The written consents (when required pursuant to section 5, below) are not secured;
    - 4) The interview, in the opinion of the Facility Administrator or Regional Director, would endanger the health or safety of the interviewer, the youth, or the order or security of the facility or office;
    - 5) If required, the court having jurisdiction over the youth has not authorized the interview; and
    - 6) Notice of the youth's whereabouts would endanger his or her safety.
  - c. Prior to approval, the news media representative must agree:
    - 1) To abide by all DJS policies and the procedures of the facility or program;
    - 2) That the product of the interview may not be used other than for the original purpose for which it was intended; and
    - 3) That the product of the interview may not be transferred to any other entity than DJS or its successors.
4. Upon approval from the PIO and the responsible Deputy Secretary, staff shall:
  - a. Permit media entities and other organizations reasonable access to DJS facilities, offices and programs and the youths involved in a manner consistent with the best interests of DJS youth and safety

- and security; and
- b. Supervise the tour with a facility staff member and the PIO or his or her designee to ensure that representatives of the media entities or other organizations are aware of security restrictions and that security and youth confidentiality is maintained.
5. Requests to interview youth shall be denied unless written consent from the youth, his or her parent or guardian (if applicable), his or her attorney, the court (if required), the Facility Administrator or Regional Director, and the PIO has been obtained. The use of a youth's name, identity, or identifiable photographs or filming is strictly prohibited absent the above consents.
  6. Youth may not receive compensation or anything of value in exchange for an interview.
  7. The Facility Administrator or Regional Director may suspend facility or program site visits, tours, or youth interviews during a facility or program emergency, or when otherwise consistent with the best interests of DJS youth or program safety and security.
  8. The Facility Administrator or Regional Director shall communicate confidentiality rules or guidelines to visitors as necessary to preserve confidentiality of the identity of youth in the care or under the supervision of DJS.

**F. Reporting Events or Incidents with Potential for Media Coverage**

Employees shall report critical incidents pursuant to the DJS *Incident Reporting Policy and Procedures*. All DJS staff are encouraged to immediately report any additional incidents, issues, or events that have the potential to attract media attention to their supervisor and Regional Director or Facility Administrator who is encouraged to then report it immediately to the PIO.

**G. Reporting Positive Events**

Employees are encouraged to report positive events to the PIO such as the outstanding professional or personal accomplishments of a staff member, facility, program or provider, and a program introduction, expansion, or enhancement.

**H. Multimedia Projects, Ceremonies, and Public Events**

1. Any ceremony, event, or multimedia project involving photography or videography of youth not related to or used for official records shall be approved by the Regional Director or Facility Administrator prior to submission to the PIO.
2. Employees shall not endorse public events on behalf of the Department or otherwise make use of the DJS agency name, logos or insignia without the approval of their Regional Director or Facility Administrator and the PIO.

**I. Representing DJS**

Prior to an employee representing the Department at a conference or contributing official information or Department data for publication, the employee shall obtain approval from their supervisor in writing and notify the PIO by email no later than 14 calendar days prior to the conference or submission to the publication.

**J. Public Information Act Requests**

The PIO is responsible for all Public Information Act requests. Any employee receiving a request for public information or any other information pursuant to the Act shall immediately, and in any event no later than the following business day, direct the requestor to the PIO or the “Public Information Requests” link on the DJS website.

**K. Requests for Departmental Support**

Letters or other expressions declaring support or endorsement of a program or youth services entity on behalf of the Department or on behalf of any staff in their capacity as an employee of the Department shall be approved by the appropriate Deputy Secretary and the Secretary prior to being dispatched.

**L. Memoranda of Understanding and Intergovernmental Agreements**

1. The Secretary shall review and approve any memorandum of understanding or intergovernmental agreement to which the Department or any staff in their capacity as an employee of the Department will become a party prior to its execution.
2. Draft memoranda of understanding and intergovernmental agreements shall be forwarded to the Office of Legislation and Policy for subsequent review by the Office of the Attorney General and each Deputy Secretary.

