

*Youth Justice Policy Determination 3.1:  
Personal and Professional Visits*

REFERENCE	61:F2018/286-9	
POLICY APPROVER	Name Title	Jeanette Kerr Deputy Chief Executive Officer Operations
	Date	18 January 2018
POLICY OWNER		Executive Director Youth Justice
POLICY RESPONSIBILITY		Senior Director Youth Justice Programs
IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY		Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent

*Document Control*

VERSION HISTORY	EFFECTIVE DATE	REASON FOR UPDATE
Version 1.01	January 2018	Update to position titles and policy determination references
Version 1.0	January 2018	Deputy Chief Executive Officer Operations approval

  

NEXT REVIEW DATE	January 2020, or as directed prior to the scheduled review date.
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## Policy Purpose

The facilitation of personal and professional visits is integral to the wellbeing of young people accommodated in a detention centre. These visits contribute to the wellbeing of young people by allowing continued connection with family, community, cultural and social networks, along with facilitating access to external services.

## Authority / Responsibility

The Executive Leadership Group and Senior Managers have responsibility for ensuring that supervisors and employees understand and comply with this policy.

## Policy Statement

This policy applies to all Territory Families staff members working in the detention centres. This policy also applies to young people accommodated in a detention centre and to all personal and professional visitors.

Facilitating personal and professional visits is an important role of the detention centres, with each centre having a specific visits area which is designed to provide a safe and secure environment in which young people can meet with their visitors.

Access to external services to compliment a young person's rehabilitation and re-integration activities is facilitated through professional visits.

### *Personal Visits*

Young people may receive personal visits from family, friends, community, cultural and social networks at the designated visits times set by the detention centre.

There are no restrictions on the number of personal visits a young person may receive in a week. However, it must be noted that the centres are only able to accommodate visits for a specific number of young people in each one hour block. Therefore, during peak visit times, the centre may not be able to facilitate all personal visits requested for each one hour block.

A personal visitor under the age of 16 years will only be permitted entry for visit purposes if they are accompanied by a parent or guardian over the age of 18 years.

A personal visitor may be denied a visits booking if they are attempting to visit a co-offender, or alleged co-offender, or the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent assesses that they pose an unacceptable risk to the safety and security of the centre, young people, staff and/or other visitors.

A young person may decline any request they receive for a personal visit. It may be appropriate for the young person's case manager to explore this with the young person to understand the reasons for the refusal and to assist the young person to maintain strong cultural and social connections.

Personal visit sessions may be cancelled by the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent. Whilst all attempts will be made to ensure that personal visit sessions proceed as planned, emergency situations or operational requirements may necessitate a cancellation.

### SPECIAL PERSONAL VISITS

The Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent may approve special personal visits for a young person where extenuating circumstances exist. These visits may occur outside of the designated visit sessions and/or allow for additional adult visitors to attend in one session.

The Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent will consider the personal situation of the visitor and young person when assessing the need for a special visit. Considerations include:

- The distance visitors need to travel to visit the young person;
- Frequency of personal visits received by the young person; and
- Significant family/cultural events (such as a birth or death in the family).

### *Professional Visits*

Professional visits are in relation to official business. Professional visitors include:

- Legal representatives;
- Youth Outreach and Re-Engagement Officers (community youth justice officers);
- Northern Territory Police officers;
- Australian Federal Police officers;
- Consular officials;
- Northern Territory Ombudsman;
- Northern Territory Children's Commissioner;
- Religious or Cultural advisor;
- Community organisation representatives who provide rehabilitation or therapeutic programs in the community; and
- Persons acting under a court order.

All professional visitors must hold a current Northern Territory Working with Children Clearance.

Young people have the right to consult with a professional visitor at any reasonable time.

A young person may decline to attend a professional visit, except if the professional visitor is a Northern Territory or Australian Federal Police Officer, or a person acting under a court order.

### *Booking a Visit*

Personal and professional visitors can book a visit by contacting the detention centre where the young person is accommodated. Visits should be booked 24 hours prior to the preferred visit time, except where the professional visitor is a Northern Territory Police Officer, Australian Federal Police Officer, Officer of the Northern Territory Children's Commissioner or a Territory Families officer. An application for a special personal visit within 24 hours of the booking time may be considered by the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent where extenuating circumstances exist.

A Northern Territory Police Officer or Australian Federal Police Officer must notify the detention centre prior to visiting the centre, provide details of the young person they wish to interview, the reason for the visit, and expected outcomes. The Manager Youth Programs – Superintendent is to be informed about the planned police visit, and alerted to any concerns for escalation as required

All personal and professional visitors must provide the full name and contact details for each person wishing to visit, the purpose of the visit (whether professional or personal), the date and time of the intended visit and the organisation they represent (if applicable).

