

<i>Child Protection Act R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. C-5.1</i>	Program	Children in Care	
	Subject	Overnight and Non-Overnight Visits	Policy # 2.9
Effective Date: September 25, 2013		Authorized by: Carol Anne Duffy	
Revised Date:		Deputy Minister	

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Director of Child Protection recognizes the importance for children in care to develop and maintain healthy social skills and family/peer relationships.
- 1.2 The Director of Child Protection must demonstrate due diligence in decision-making as a responsible and conscientious parent.
- 1.3 Foster Parent(s) and Residential Services staff, as caregivers, have knowledge of the social and emotional needs of the children in their care and the importance of establishing and maintaining positive family/peer relationships.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 This policy does not apply to overnight visits with a parent(s) in receipt of a Child Protection Service. Overnight visits with a parent(s) in receipt of a Child Protection Service may be approved by a Child Protection Social Worker and documented in the parent's Case Plan and the child's Plan of Care.

Non-Overnight Visits

- 2.2 Non-overnight visits may be approved by the caregiver unless restricted by the child's Plan of Care and/or a Child Protection Social Worker. The caregiver shall be responsible for ensuring appropriate supervision is in place during the visit. The caregiver's contact information is to be provided and the caregiver must be available to respond to the child if needed.
- 2.3 Caregivers must advise the Child Protection Social Worker of any child initiated requests for a non-overnight visit that could not be accommodated.

Overnight Visits

- 2.4 Overnight visits, including relative and non-relative, require prior approval by a Child Protection Social Worker. Advance notice is important to ensure children can participate as deemed appropriate.

- 2.5 The Child Protection Social Worker, in consultation with the child's caregiver, will review all requests for overnight visits and make a decision. If the child is in the temporary custody and guardianship of the Director of Child Protection, the parent(s) wishes will be considered.
- 2.6 The Child Protection Social Worker will consider the following criteria to assess the risk and vulnerability of the child when making the decision to approve an over-night visit:
- Purpose of the visit
 - Wishes of the child
 - Impact for child to be separated from caregiver
 - Responsible adult supervision throughout the visit
 - Age and developmental needs of the child
 - Child Protection Social Worker's knowledge of the family including a Child Protection Record Check to determine if the person is of known risk to potentially cause harm to the child. The Director of Child Protection does not require consent to complete a Child Protection Record Check of provincial Child Protection files for this purpose, however, consent to a Child Protection Record Check is required for all other jurisdictions
 - Caregiver's knowledge of the family
 - Availability of the child's caregiver to respond to the child, if necessary
 - Child's medical condition, behaviours, fears /anxieties, culture, special needs, etc., and ability of the family to meet these needs
 - Child's previous knowledge and/or contact with the family
 - Child's previous experience with overnight visits
 - Child's previous experience with overnight visits with this family
 - Proposed sleeping arrangements
 - Family's experience in caring for children of similar age
 - Proposed activities during overnight visit
 - Presence, age and gender of other children
 - Frequency and nature of child requests for overnight visits
- 2.7 A Criminal Record Check for all adults residing in the home is required prior to the Child Protection Social Worker's approval for an overnight visit for a child under the age of twelve (12) years. If it is determined the cost for a Criminal Record Check is prohibitive to the child going for the overnight visit, the Child Protection Social Worker, in consultation with the Child Protection Supervisor, may approve this expenditure to be paid from the child's file.
- 2.8 The Child Protection Social Worker may request a Criminal Record Check, for all adults residing in the home, when a child twelve (12) years and older is being approved for an overnight visit.
- 2.9 The original Criminal Record Check is to be provided to the Child Protection Social Worker for inclusion in the child's file.
- 2.10 In the event concerns are identified in the Child Protection Record Check and/or the Criminal Record Check, the Child Protection Social Worker will consult with the Child Protection Supervisor regarding approval of the request.

- 2.11 An updated Criminal Record Check will be requested every two (2) years if the child continues to request overnight visits at a previously approved home.
- 2.12 Upon approval for an overnight visit, the caregiver must be available to respond to the child if needed. The caregiver will provide the child with age-appropriate safeguarding information and a safety plan of who to contact and how contact will be made should the child become uncomfortable or afraid.
- 2.13 The caregiver will provide the supervising adult(s) with sufficient information regarding the child to include the child's:
- Likes and dislikes
 - Routines
 - Cultural considerations
 - Medical needs to include known allergies
 - Fears/phobias
 - Behavior and appropriate management strategies
 - Contact information for caregiver and the After Hours Emergency Child Protection Service
- 2.14 The caregiver shall review, with children in care over the age of twelve (12) years and the supervising adult(s), related departmental policies for anticipated activities.
- 2.15 Following an overnight visit and prior to the next overnight visit, the caregiver will discuss the visit with the child to assess the child's positive and/or negative experience and discuss future plans for ongoing visits. The caregiver will immediately advise the Child Protection Social Worker of any identified concerns and the Child Protection Social Worker will determine the required followup which will be documented on the child's file.
- 2.16 The Child Protection Social Worker will continue to monitor the child's experience regarding visits through ongoing contact with the child and caregiver.

3.0 REFERENCES

After Hours Emergency Child Protection Service 1.11