**IV. RESPONSIBILITY**

Administrators are responsible for implementation and compliance with this procedure within 30 days of issuance.

**V. INTERPRETATION**

The Deputy Secretary for Support Services shall be responsible for interpreting and granting any exceptions to these procedures.

**VI. LOCAL OPERATING PROCEDURES REQUIRED**

No



**VII. DIRECTIVES/POLICIES REFERENCED**

- A. Legislative Session Policy, MGT-607-13
- B. Incident Reporting Policy, OPS-900-15

**VII. APPENDICES**

- 1. Media Consent Form
- 2. Handling requests from external entities: Staff Quick Reference



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# DJS POLICY AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

## Statement of Receipt and Acknowledgment of Review

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**SUBJECT: Interaction with Public and Media Policy**  
**NUMBER: MGT-606-13**  
**APPLICABLE TO: All Employees**  
**REVISION DATE: April 2019**

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I have received and reviewed a copy (electronic or paper) of the above titled policy and procedures. I understand the contents of the policy and procedures.

I understand that failure to sign this acknowledgment form within five working days of receipt of the policy shall be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

I understand that I will be held accountable for implementing this policy even if I fail to sign this acknowledgment form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT FULL NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
WORK LOCATION

***SEND THE ORIGINAL, SIGNED COPY TO DIRECTOR OF THE DJS OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES FOR PLACEMENT IN YOUR PERSONNEL FILE.***



**MEDIA AND PUBLIC APPEARANCE CONSENT FORM**

Youth's name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

ASSIST ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Facility or office: \_\_\_\_\_

DJS or Media representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Media outlet represented: \_\_\_\_\_

DJS or Media address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby freely give permission to DJS or the news media listed above to (check all that apply):

Interview  Photograph  Audio Record  Videotape

(me/my child) on (date) \_\_\_\_\_. I further authorize the media represented to use any of the information gathered including photographs, audio recordings, and videotape as permitted by law.

I further authorize the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services to release to the media representative any information relevant to the interview, so long as it is not confidential in nature. I further release and discharge the State of Maryland, the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services and its programs, agents, and employees from all liability, claims, or subsequent information obtained as a result of the interview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Youth signature* *Date* *Parent/Guardian signature* *Date*

Check here if youth is 18 years of age and able to provide legal consent for him/herself.

I hereby declare that I have reviewed the contents of this consent form with the above named youth and/or his or her parent or legal guardian, if applicable, and that all parties have demonstrated a reasonable understanding of the contents of this form and that such consent was signed in my presence.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Staff signature* *Print Name* *Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Print title*

Boyd K. Rutherford  
 Lt. Governor

Larry Hogan  
 Governor

Sam Abed  
 Secretary

## Handling requests from external entities

### Staff Quick Reference

April 2019

Any DJS employee, intern, or volunteer receiving requests from the following individuals or entities must forward the request to the following corresponding DJS Executive staff and copy the supervisor and Regional Director, Facility Administrator, or DJS unit director, as appropriate:

<i>Requests received from:</i>	<i>Forward to:</i>	<i>Refer to:</i>
<b>Governor’s Office or Staff (non-legislative matters)</b>	Jay Cleary	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Members and staff of the General Assembly</b></li> <li>• <b>Governor’s Office or Staff (legislative matters)</b></li> </ul>	Gavin Patashnick	<a href="#"><u>Legislative Session Policy &amp; Procedures</u></a>
<b>Public Information Act (PIA) requests and data requests</b>	Eric Solomon	<a href="#"><u>Communication with Public &amp; Media Policy &amp; Procedures</u></a> <i>* direct the requestor to the PIO or the “Public Information Requests” link on the DJS website</i>
<b>Prospective researchers; educational institutions and related data requests</b>	John Irvine and Eric Solomon	<a href="#"><u>Review &amp; Approval of Research Proposals Policy &amp; Procedures; Communication with Public &amp; Media Policy &amp; Procedures</u></a>

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

