

<p>Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services Division of Youth &amp; Family Services</p> <p><b>POLICY &amp; PROCEDURE</b></p>	<p>Original Date Issued: <b>02/01/2014</b></p> <hr/> <p>Last Revision Date: <b>01/01/2018</b></p>	<p>Current Review Date: <b>08/13/2019</b></p> <p>Current Review By: <b>DP</b></p>	<p>Section: <b>ADMINISTRATION</b></p>	<p>Policy No: <b>015</b></p>	<p>Pages: <b>Page 1 of 3</b></p>
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Division of Youth &amp; Family Services (DYFS)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Detention Center</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DYFS Services Network</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purchase of Service Agencies</p>	<p>Current Effective Date: <b>11/01/2019</b></p>	<p>Subject:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ethics and Boundaries Policy</b></p>			

## I. Policy

The Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) is dedicated to promoting public safety and positive youth development by reducing youth crime and holding youth accountable through interventions and supportive services. All DYFS management, staff and all affiliated providers will engage in professional behaviors and maintain ethical standards of practice with youth/families, colleagues and the community.

## II. Procedure

**It is the responsibility of all DYFS staff to adhere to the following ethical conduct guidelines. All DYFS staff are expected to:**

### A. Abuse

Physical, verbal, emotional or sexual abuse of any person is not permitted.

### B. Confidentiality

- 1) Respect confidentiality of youth and families and do not disclose confidential information without having an authorized release of information.
- 2) Never use the youth and/or family members' full name in email subject line of emails or in the cell phone contact list.

### C. Dual Relationships

- 1) Dual relationships are not permitted. Dual relationships occur when a staff person is connected to a youth and/or their families in a manner beyond their role at DYFS. The term relationship encompasses professional, social and/or business.
- 2) In instances where dual relationships are unavoidable, staff should take steps to protect youth and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate and cultural boundaries. Your Supervisor and Administration staff should be made aware immediately of any possible dual relationships.
- 3) Employees are expected to report any dual relationship (*i.e. professional, social, business, etc.*) with other community entities providing services to youth/families to the DYFS Quality Assurance Department.

### D. Media/Social Media

- 1) Do not request or accept "friend requests" from current or former youth or family members on any social networking site (e.g. *Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.*). Adding youth as "friends" or contacts on these sites can compromise your youths' confidentiality, as well as your privacy. It

will blur the boundaries of a therapeutic, professional relationship. Inviting or allowing youth or their family members, to interact with or view your personal social media pages will be perceived as inviting them into your personal life and sends mixed and confusing messages to youth and families.

- 2) Creation of “fake” social media pages is not permitted for the purposes of investigating or monitoring our youth and family or friends.
- 3) Text messaging and email correspondence is encouraged, in addition to phone calls, as methods to communicate with youth and families. It should be noted however, that text messages and/or email correspondence does not constitute a face-to-face contact.

**E. Professionalism**

- 1) Employees are expected to take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, correct and/or report the unethical conduct of colleagues. Use reasonable judgment to determine when unethical conduct is taking place.
- 2) Licensed professionals must abide by their respective code of ethics in addition to policies and protocols set forth by Milwaukee County and/or Division of Youth & Family Services.
- 3) Never accept payment of a private fee or other monetary compensation from a youth or family for providing services to the youth/family.
- 4) When providing items to youth and families in the course of professional relationships, it should be presented on behalf of the Department and the specific transaction should be documented in Synthesis.

**F. Respect and Integrity**

- 1) Treat youth, families and colleagues with dignity, respect and fairness at all times.
- 2) Treat colleagues in a professional, respectful and courteous manner; represent fairly the views of colleagues.
- 3) Avoid the use of derogatory language in written and/or verbal communications to or about youth/families.
- 4) Always demonstrate sensitivity to the culture of our clients and demonstrate competence in providing services. Always treat all youth/families fairly, without prejudice in regard to behavioral or physical disability or characteristics, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or religious beliefs and/or practices.

**G. Secondary Employment (*refer to Milwaukee County Code of Ethics 9.05 for additional information*)**

- 1) DYFS Employees seeking secondary employment with community agencies contracted with DYFS must report this to their immediate Supervisor prior to becoming employed. In order to minimize any concerns with staff and youth and families served, the parameters of employment must be explored for circumstances posing a conflict of interest and documented accordingly.
- 2) DYFS Employees holding secondary employment outside of DYFS are subject to the following guidelines:
  - a. Employment cannot be during your regular DYFS scheduled working hours.
  - b. Employment cannot occur with programs *being considered for* contract with DYFS.
  - c. Employment cannot be with any DYFS contracted community program.
  - d. Employment with community social service agencies (outside of the DYFS network) require the following:
    - Employee notifies their immediate Supervisor and Administrator (or designee).

- Employee to submit written confirmation that they will not be working directly with DYFS youth to be placed in the employee file by the DYFS Supervisor.
  - In the event contact with DYFS youth occurs, employee is to safeguard that youth/family and immediately report it to the Supervisor and Administrator (or designee). This should be noted in the employee file by the DYFS Supervisor.
- ✚ At the time of this 2019 policy revision, all employees holding secondary employment as described in section II.G. of this policy must immediately report this to their supervisor and follow the guidelines set forth herein.
- ✚ The DYFS Administrator reserves the right to review any extenuating circumstances as deemed appropriate for employment conflicts that may arise.

### III. Corrective Action

#### **Initial Occurrence/Counsel:**

DYFS staff will have the opportunity to rectify the situation. A counseling session reviewing the DYFS Ethics and Boundaries Policy with immediate supervisor or management staff not to include any written documentation will ensue with the initial occurrence.\*

#### **Second Occurrence/First Warning:**

A counseling session reviewing the DYFS Ethics and Boundaries Policy with immediate supervisor or management staff accompanied by written documentation will ensue with the second occurrence.\*

#### **Third Occurrence/Final Warning:**

A counseling session reviewing the DYFS Ethics and Boundaries Policy with immediate supervisor and management staff accompanied by written documentation will ensue with a third occurrence and the staff is subject to termination at this point.\*

- ✚ Supervisor and management staff reserve the right to skip any of the above steps at any time if the DYFS staff is not demonstrating immediate improvement. This will be based on the DYFS staff's willingness (or lack thereof) to comply with the counseling session efforts and policy.
- ✚ Any manager and/or supervisor has the authority to address policy violations with any staff at any time during the work day. Notification to the immediate supervisor is required.

*\*Refer to DYFS Policy & Procedure #44: Corrective Action Policy for additional details.*

Reviewed & Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Mark Mertens, Division Administrator