I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish guidelines to be used by Department and Purchase of Service (POS) staff of Institutions and Group Homes when calling local law enforcement regarding a DCFS ward.

II. PHILOSOPHY

Defining circumstances in which the use of local law enforcement intervention is appropriate with wards is essential to help ensure that the results of the intervention are positive for the ward. Inappropriate use of law enforcement will not yield positive results, and in some situations may prove to be harmful to wards, as well as cause negative attitudes within law enforcement. All youth deserve consistent consequences for their behavior in an effort to guide them toward patterns of healthy, appropriate behaviors. It is important to understand that residential treatment programs work with seriously emotionally disturbed clients who can often be violent. There is a potential for employees working in these facilities to get hurt in the course of their work.

III. MISSING, RUNAWAY AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN

Guidelines for utilization of local law enforcement are in Procedures 329, Locating and Returning Missing, Runaway and Abducted Children.

IV. DEPARTMENT NOTIFICATION OF LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT INTERVENTION

Whenever it is necessary to seek local law enforcement intervention regarding a ward, residential staff shall immediately notify the Department by:

- completing an Unusual Incident Report in accordance with Procedures 331, Unusual Incidents; and
• making a verbal report to the Office of the DCFS Guardian (312/814-8600) immediately or, if after hours, on the next business day.

V. MANDATORY USE OF LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT INTERVENTION WITH A WARD

Local law enforcement authorities must always be called in the following circumstances:

• There is immediate danger of serious bodily injury or death of an individual. “Serious” means grave in quality, character, or manner.

• Evidence or allegations of sexual misconduct of a ward or staff member

• Motor vehicle theft

• Discovery of:
  o Firearm or firearm ammunition - See Administrative Procedure #18, Possession of Firearms and Firearm Ammunition by a DCFS Ward.
  o Explosives – Immediately evacuate the area. Do not handle the material.

VI. DISCRETIONARY USE OF LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT INTERVENTION WITH A WARD

Local law enforcement authorities may be called in the following situations:

• To request immediate help in a dangerous situation to maintain safety for all residents

• Physical aggression toward others that is not provoked and results in an injury to the victim

• A documented individualized pattern of aggression that is not responsive to conventional behavior management techniques

• Use of an offensive or defensive combat instrument other than firearms in the context of an aggressive act that results in an injury requiring medical attention

• If a program confiscates contraband substances from a ward

• Firesetting

VII. SUPERVISORY APPROVAL

Supervisory approval is required for all non-immediate police interventions. It is important to remember that many situations do not require an immediate call to the police. The supervisor will determine whether police intervention is warranted within 24 hours of being notified of the incident.

Supervisors should consider the following criteria as part of their decision making process:

• The ward’s history

• The ward’s intent

• The ward’s individual treatment plan
• The ward’s caseworker’s perspective
• The probation officer/parole officer’s perspective
• The seriousness of the incident
• The victim’s desire regarding law enforcement intervention
• The existence of peer juries and other alternative programs

VIII. RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Local law enforcement intervention shall never be used:

• As a form of discipline
• When the act of aggression is displayed in the context of a physical intervention, e.g. restraint or seclusion
• As an alternative to seclusion or physical intervention
• For a non-emergency situation to control the environment

IX. LIMITATION OF THIS POLICY GUIDE

Nothing in this Policy Guide shall limit the right of a victim to call the police.

X. QUESTIONS

Questions regarding this Policy Guide should be directed to the Office of Child and Family Policy at 217/524-1983.

XI. FILING INSTRUCTIONS

File this Policy Guide directly behind Procedures 331, Unusual Incidents, in your policy manual.