

# **Parents/Guardians Bill of Rights**

## **Indiana DOC/Division of Youth Services**

The Division of Youth Services is dedicated to protecting, caring for and improving the lives of youth and the families of those children committed to the Department of Correction. We are committed to promoting an atmosphere of trust and compassion which improves the quality of life, conditions of confinement and reintegration and aftercare services which improve long-term outcomes for youth and their families. We are dedicated to increased family engagement initiatives which promote your parental rights and continued engagement with your child during their commitment to the Department of Correction, Division of Youth Services.”

**1. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to know that you and your child will be treated fairly regardless of race, religion, national origin, language, economic status, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or age and that each child will be treated as an individual.**

*You and your child will be treated fairly by DYS staff, without regard to your age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, the color of your skin, the language you speak, the amount of money you have, the country you come from, or disabilities you may have. You and your child should always be treated with professionalism, respect, and dignity.*

**2. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to expect DYS to provide a safe, secure, and sanitary environment for your child.**

*As a parent/guardian, you have a right to expect that the environment your child is in will be safe, secure, and clean.*

**3. As a parent/guardian, you have the right not to be judged, blamed or labeled because of your child’s incarceration.**

*We recognize that there are many factors that contribute to a child being committed to DYS. Your child’s incarceration is not an indicator of your worth as a parent. DYS staff will not judge you because your child has been committed to DYS.*

**4. As a parent/guardian you have the right to be a vocal and active advocate on behalf of your child.**

*It is more important than ever before to be a vocal and active advocate on behalf of your child. Some ways to be involved are:*

- The right to prohibit identifiable pictures or videos of your child from being disseminated for public use without your permission.
- The right to direct the religious training of your child.
- The right to file a complaint with the expectation that it will be tracked, investigated, and resolved in a timely manner in accordance with law, policies, or administrative directives.
- The right to access any policy or directive upon request unless it is confidential in nature.
- The right to express your concern and have it taken seriously without the threat or fear of retaliation against you or your child.

**5. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to be an active participant when decisions are made about your child.**

*As a parent/guardian, you also still have the right to actively participate when decisions are made about your child. This may include:*

- Participate in person or via telephone on any and all treatment teams.
- Participate in person or via telephone on any educational conference.
- Participate in person or via telephone for mental health/medical conferences
- Attend family sessions to review student’s progress in program

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### **6. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to be informed about matters related to your child's welfare.**

*Parents/guardians need information about their children. That need is especially critical when your child is away from you for long periods of time. While your son or daughter is in DYS, you have the right to be informed about different aspects of his or her welfare. Some of these rights include:*

- The right to timely notification of your child's behavior, including any consequences for rule violations.
- The right to timely notifications of special events at your child's facility, including graduations or other activities.
- The right to be provided contact information for the Office of the Ombudsman.
- The right to timely notification if your child is assaulted injured, hospitalized, transferred to another facility, or escapes.
- The right to be informed of your child's progress in treatment, including medical, psychological, psychiatric, and educational progress.
- The right to be informed of serious or persistent medical conditions related to your child.

### **7. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to communicate with your child, including visitation, telephone, and mail.**

*Continued communication with your child is essential. You have the right to visit your child, talk to him or her on the telephone, and to send and receive letters from your child within guideline. Specifically, those rights include:*

- The right to a timely visit with your child after properly arriving at the receiving facility.
- The right to have your child's mail and telephone calls handled in a respectful, timely fashion.
- The right to face-to-face contact visits with your child.
- The right to be informed, in a timely manner, of current policies and procedures that affect visiting with your child
- The right to have special visitation requests accommodated if approved by the facility, may included long-distance travel requirements, parent work schedules that preclude visiting during normal hours, or bereavement.
- The right to have accurate information about current visitation rules.

### **8. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to be assured that all DYS staff are professional, courteous, and respectful.**

*You have the right to expect that DYS staff will treat you and your child in a professional, courteous, and respectful manner. DYS staff will be professionals in their field. You have the right to know that they have been properly trained and credentialed for their job responsibilities. Furthermore, you should expect DYS staff to keep accurate records, from the time of your child's intake to his or her eventual discharge.*

### **9. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to meaningful participation in your child's transition planning – from intake through community reentry and eventual discharge.**

*As a parent/guardian, you have the right to participate in the release planning, beginning at your child's initial commitment to DYS and continuing through the Community Supervision process all the way to his or her eventual discharge. Your rights include:*

- The right to know that effective transition planning for your child, including early identification of youth and family needs and referral to appropriate services and resources, begins at intake and continues through reentry until discharge.
- The right to be informed of the services, support, and resources available to you and your child in your home community, including possible medical coverage and other government benefits.
- The right to be informed of your rights and responsibilities while your child is on community supervision.