


Religious Services and Programming

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

POLICY NUMBER:	DCFS/JJS 500.09
EFFECTIVE DATE:	January 30, 2023
APPROVED BY:	Sharon Anderson, Deputy Administrator – DCFS 
DATE:	01/05/2023
SUPERSEDES:	New Policy
APPROVED BY:	Dr. Cindy Pitlock, Administrator – DCFS 
DATE:	01/09/2023
REFERENCES:	Documentation Standards (DCFS/JJS 100.13)
ATTACHMENTS:	None

I. SUMMARY

The Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) juvenile justice services shall ensure facilities offer religious services to develop a responsible environment for spiritual instruction for youth who desire such services. Although facilities may plan and coordinator religious programs, they shall not endorse any one religion.

II. PURPOSE

To provide standards and criteria for ensuring religious programming is both available and supervised.

III. DEFINITIONS

None

IV. GENERAL PROCEDURES – FACILITY

- A. Facilities shall ensure an opportunity for religious belief and practice is afforded to youth without fear of discrimination, penalty, coercion, harassment, ridicule, or intimidation.
- B. A youth's opportunity to participate in religious belief or practice shall be balanced against the necessity of maintaining a safe and secure facility.

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- C. Facilities may establish a protocol to determine when religious programming is needed either through the intake process or a request process.
 - 1. Youth may change religious designations through a request process.
- D. Youth may request a religious diet using a request process.
 - 1. Religious diets shall be approved by the food services manager and director of nursing.
 - 2. The facility shall make reasonable accommodations to comply with youth requests for a religious diet.
- E. Youth may request individual counseling through a religious program using a request process.
 - 1. Religious counseling shall be considered by mental health staff. The facility shall make reasonable accommodations to comply with a youth's request for religious counseling.
- F. Religious programs may be provided in a facility by religious volunteers, Chaplains/Pastors, or religious interns.
 - 1. Any such individuals must comply with DCFS confidentiality requirements and Prison Rape Elimination Act requirements.
 - 2. Any such individuals must have proper credentials and are subject to background checks prior to entry into a facility.
- G. All religious programs shall be planned and organized with security considerations, including adequate supervision, space, supplies, etc.
- H. The facility superintendent has the discretion to approve religious programs and has the authority to appoint a Chaplin/Pastor or religious volunteer to conduct religious programming.
 - 1. Facilities shall identify at least one staff member to oversee all religious programming.
 - a. All religious programming shall be supervised by facility staff.
 - b. Occasional religious programming review shall be conducted.
- I. Youths may have a bible or other sacred scripture in their rooms which may be provided by the facility or other source if not readily available at the facility.

V. GENERAL PROCEDURES – PAROLE

None

VI. DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. The facility shall follow Documentation Standards (DCFS/JJS 100.13) regarding program documentation and ensure the following records are kept for all youth participating in religious services or programming:

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1. Number of youths participating in a religious program, religious diet, and religious counseling.
 - a. Facilities may require sign in sheets for all religious programs.

VII. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

- A. Each facility shall create Standard Operating Procedures consistent with this policy, to include:
 1. Process for youth to request a religious program, religious diet, or religious counseling, including review by appropriate facility staff.
 2. Process for youth to change a religious program, religious diet, or religious counseling, including review by appropriate facility staff.
 3. Process to have religious volunteers, chaplains/pastors, or religious interns.
 4. Identification of designated locations in facility to hold religious programming.
 5. Identification of designated staff person to provide oversight of all religious programming.
 6. Process to ensure structured religious programming is supervised by facility staff.
 7. Process to review structured religious programming by facility staff.
 8. Process to document structured religious programming.
 9. Process to ensure a bible or other sacred scripture is available for youth who request one to be kept in their living quarters.
- B. Failure to follow this policy or facility Standard Operating Procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- C. This policy shall be every two years or sooner if deemed necessary.