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# Searches of Youth and Property – State Facilities

Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS)  
Juvenile Justice Services (JJS)  
Statewide Policy

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| <b>POLICY NUMBER:</b>  | DCFS/JJS 300.14   |
| <b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> | August 1, 2025  |
| <b>APPROVED BY:</b>    | Sharon Anderson, Deputy Administrator – DCFS<br>   |
| <b>DATE:</b>           | 07/25/2025  |
| <b>SUPERSEDES:</b>     | DCFS/JJS 300.14 effective November 2, 2020  |
| <b>REFERENCES:</b>     | NRS 62B.212, NRS 62B.510, NRS 62B.520, NRS 233B.050;<br>Prison Rape Elimination Act: PREA Juvenile Facility Standards, 28 C.F.R. Part 115;<br>Documentation Standards, DCFS/JJS 100.13;<br>Youth Rights, DCFS/JJS 300.03;<br>Prison Rape Elimination Act, DCFS/JJS 300.09 |
| <b>ATTACHMENTS:</b>    | Attachment A: Housing, Programming, Search Preference Form<br>Attachment B: Youth Searches Documentation Form   |
| <b>REVIEW DUE BY:</b>  | July 25, 2028   |

## I. PURPOSE

To outline approved methods for searching youth, their rooms, and other property to ensure the safety and security of youth and staff in state facilities, including ensuring violation of youth rights do not occur.

## II. DEFINITIONS

As used in this document, the following definitions shall apply:

- A. Clothed Body Search: Commonly known as a pat-down search and includes the running of the hands over the clothed body of a youth by a staff member to determine whether the individual possesses contraband.
- B. Contraband: Any unauthorized item a youth has in their possession, including those which can be used as a weapon or fabricated into a weapon or for the purpose of escape.

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- C. Cross-Gender Search: A clothed or unclothed body search conducted by a person of the opposite gender of the person being searched.
- D. Exigent Circumstances: Any set of temporary and unforeseen events requiring immediate action to combat a threat to the security or order of a facility which may result in reasonable restrictions on the rights of youth (NRS 62B.520).
- E. Intersex: A condition in which a person has reproductive or sexual anatomy which does not fit the typical definitions of male or female.
- F. Non-Intensive Sensors/Scanning Devices: Handheld wands, stationary walk-through metal detectors, or other types of metal detectors.
- G. Probable Cause: The sufficient knowledge to believe contraband or other unauthorized items may be in the possession of a youth.
- H. Room Search: A search of a youth's individual living space for the presence of contraband or other unauthorized items.
- I. Transgender: A person whose gender identity is different from their biological sex assigned at birth.
- J. Unclothed Body Search: Also known as a strip search; this is a professional and sterile search requiring a person to remove or arrange some or all clothing so as to permit a visual inspection of the person's breasts, buttocks, or genitalia.

### III. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. Youth shall be free from being subject to a search for the purpose of harassment or as a form of punishment or discipline per NRS 62B.510 (Rights of Youth Placed in a Facility); Youth Rights, DCFS/JJS 300.03.
- B. All searches of youth and youth property shall be conducted based on documented facility procedures or probable cause, and shall be conducted respectfully, in the least intrusive manner possible.
- C. All youth shall be informed of the facility search procedure during the facility intake process.
- D. Facilities may permit scheduled clothed body searches of youth based on daily activities where youth may have access to contraband or other unauthorized items, including but not limited to before lunch, after lunch, after school, after

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any unsupervised activity, after any outside activity, or when an item goes missing within the facility (e.g., pens, tools, keys).

- E. A search of youth property shall be conducted upon admission of a new youth before placing property in storage.
- F. A search of youth mail for contraband shall be conducted prior to dispersing mail to a youth.
  - 1. Mail should only be accepted from individuals listed on a youth's list of individuals authorized to contact youth.
- G. Any contraband or unauthorized items confiscated during a search of youth and youth property will be stored, documented, and disposed of in accordance with the facility standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- H. All facilities shall provide transgender and intersex youth an opportunity to request the gender of the staff they would prefer to conduct body searches. This preference will be documented on the Statement of Search Preference Form (Attachment A) at the time of intake and may be amended at any time.
  - 1. Transgender and intersex youth shall be advised of their right to amend their Housing, Programming, Search Preference Form (Attachment A).
  - 2. Transgender and intersex youth shall notify any staff member of their intent to amend their Housing, Programming, Search Preference Form (Attachment A). Staff shall allow modifications to be made immediately, and staff shall make the proper notifications to other staff regarding the change in search preference.

