



# Youth detention centre

## OPERATIONAL POLICY

---

**Title:** YD-1-8 Youth detention – Visits to young people

---

### Policy statement

The department will promote and support a young person's right to receive visits from:

- their parents/guardians
- family members
- Elders
- kin
- community members
- peers
- other persons of significance in the young person's life.

The department recognises that positive family, peer and community relationships are critical to a young person's successful transition back into their community.

In particular, youth detention centres (YDCs) will actively support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to strengthen their relationships with their families and communities. Elders and respected community members will be proactively engaged to support young people and promote their sense of cultural identity and belonging.

### Principles

#### 1. General Principles

- 1.1. Young people in YDCs will be supported to maintain appropriate relationships and establish new relationships that will provide them support while in youth detention and when they return to their community.
- 1.2. Young people's views on visits and visitors will be actively sought and considered.
- 1.3. YDCs will work with young people and their support networks to facilitate appropriate visits and contact via other means (such as phone calls and video calls).
- 1.4. The cultural unit/cultural staff will enhance these processes through kinship mapping and other engagement activities that promote positive support networks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.
- 1.5. Appropriate family, peer, community and professional visits will also be considered through restorative practice processes and Visits Beyond Visits<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.6. If face-to-face visits are suspended or unable to occur, YDCs will make every reasonable effort to facilitate increased phone and/or video call contact between young people and their visitors.

---

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Chapter 1, Section 11.3.17 of the Youth Detention Operations Manual for more information.



## **2. People who may visit a young person in detention**

- 2.1 Parents, care providers and other family, friends and significant support people
- 2.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and respected persons
- 2.3 Religious and spiritual counsellors
- 2.4 Staff from non-government agencies
- 2.5 Professional visitors
- 2.6 Accredited visitors

## **3. Approval process**

- 3.1 All personal and professional visitors must be approved prior to a visit being scheduled.
- 3.2 A criminal history check may be conducted at the request of the executive director (ED) as part of the approval process.
- 3.3 Approval may be conditional on contact restrictions if there is reasonable suspicion a visitor may pass restricted, prohibited or illegal articles to a young person during the visit.
- 3.4 People who do not receive approval to visit a young person will be advised in writing of their non-approval and informed that they have the right to appeal the decision by submitting a written statement to the ED (which will enact the complaints process).
- 3.5 Any visitor under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a legal guardian, unless explicitly approved by the ED, deputy director (DD), assistant director (AD), visits coordinator or unit manager (operations) in consultation with client services.
- 3.6 Personal visitors must be informed of, and consent to, their personal information being collected and in certain circumstances, disclosed to other agencies, e.g. Queensland Police Service (QPS) or Child Safety (refer to appendix 1-8 of chapter 1 – Care and management of young people for the suggested script for YDC staff when informing personal visitors about information privacy).
- 3.7 Personal visitors will be given a centre brochure or personalised letter that includes information about the visits process and visiting conditions.

## **4. Consideration of young people's views on visits and visitors**

- 4.1 As part of the admissions process, young people must:
  - be informed of visiting times and booking arrangements
  - be provided the opportunity to nominate people who they would like to have contact with, including via visits.
- 4.2 Young people will be informed of any nominated personal visitor who has not been approved and the reasons for non-approval, unless the disclosure poses an extenuating security risk to the centre, staff or other young people. When disclosing information to young people about non-approval of personal visitors, due consideration must be given to the young person's age, ability to comprehend and confidentiality to the personal visitor's background information.
- 4.3 Young people have the right to refuse a visit at any time. The only exception to this applies to QPS officers acting under instructions from a court.<sup>2</sup>
- 4.4 If QPS wish to interview a young person on centre, the YDC must:
  - inform the young person that QPS cannot question them without their consent
  - advise the young person that QPS may use their body worn cameras and/or other recording equipment during the interview with their (the young person's) consent for evidence gathering purposes

---

<sup>2</sup> For example, delivering a Notice to Appear.



- facilitate a support person for the young person
- provide the young person an opportunity to speak with their legal representative before the interview
- case note the young person's consent if they wish to proceed with the interview
- debrief with the young person following the interview.

## 5. Conditions of entry

5.1 Before entry, all approved visitors will be advised of the following obligations and responsibilities that apply for the duration of their visit, including that they must:

- complete the visitors register and provide photographic proof of identity
- wear appropriate clothing<sup>3</sup> and safe, enclosed footwear
- submit items in their possession to be searched upon request of YDC staff
- comply with any lawful and reasonable direction given by YDC staff.

5.2 Visitors will be made aware that CCTV and body worn camera audio and video footage may be captured during their visit through appropriate signage and notifications.

