**Search Policy**

**Purpose:** It is the intent of this policy to mitigate and prevent the presence of all contraband that threatens the safety and confidentiality of all youth and staff and to ensure the safety of participants, staff, volunteers, and visitors by identifying any and all contraband and appropriately removing it for storage or disposal.

**Policy:** Staff may engage in searches on a regular or random basis to assure the security and protection of all. At any time, participants may be asked to empty their pockets and/or take off their shoes. In all cases, staff should be respectful and safe guard participant rights during any search. In no case will a body search be conducted.

Staff must be diligent in their efforts to prevent the introduction of contraband into the shelters. Staying alert at all times, being observant in all supervision and the execution of appropriate search techniques greatly enhances the ability to maintain a safe environment for staff and youth.

The use of an electronic metal detecting wand prior to entry into the facility (upon admission, when returning from school, outing, or visitation) where video surveillance is present is mandatory.

**Procedure and/or Process:**

**Education:**

* Each program will utilize the educational video or information packet developed by the Florida Network summarizing contraband and the consequences of having it in a residential program. The video or document shall inform the youth of contraband and what to do if approached by staff or youth with contraband. This should be incorporated into each youth’s orientation and document the youth’s review and acknowledgement.
* As part of the youth’s intake process to a CINS/FINS shelter, staff shall ask youth if and what substances they typically use to self-medicate or cope with symptoms of depression and/or anxiety. Staff will ensure that youth and parents/guardians understand and acknowledge that substances are contraband and will not be permitted in the shelter. Shelter staff will be engaged to work with youth to develop alternative coping mechanisms (e.g., using a stress ball, listening to music, deep breathing exercises, etc.).
* Contraband detection and participant searches will be standing agenda items added to all shift brief meetings. During each daily meeting, the shift leader will ensure/confirm that staff members do not have anything that could be considered contraband on their person or in the program.
* A review of contraband, including prohibited and illegal items and the consequences of introducing contraband, as well as search expectations will be a part of the new hire training packet. Employees will sign an employee acknowledgement form. Each program will review its contraband expectation practices annually at a minimum.
* For the safety of all concerned, upon admission the youth and their possessions shall be searched to ensure that items are not brought into the shelter that are illegal, potential safety hazards or otherwise not allowed by program rules.

**Search Protocol:**

* Conduct searches one youth at a time and ensure search is fully captured on video.
* Place bags and loose items aside and complete a thorough inspection after wanding youth.
* Ask each youth to:
  + Remove any hat or head covering and any outwear for inspection
  + Empty and turn out all pockets
  + Remove shoes; tap shoes together while upside down to dislodge any concealed items
  + Remove socks to be inspected by staff, visually inspect feet and toes
* Use a fully charged, hand-held metal detector wand from head to toe, back to front. If a participant is suspected of being in possession of contraband that is not detectable by a wand, shelter staff shall contact law enforcement to conduct a pat-down search. Such items include but are not limited to: any illegal drugs such as marijuana, hemp, or industrial hemp, any controlled substances without a legal prescription, any firearm, any weapon (if the item is considered illegal per Florida Statute), or any explosive substance.
* Shelter staff shall search outdoor recreation areas before youth are permitted to use the area.
* In circumstances where a room search is conducted specifically involving a participant’s possessions, either the participant or another staff member must be present.

**Detection:**

* Conduct frequent and random searches within each shelter on all shifts.
* Staff will utilize search tools such as the hand-held wand to search youth periodically throughout the day, i.e., when returning from recreation.
* Programs will incorporate a “Proud Acknowledgement” program to celebrate staff who have prevented or detected contraband in the shelter though diligent efforts. For example, the Proud Acknowledgement program could also reward staff with incentives for those who recover items during searches that Management staff strategically placed or signage celebrating the numbers of days contraband-free.
* Random review of video surveillance to address any discrepancies in search practices.
* If illegal contraband is discovered, staff will handle the situation in accordance with the appropriate state and federal laws.
* In cases where there is a small amount of substance discovered of unknown origin, it may be destroyed in the presence of at least two staff members and the event documented in the program logbook.
* If the item is legal for the youth to own, but in violation of agency policy, the item shall be confiscated, secured, and may be returned to the youth’s legal guardian or collected by the youth at discharge.

**Response:**

* Each program will notify law enforcement if staff find illegal contraband during a search.
* Specifically illegal contraband should be secured and law enforcement contacted to remove the contraband. If illegal contraband is discovered in the possession of a participant, law enforcement should be contacted and the CCC must be called within the two (2) hour timeframe from discovery.
* Each program will initiate an internal investigation to determine any incongruence’s as it relates to searches according to rule and policy.
* Shelter staff shall wand any recovered vape pen, cell phone, or other item to determine if it is detectable by the metal detector. The results shall be documented in the incident report and internal investigation.

**Data Collection:**

* Programs will share best practices and areas needing improvement with the Florida Network (FN) Contraband Reduction Implementation Workgroup monthly. This information will be shared with the FJJA (Florida Juvenile Justice Association) Contraband Reduction Taskforce quarterly.