### **IV. NON-INTENSIVE SENSORS/SCANNING DEVICES**

- A. A facility may use handheld wands, stationary walk-through devices, or other approved metal detectors for searches of new youth upon admission, and at any other time as identified in the agency SOP.
- B. A facility may use handheld wands, stationary walk-through devices, or other approved metal detectors for entrance into the facility, to include, but not limited to, staff, family, contractors, interns, and vendors.
- C. A facility may use handheld wands or other approved metal detectors to search mail, packages, and items brought into the facility for youth visitations.

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### **V. CLOTHED BODY SEARCHES**

- A. Clothed body searches shall be thorough enough to ensure the safety and security of the facility.
- B. Clothed body searches shall be conducted with consistent steps to ensure youth know what to expect.
- C. All staff shall communicate clearly to the youth during each step of the search, including what will be searched, how the search will be conducted, and what the expectations of the youth are (e.g., how to stand, where to put hands).
- D. Clothed body searches should be conducted within areas of the facility subject to video monitoring whenever available and reasonable.
- E. Staff shall use nationally accepted search techniques when conducting clothed body searches.
- F. Only staff trained in a DCFS-approved clothed body search technique shall complete clothed body searches of youth.
- G. It is best practice and highly recommended staff wear gloves during a clothed body search, unless the search is spontaneous, gloves are not immediately available, and there is an immediate need for the search.

### **VI. ROOM SEARCHES**

- A. Facilities shall conduct room searches on an unannounced and random schedule as identified in the agency SOP.
- B. Room searches may be completed prior to placing a youth in their room for confinement.
- C. Youth shall be advised of all room searches and any confiscated items within 24 hours.
- D. Staff shall be respectful of youths' personal property and rooms shall never be left in disorder after a search.
- E. All room searches shall be documented as a New Activity (Facility Room/Property Search) in the youth's record in the web-based case management system per Data Collection and Documentation Standards, DCFS/JJS 100.13, including the following information, at a minimum:

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1. Reason for the search (e.g., intake, release, probable cause, random, planned)
2. Outcome of the search (e.g., no issues, damages found, contraband found)
  - a. If damage or contraband is found during a room search, details of the damage or contraband shall be specified in the Notes section of the Facility Room/Property Search Activity.

### VII. UNCLOTHED BODY SEARCHES

- A. Staff members are prohibited from conducting an unclothed search of a youth unless:
  1. The staff member reasonably suspects the youth possesses or has immediate access to a weapon or contraband; **and**
  2. The staff member has exhausted all available, less intrusive methods of identifying any such item, including, without limitation, search techniques allowing the youth to remain fully clothed.
- B. Verbal requests for the youth to turn over unauthorized items shall be the first course of action before an unclothed body search is conducted.
- C. In all cases, unclothed body searches must be approved by the facility superintendent or designee.
- D. All unclothed body searches shall be conducted in a private setting.
  1. In all cases, an unclothed body search shall be conducted by two trained staff for the entire duration of the unclothed search of a youth; **and**
  2. The two trained staff, to the greatest extent practicable, shall be of the same gender as the searched youth's gender, or as indicated on the youth's Housing, Programming, Search Preference Form (Attachment A).
- E. For unclothed body searches, one staff member shall be a medical professional if available at the time of the search.
- F. Staff shall use nationally accepted techniques adopted by DCFS when conducting unclothed body searches.
- G. Staff shall wear gloves during all unclothed body searches. There is no exception to this rule.