5.3 The following list prescribes the only items personal and professional visitors are authorised to bring into the YDC without prior approval of the ED:

- coins for vending machines
- photographs
- letters
- baby bottles and/or baby food for parents with infants
- items required for the visit, such as paper files and notebooks.

5.4 Personal visitors are also permitted to bring:

- a young person's clothes for a court appearance
- a young person's clothes for a funeral attendance, Sorry Business or Sad News
- money for a young person for deposit into their personal account.

5.5 Any clothes brought by a visitor for the purpose of a court appearance, must be inspected by YDC staff prior to providing them to a young person.

5.6 The YDC may reject any other item a visitor brings for a young person.

5.7 If personal, professional or accredited visitors (excluding the Inspector of Detention Services) wish to bring a restricted item into the visits area, approval must be sought from the ED by completing the Request for restricted item approval form. Refer to policy 4-1: Management of restricted and prohibited articles for more information.

## 6. Entry to detention centre may be refused or terminated

6.1 The ED, DD, AD, unit manager, shift supervisor or visits coordinator may refuse an approved visitor entry or request a visitor to leave for any of the following reasons:

- they fail to comply with a reasonable direction
- they engage in any behaviour or action that poses a safety and security risk or may disrupt the good order of the centre
- their presence would not be in the best interest of the young person
- they appear to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs

---

<sup>3</sup> Refer to definitions table.



- they attend the YDC without a booking
- upon request, they do not/refuse to provide their name, address and photographic proof of identify
- upon request, they refuse to submit to an external physical search
- upon request, they refuse to allow anything in their possession to be searched.

6.2 If a person refuses to leave after they are requested to do so, a police officer or YDC staff member may use force that is reasonable and necessary to remove the visitor from the centre.

6.3 Visitor misconduct that may constitute a potential criminal offence (e.g. bringing in an illicit substance) should be referred to QPS via the client relations manager.

## **7. Visit facilitation, restrictions and supervision**

7.1 YDCs will ensure the visits area provides a welcoming atmosphere for visitors and has the following facilities:

- tea and coffee
- access to BBQ areas and BBQ packs for special occasions
- access to a birthday cake if personal visitors attend to celebrate a young person's birthday
- photographic facilities.

7.2 YDCs must provide flexible visiting hours.

7.3 The visits coordinator and/or visits officer will ensure visits are supervised in the least intrusive manner while having regard to safety and security considerations. The use of CCTV surveillance systems for this supervision is permitted.

7.4 A risk assessment is undertaken to ascertain the type of visit to be conducted.

7.5 Clear behavioural expectations are reiterated to young people and visitors before the start of the scheduled visit.

7.6 If misconduct occurred in a previous visit, young people and visitors will be advised of any visit restrictions applicable, at the time of booking and before the start of the scheduled visit.

7.7 If a safety and security risk has been identified that cannot be managed in another way, use of a non-contact visits room will be provided at the approval of the DD or AD.<sup>4</sup>

## **8. Financial assistance for personal visitors**

8.1 Personal visitors may apply for financial assistance for associated travel expenses if they are experiencing financial difficulties and without such assistance, would be unable or seldom able to visit the young person.

8.2 Relevant travel expenses may include:

- flights (ED, DD or AD approval required for intrastate travel)<sup>5</sup>
- taxi, bus or train fare
- accommodation
- meals provided on centre for specified visits
- fuel reimbursement.

---

<sup>4</sup> Obligations under the *Human Rights Act 2019* will be fully considered in relation to any non-contact visits.

<sup>5</sup> As per the travel delegations, noting only the Senior Executive Director, Youth Detention Operations and Reform can approve interstate travel.



- 8.3 Personal visitors will be assisted to apply for financial assistance by the cultural unit, the young person's caseworker, or the visits coordinator.
- 8.4 The ED, DD, AD or manager, client services will approve or decline the application for financial assistance (noting the requirements of 8.2 for flights) based on the following considerations:
- young person's needs
  - whether the visitor's residence is a significant distance from the centre
  - if the visit is in relation to a significant event
  - available transport options
  - number of people attending visit
  - any previous visits.
- 8.5 A written response will be provided to the applicant by the manager, finance and administration, (coordinated with client services and the visits coordinator) about the outcome. If declined, the reasons why will also be provided. If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome, they can escalate their concerns through the complaints process.
- 8.6 Ongoing financial assistance will be assessed by client services and/or the visits coordinator and recommended as resources permit and subject to application approval.