Visitors are to be advised of the requirement for all visitors over the age of 18 to attend with photographic identification or a valid Northern Territory Working with Children Clearance if they are a professional visitor.

### *Visiting a Youth Detention Centre*

All personal and professional visitors to a youth detention centre must be advised of the following requirements:

- Visitors are required to arrive 15 minutes prior to their scheduled visit time to allow for sufficient time to proceed through reception;

- Certain items are not permitted inside youth detention centres. Visitors are able to secure personal items in lockers provided in the reception area. Prohibited items include:
  - Wallets, purses, handbags;
  - Keys;
  - Tobacco, lighters, matches;
  - Electronic devices such as mobile phones, smart watches, portable media players, memory storage devices, tablets and laptops;
  - Money or legal tender;
  - Items made from glass or ceramic;
  - Alcohol and all illicit substances; and
  - Any other items which may pose a threat to the safety of young people, staff, visitors, contractors or the security of the centre.
- Visitors are permitted the following items in the visits centre:
  - Prescription glasses;
  - Empty baby bottles (water is available inside the visits area);
  - One nappy;
  - Prescription medication (however, this must be declared to the Visits Booking Officer); and
  - Any other items approved by the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent.
- Where approved, visitors may be permitted the following items:
  - Photographs;
  - Food and drinks; and
  - Art and craft materials.
- All visitors attending a youth detention centre must be appropriately groomed with clean clothes and appropriate footwear. Visitors not deemed to be dressed appropriately will not be permitted entry to the centre. Visitors are not permitted to wear the following:
  - Clothes with obscene, violent or offensive words, pictures or diagrams;
  - Gang affiliated colours or symbols; and
  - Clothing which is excessively tight and/or revealing.
- Visitors must not be under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs; and
- Only pre-booked visitors will be permitted entry into a visit session unless extenuating circumstances exist. In this instance, approval for entry must be given by the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent.

### *Standards of Behaviour during Visits*

All visitors and young people must conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. Inappropriate behaviour includes:

- Swearing and/or yelling;
- The use of lewd or threatening language;
- Sexualised behaviour and/or contact; and
- Undertaking illegal activity.

Visitors and young people are permitted to hug and hold hands.

Conversations between young people and their visitors may be conducted in their first language.

Visitors and/or young people who engage in inappropriate behaviour during a visit session may have their visit session terminated. Visits may also be terminated where a Youth Justice Officer has reasonable suspicions that a visitor is under the influence of drugs or illicit substances.

Visitors who are uncooperative will be required to leave the youth detention centre immediately. If a visitor refuses to leave, the officer involved is to telephone the Northern Territory Police for assistance.

### *Searches*

All searches of young people, visitors and visit areas are to be conducted in accordance with [Youth Justice Policy Determination 2.2: Searches](#), and with the local Operating Procedures.

A general search of the visits area must be performed prior to a visit session occurring. This includes the common areas, visitors' amenities, children's play area and the general visits area. Additional irregular and unannounced searches are to be conducted across all areas of the visits centre. All searches of the centre or environs must be recorded in the search register.

Visitors to a youth detention centre may be subject to a wand search.

Any Officer with reasonable suspicions that a visitor may attempt/be attempting to smuggle prohibited item into the centre or commit an unlawful act within the centre, must immediately refer their concerns to the Officer in Charge for further action. Where this is acted upon, the Officer in Charge must ensure that an incident report is completed and any searches that are conducted are recorded in the search register.

### *Important Information for Visitors*

In accordance with Part 12 of the Youth Justice Act, a person must not, without permission of the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent of a youth detention centre:

- Convey or deliver, or allow to be conveyed or delivered, to a young person in a detention centre any alcohol, drugs, money, letter, document, clothing or other article;
- Convey or deliver, or receive, any alcohol, drugs, money, letter, document, clothing or other articles with the intention of it being received or found by a young person in a detention centre; and

If a visitor attempts to conduct any of the above activities, the visit is to be terminated immediately and the Northern Territory Police are to be contacted.

### *Complaints*

Visitors who wish to make a complaint, or seek a review of a decision in relation to a visits sessions, are encouraged to do so. Complaints may be lodged either verbally or in writing to the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent of the relevant detention centre.

Complaints from visitors are to be handled in accordance with [Youth Justice Policy Determination 3.3: Complaints](#).

Visitors and young people may also raise a complaint to the Northern Territory Children's Commissioner or the Ombudsman.