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- H. Only staff trained in a DCFS-approved unclothed body search technique shall complete unclothed body searches of youth.
- I. Youth subject to an unclothed body search shall be advised of their right to request a meeting with a mental health counselor to discuss the incident.
- J. All unclothed body searches shall be documented as a New Incident (Unclothed Body Search) in the youth's record in the web-based case management system per Data Collection and Documentation Standards, DCFS/JJS 100.13.
  - 1. The following information shall be included in the Youth Searches Documentation Form (Attachment B):
    - a. Reason for the search (e.g., suspected contraband)
    - b. Outcome of the search (e.g., contraband found)
    - c. Youth informed of rights prior to search
    - d. Verbal attempt made to obtain contraband prior to conducting search
    - e. Documentation of staff present during search
    - f. Witness to search, if applicable
    - g. Documentation of deviation from gender-matching requirements of staff
    - h. Mental Health referral made
    - i. Documented in web-based case management system under:
      - i. New Activity "Unclothed body search"
      - ii. Clinical Activity (if mental health involved)
    - j. Superintendent or designee notified
- K. All unclothed body searches shall be documented using the Youth Searches Documentation Form (Attachment B).
  - 1. All documentation shall be completed within 24 hours of the search.
- L. The PREA Compliance Manager shall be notified within one business day after an unclothed body search occurs.

### **VIII. CROSS-GENDER SEARCHES**

- A. Cross-gender clothed body searches shall not be conducted, except in exigent circumstances, or when conducted by a medical professional.
- B. When a cross-gender clothed body search is conducted, it shall be conducted in the presence of a secondary staff of the same gender as the youth.
- C. All staff responsible for conducting searches shall be trained on how to conduct cross-gender clothed searches using a nationally accepted search technique.

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- D. Cross-gender unclothed body searches are never allowed unless specified on the Housing, Programming Search Preference Form (Attachment A).
- E. All cross-gender clothed body searches shall be documented using the Youth Searches Documentation form (Attachment B).
  - 1. The Superintendent and PREA Compliance Manager shall be notified immediately after a cross-gender clothed body search occurs.
  - 2. The PREA Coordinator shall be provided the documentation of cross-gender clothed searches by the next business day.

### **IX. TRANSGENDER, INTERSEX SEARCHES**

- A. Cross-gender clothed body searches shall not be conducted, except in exigent circumstances, or when conducted by a medical professional.
- B. When a cross-gender clothed body search is conducted, it shall be conducted in the presence of a secondary staff.
- C. Pursuant to NRS 62B.212, youth committed to the state shall be treated in accordance with their gender identity or expression.
- D. All facility staff responsible for conducting searches shall be trained on how to conduct searches on transgender and intersex youth.
- E. All transgender and intersex youth shall have the opportunity at admission to document their preference regarding the gender of staff who will conduct searches using the Statement of Search Preference Form (Attachment A).
- F. Staff shall be considered men or women for the purposes of conducting searches.
  - 1. A transgender staff member's gender will be based on their gender identity, not their sex assigned at birth.

### **X. TRAINING**

- A. All staff responsible for conducting searches shall be trained in proper techniques and facility procedures at hire, annually thereafter, and as deemed necessary for remedial training.
  - 1. No staff shall conduct any searches of youth or youth property without training.

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- B. Training shall incorporate a trauma-informed care approach to take into account any clothed or unclothed body search may be traumatizing for youth.

### **XI. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

- A. Each facility shall create standard operating procedures consistent with this policy, to include:
  - 1. Authorized reasons for the search of youth and youth property.
  - 2. Youth training on facility search procedures.
  - 3. Processes for how staff will conduct each permitted type of search using nationally accepted techniques, including non-intensive sensors/scanning devices (e.g., clothed body, room, property, mail).
  - 4. Processes and requirements for searches of youth and youth property at intake and during commitment, including documentation in the web-based case management system.
    - a. Any set time or schedule (e.g., before or after certain activities) when searches will take place.
  - 5. Processes to document and report unclothed body searches ensuring timelines are met.
  - 6. Staff training requirements regarding the proper way to search youth and youth property, including how often training is required.
  - 7. How staff will be confidentially notified of transgender and intersex youth gender search preferences.
  - 8. How confiscated items will be documented, stored, or disposed of.
- B. The DCFS Juvenile Justice Programs Office shall review this policy every three years, or sooner if deemed necessary (NRS 233B.050).