## 9. Other types of visits

- 9.1 Young people are permitted to take a leave of absence from a YDC to attend a visit, including visits to correctional facilities. Refer to policy YD-2-2: Leave of absence for further information.
- 9.2 The Visits Beyond Visits (VBV) program provides opportunities for youth justice service centre (YJSC) staff around Queensland to visit young people in detention beyond the visits centre and connect with YDC staff to share information and improve transitional processes for young people. Refer to chapter 1 – Care and management of young people.

## 10. Record keeping

- 10.1 The following details must be recorded on DCOIS:
- the scheduled visit, arrival, departure, assistance or non-attendance of all visitors
  - assisted visits application and decision
  - each young person's approved visitors list
  - contact restrictions related to personal visitors.

## Objectives

Fundamental to a young person's rights, wellbeing and rehabilitation while in youth detention is the maintenance of their relationships with family, friends, Elders, kinship carers, respected members, local community members and other people of significance and the establishment of professional relationships with stakeholders such as legal representatives, non-government agency support workers and the Office of the Public Guardian Community Visitors. These relationships provide young people support and maintain important connections while in youth detention and upon their return to their community.

This policy establishes the fundamental principles to ensure these relationships are supported and maintained in a manner that is culturally safe and in the best interests of the young person while ensuring the safety and security of the centre.

This policy also aims to protect and promote young people's rights in accordance with the *Human Rights Act 2019*.



## Scope

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- Policy YD-1-1: Casework
- Policy YD-1-2: Behaviour support
- Policy YD-1-4: Room sharing
- Policy YD-1-16: Restorative practice
- Policy YD-3-4: Protective actions continuum
- Policy YD-3-9: Identifying and reporting harm in a youth detention centre
- Policy YD-4-1: Management of restricted and prohibited articles
- Chapter 1: Care and management of young people, Youth Detention Centre Operations Manual
- Chapter 4: Security management, Youth Detention Centre Operations Manual.
- Appendix 02: Philosophy of youth detention services

## Roles and responsibilities

- Client services manager:
  - approve financial assistance provided to personal visitors (excluding flight costs)
  - notify relevant YDC staff of the decision.
- YDC caseworker:
  - conduct background checks and seek recommendations regarding personal visitors
  - include professional visitors on young person's visitors list
  - help personal visitors to apply for financial assistance as appropriate
  - advise young person and YJSC of any rejected personal visitors (without disclosing confidential information)
  - advise personal visitors of rejection of financial assistance
  - advise young person of rights if QPS wishes to interview them, case note young person's consent.
- Section supervisor and detention youth worker:
  - draft visitors list based on young person's nominations.
- Cultural unit/cultural staff:
  - proactively support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young to connect with their family and community while in detention
  - work with communities and Elders to strengthen young people's connections with their family and community through kinship mapping and on-centre visits
  - liaise with YJSCs and community stakeholders for assistance in facilitating video conferencing, where required
  - conduct background checks and seek recommendations regarding personal visitors
  - include professional visitors on young person's visitors list
  - assist personal visitors to apply for financial assistance as appropriate
  - where possible, provide transport assistance to personal visitors
  - advise young person and YJSC of any rejected personal visitors (without disclosing confidential information)
  - advise personal visitors of rejection of financial assistance
  - advise young person of rights if QPS wishes to interview them, case note young person's consent.



- Visits coordinator:
  - oversee visits process
  - coordinates estimated expenditure for assisted visits request
  - record approved visitors on DCOIS and ICMS
  - record assisted visits application and decision on DCOIS
  - refer any suspicious activities to the intelligence officer for further review or evidence
  - approve a visitor under the age of 18 years to visit a young person.
- Senior intelligence officer and intelligence officer:
  - inform client services and visits coordinator of any relevant intelligence relating to a young person's visit and recommend management strategies
  - review CCTV if suspected restricted/illegal item has entered the visits area.
- Manager, finance and administration:
  - monitor child related costs cost centre and determines if sufficient funds are available for assisted visit requests and provides advice to client services and/or visits coordinator about the equity and reasonableness of request
  - ensure assisted visit requests comply with relevant departmental financial policies, procedures and delegations.
- Unit manager, accommodation:
  - advise young person of rights if QPS wish to interview them.
- Unit manager, operations:
  - record criminal history check results on DCOIS
  - notify the visitor in writing of any visit restrictions
  - advise visitor of non-approval for a visit
  - approve a visitor under the age of 18 years to visit a young person.
- DD or AD:
  - ensure information about the arrangements for visits is provided to young people's parents, carers and other significant support people in the form of centre booklets, factsheets and/or personalised letters
  - approve financial assistance, including intrastate flight costs, provided to personal visitors
  - approve visit in a non-contact room
  - approve a visitor under the age of 18 years to visit a young person.
- ED:
  - request a criminal history check
  - approve contact restrictions
  - approve financial assistance, including intrastate flight costs, provided to personal visitors
  - approve a visitor under the age of 18 years to visit a young person
  - ensure YDC staff comply with this policy
  - provide resources to put this policy into practice.
- Director, Statewide Intel and Secure Services Support:
  - provide practice support and advice to YDC operational staff and management about issues relating to compliance with this policy.



