

*Policy Determination 3.2:
Official Visitors Program*

REFERENCE	61:F2018/286-10	
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
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

Independent review of the treatment, behaviour and conditions of young people in the care of Territory Families is essential to ensuring procedural fairness, transparency and accountability.

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 staff employed, and all young people accommodated, within a Territory Families youth detention centre.

Section 169 of the *Youth Justice Act* provides for the Minister responsible for youth justice to appoint a person as an Official Visitor for a detention centre. Not less than three (3) Official Visitors must be appointed for each detention centre.

Functions of the Official Visitor

Official Visitors are required to visit the youth detention centre to which they are assigned for the purpose of inquiring into the treatment and behaviour of young people in the centre. Official Visitors must also inquire into the conditions young people are experiencing in the detention centre. Official Visitors may interview young people in the centre with their consent.

The Official Visitor is to provide a written report regarding their visit to the Minister.

The Minister may direct an Official Visitor to report on a specified matter at the detention centre to the Chief Executive Officer of Territory Families (the CEO). In this instance, the Official Visitor must provide the CEO with a written report following the visit to the centre.

Official Visitors must attend the centre to which they are assigned at least once every month and allow sufficient duration to review each inquiry from anyone who wishes to see them.

A young person is not compelled to speak with an Official Visitor, however, if they express a desire to do so, staff must ensure that the young person is given the opportunity to meet with the Official Visitor.

In accordance with Section 172 of the *Youth Justice Act*, Official Visitors do not have the authority to interfere with the duties of a member of staff, or give them instructions, regarding the management, discipline or treatment of young people admitted to the centre.

Official Visits

Official Visitors must contact the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent or delegate one week prior to their preferred visits date.

The Official Visitor must meet with the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent or Officer in Charge at the commencement and conclusion of the visit. This allows for the Official Visitor to be briefed on the conditions of the centre prior to their review and allows for issues to be discussed following their review.

The Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent is responsible for ensuring support is provided to the Official Visitors to allow them to carry out their obligations.

Official Visitor Reports

Official Visitors are accountable to the Minister and must provide a written report to the Minister within 14 days of a visit to a centre.

To ensure the effectiveness of the Official Visitor program, the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent should ensure that issues raised are addressed by the relevant operational areas and

recommendations are actioned and responded to. An appropriate register should be maintained to record issues raised and actions taken.

Remuneration and Claims

Each youth detention centre is responsible for the administration and payment of Official Visitors remuneration claims. To facilitate this, a register of Official Visitor attendance must be maintained at each centre. Claims may not be paid unless a performance of service signed by the Manager Youth Programs - Superintendent or delegate, verifying that the Official Visitors attended the facility on the date and duration for which the claim is made. Official Visitors are entitled for payment for the time spent at the facility and for one (1) additional hour for the purpose of report writing. Official Visitors are not paid for travel time to and from a centre.

Official Visitors are requested to submit claims for payment after each visit. Remuneration rates are determined by the Minister.