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POLICY 101– Policy on Policy

A. POLICY

Given the importance and critical nature of the work provided by the Office of Children's Services (OCS), all policies and procedures will ensure safety, permanency and well-being of children and families. All policy will be child centered, family focused and strength based.

All policy shall have a thorough, but time-limited review and approval process by the Policy Review Team and will be consider in effect when the Division Director has signed the policy and is active on the Department website. All OCS policy materials will be accessible via the Department website.

The Division Director or designee are the only authorized agents who can make exceptions to the OCS policies and procedures. Management Directives will be used to implement immediate changes in policy and procedures.

B. PROCEDURES

1. The Program Manager/Author shall develop, write and update policies through a collaborative process involving the users/stakeholders and with review and input from the Policy Review Team. Program, leadership and stakeholder meetings may be used for development and drafting of policies and procedures. Program Managers shall review policies for needed revisions annually.

2. The Policies shall be in the following format:
   a. **POLICY {###} - {Title}**
   b. **POLICY** section - statement of principle based on sound practices in the field of child welfare and in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations in paragraph form.
   c. **PROCEDURES** section - casework practice standards that implement the policy. Procedural instructions in paragraph form and steps for policy implementation in numbered format (1. , 2. , 3. Etc)
   d. **FOCUS** section - Indicate a FOCUS User Manual for specific policy or the records directly linked to the policy. If no FOCUS activity is required to comply with policy indicate with "No FOCUS functionality".
   e. **FORMS** section - Indicate each form used to implement policy and submit with policy to be a link on website. Forms can be updated without updating the policy itself. Also web address or documents that support policy or provide additional information may be entered here.
   f. Effective date will be indicated if policy is new. All policies converted from the old manuals will have a revision date only.
   g. Technical formatting:
      1. Header: Division Logo; Revision Date, Primary Author(s) names, Authorized signature- Name of DFS Director

2. Style – Title Arial 14, No Spacing, Body Font - Arial 11, Bold Section Header, Paragraph – Justified, Orientation – Portrait; forms may be Landscape, Margins - Top 1", Left 1", Right 1", Bottom 1"
3. Footer- Policy name, Effective date and revision dates, page numbers

3. New policy drafts or policy revisions with applicable forms documents will forwarded to the Program Support Manager who will forward to the Policy Review Team for review and comments. Policy materials will be sent electronically along with a DFS Policy Review Comment form.

4. The review period will be ten (10) business days or other timeframe set by the Program Support Manager. The members of the Policy Review Team will review the material for policy clarity, comprehensiveness, impact on workload, and impact on caseload and submit feedback using the DFS Policy Review Comment form. If necessary, the Program Manager may request the policy be placed on the agenda of any leadership meeting.

5. Upon receipt of the comments, the Program Manager will incorporate the Policy Review Team's input into the final materials within two weeks. The Program Manager shall also note their response to specific comments on the comment form and will maintain the comment and response forms for historical reference.

6. The Program Manager shall prepare a final draft for the Director that uses strikethroughs for deletions and highlighted font for new edits. Once approved, the final edits will conform to font and format requirements. The Division Director shall review and approve final policy material with a signature.

7. Program Managers shall write Management Directives as assigned by the Director or designee. Management Directives will be deactivated upon revision of policy and procedure through the declared policy review process.

8. Policies shall be effective upon website activation or by Management Directive issuance. The Program Support Manager shall maintain a historical record of all policy and management directives on the Division's shared network drive.

9. The originating Program Manager will prepare a global email informing staff of policy issuance that includes a brief description of the substantive changes. Training will be provided as needed by the Program Manager or in collaboration with the Center for Professional Development. Training should be coordinated and scheduled to fully implement the policy.

C. FOCUS
No FOCUS functionality

D. FORMS   Use the DFS policy website to access any forms:
https://kids.delaware.gov/policies/dfs-policies

DFS Policy Template
DFS Policy Review Comment Form