- Senior Executive Director, Youth Detention Operations and Reform:
  - approve interstate flight costs.

## Authority

*Youth Justice Act 1992*

*Youth Justice Regulation 2016*

## Delegations

Position	Delegation
Deputy Director-General Senior Executive Director, Youth Justice Executive Director, Youth Detention Centre Director, Youth Justice Practice Director, Youth Detention Operations and Support	<i>Youth Justice Act 1992</i> Section 263 (2) – Issue directions, codes, standards and guidelines for the security and management of detention centres and the safe custody and wellbeing of children in detention.
Deputy Director-General Senior Executive Director, Youth Justice Executive Director, Youth Detention Centre Deputy Director, Youth Detention Centre Director, Youth Justice Practice Director, Youth Detention Operations and Support Director, Office of the Director-General Manager, Office of the Director-General Principal Inspector	<i>Youth Justice Act 1992</i> Section 263 (4) – Inspect and monitor operation of detention centres.
Deputy Director-General Senior Executive Director, Youth Justice Executive Director, Youth Detention Centre Deputy Director, Youth Detention Centre Director, Youth Justice Practice Director, Youth Detention Operations and Support	<i>Youth Justice Act 1992</i> Section 263 (5) – Must ensure principles are complied with.
Deputy Director-General Senior Executive Director, Youth Justice Executive Director, Youth Detention Centre Deputy Director, Youth Detention Centre Assistant Director, Youth Detention Centre Unit Manager (Accommodation) Unit Manager (Operations) Unit Manager, Youth Detention Centre Shift Supervisor, Youth Detention Centre Visits Coordinator, Youth Detention Centre	<i>Youth Justice Act 1992</i> Section 272 (2), (3), (4), (5), (6) - Approve entry of visitors to detention centre. Refuse entry to detention centre. Require visit to be supervised by detention centre staff. Ask visitor to submit anything in their possession for search by youth detention staff. Give a visitor a direction.
Deputy Director-General Senior Executive Director, Youth Justice Executive Director, Youth Detention Centre Deputy Director, Youth Detention Centre Assistant Director, Youth Detention Centre Unit Manager (Operations) Unit Manager, Youth Detention Centre Shift Supervisor, Youth Detention Centre Visits Coordinator, Youth Detention Centre	<i>Youth Justice Act 1992</i> Section 272 (7), - Direct visitor to leave centre if they fail to submit to a search or comply with a reasonable direction.
Deputy Director-General Senior Executive Director, Youth Justice Executive Director, Youth Detention Centre	<i>Youth Justice Act 1992</i> section 273 (1) – May ask the commissioner of the police service to give the chief executive a report about the criminal history of a person visiting, or who has applied to visit, a detention centre.
Deputy Director-General Senior Executive Director, Youth Justice Executive Director, Youth Detention Centre Deputy Director, Youth Detention Centre Assistant Director, Youth Detention Centre	<i>Youth Justice Regulation 2016</i> Section 27 (2) – Must keep a record of search.



Unit Manager (Operations), Youth Detention Centre Unit Manager (Accommodation), Youth Detention Centre Shift Supervisor, Youth Detention Centre Section Supervisor, Youth Detention Centre Court Supervisor, Youth Detention Centre Visits Coordinator, Youth Detention Centre Youth Worker, Youth Detention Centre	
Deputy Director-General Senior Executive Director, Youth Justice Executive Director, Youth Detention Centre Deputy Director, Youth Detention Centre Assistant Director, Youth Detention Centre Unit Manager (Accommodation), Youth Detention Centre Unit Manager (Operations), Youth Detention Centre Shift Supervisor, Youth Detention Centre Section Supervisor, Youth Detention Centre Youth Worker, Youth Detention Centre	Youth Justice Regulation 2016 Section 28 (4) – Record particulars of property in property register and ensure it is signed.

## Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

Term	Definition
Accredited visitor	Means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Minister</li> <li>• a Member of the Legislative Assembly</li> <li>• the Director-General</li> <li>• the Deputy Director-General</li> <li>• the Senior Executive Director, Youth Detention Operations and Reform</li> <li>• the principal inspector and any other officer with a delegated authority under section 263(4) of the <i>Youth Justice Act 1992</i></li> <li>• a member of the United Nations Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNSPT)</li> <li>• the Inspector of Detention Services (IDS) and any other person acting on behalf of the IDS</li> <li>• a Youth Justice staff member.</li> </ul>
Appropriate clothing	Means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• closed in shoes at all times (sandals, thongs or stiletto heels are not permitted)</li> <li>• not clothing displaying obscene or discriminatory slogans</li> <li>• not short skirts</li> <li>• not sleeveless shirts, tank tops and singlets</li> <li>• not excessively tight clothing, transparent fabric and clothing that is overly revealing</li> <li>• minimal jewellery.</li> </ul>
Leave of absence	When a young person temporarily leaves a YDC (i.e. there is an expectation of their return) and their custody has not been transferred to another party.
Non-contact visit	A visit where contact between the visitor and young person is restricted by use of the non-contact facility.
Personal visitor	Generally refers to parents, care givers, friends, community members and religious and spiritual counsellors.
Professional visitor	A person who provides one on one support or services to a young person and is subject to criminal history screening as part of the conditions of their employment. Professional visitors generally refer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a legal professional</li> <li>• a QPS Officer</li> <li>• a casework professional from either Youth Justice or Child Safety</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a commission Community Visitor.</li> </ul> <p>A professional visitor may also be an accredited visitor and vice versa.</p>
Restricted contact visit	Visits that are facilitated at the restricted contact table.
Restricted article	<p>The following items are restricted within a YDC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tools</li> <li>knives (including rescue knives) and scissors</li> <li>keys and key fobs</li> <li>chemicals, fuels and gas</li> <li>restraint equipment</li> <li>gardening and grounds maintenance equipment</li> <li>stationary</li> <li>program equipment</li> <li>medical items in the health services area</li> <li>computers and telecommunication equipment (e.g. mobile phones, USB sticks, portable music players, cameras, smart watches &amp; etc)</li> <li>any other item that the ED determines to be restricted.</li> </ul>
YDC operational staff	A staff member who has direct care responsibility for young people, e.g. a detention youth worker or section supervisor.

## Human rights compatibility statement

Youth Justice is committed to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights. Under the [Human Rights Act 2019](#), Youth Justice has an obligation to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with and properly considers human rights. When making a decision about the care and management of young people, decision-makers must comply with that obligation.

## Multicultural Queensland Charter

Youth Justice supports the [Multicultural Queensland Charter](#), established under the *Multicultural Recognition Act 2016* (Qld). The Charter seeks to promote Queensland as a unified, harmonious and inclusive community.

## Child safe standards

The Royal Commission into Institutionalised Responses to Child Sexual Abuse developed several national [child safe standards](#) for institutions and organisations working with children. Youth Justice is cognisant of these standards when considering operational practice guidelines and service delivery in community and youth detention centres.

## State disability plan

Youth Justice will work with our partners to build a fairer, more inclusive Queensland where people with a disability, their families and carers are able to access the same opportunities, on the same basis as everyone else. We will take actions to progress the priorities of the [All Abilities Queensland: opportunities for all](#) state disability plan and support improved access to services for Queenslanders with disability.

**Records file number:** nil

**Version number:** 1.6

**Date of approval:** 15 July 2020



**Approved by:** 1.0 Director-General (23 September 2013)

1.1 Assistant Director-General (17 March 2015)  
1.2 Director, Practice Program and Design (16 November 2017)  
1.3 Deputy Director-General (2 December 2019)  
1.4 Youth Detention Executive Directors (14 May 2020)  
1.5 Director, Youth Detention Operations and Support (15 July 2020)  
1.6 Director, Statewide Intel and Secure Services Support (26 July 2023)

**Date of operation:** 17 March 2015

**Date to be reviewed:** 3 years from the date of approval

---

**Office:** Statewide Intel and Secure Services Support

**Help contact:** Secure Services Support  
[YDCPracticeEnquiries@cyjma.qld.gov.au](mailto:YDCPracticeEnquiries@cyjma.qld.gov.au)

---

## Communication strategy

- publish on intranet
- publish on internet
- advise staff to read
- supervisors discuss with direct reports

## Links

[Australasian Youth Justice Administrators \(AYJA\) service standards for juvenile custodial facilities](#)

[Basics of youth detention](#)

[Human Rights Act 2019](#)

[Information for parents and carers](#)

Travel delegations

[United Nations Rules for the Protection of Young People Deprived of Their Liberty 1990](#)

[Visiting a young person in detention](#)

Youth Detention Centre Operations Manual

Youth Justice delegations

Youth Justice policies