To guide and promote the consistent use of best practices, to ensure staff accountability, and to pursue excellence in service delivery the Division for Children, Youth and Families maintains a policy manual. Effective policies set expected practices while recognizing the need for flexibility in day-to-day implementation. Policy supports staff in daily functions by providing the parameters within which they may act decisively and with assurance, while increasing efficiency and consistency through standardized practices. A well-articulated policy provides logic behind actions, transparency in decisions, and allows for critical thinking skills when deviations are necessary due to specific circumstances.

**Purpose**

This policy establishes the requirements for the official, written policies and procedures of the Division for Children, Youth and Families.

**Definitions**

“DCYF” or the “Division” means the DHHS Division for Children, Youth and Families.

“DHHS” or the “Department” means the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services.

“NH DCYF Practice Model” means the beliefs and each bureau’s guiding principles that drive the agency’s approach to providing services, and creates a framework for decision-making and a practice structure within all levels of the agency.

**Policy**

1. Effective policies set expectations across the Division through reinforcement of the NH DCYF Practice Model. The primary principles for effective policies are:

   A. Alignment with the mission and vision of DCYF and the NH Department of Health and Human Services;

   B. Cultural competency, including the impact of geographic locations;

   C. Expectation for a professional and compassionate approach to working with clients, colleagues, and stakeholders, assuming good intentions and goodwill;

   D. Fidelity to best practice;

   E. Flexibility in implementation of practices to meet specific outcomes; and
F. Continuous review of quality assurance and quality improvements.

II. Policies are presented in an established format.

A. A header section that includes:
   1. The assigned DCYF policy reference number and title of the policy;
   2. The DCYF manual chapter where the policy is located;
   3. The section of the DCYF manual chapter where the policy is located;
   4. The effective date of the policy;
   5. The Policy Directive number through which the policy was released;
   6. Identification of any New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated which impact the practice;
   7. Identification of any Administrative Rules which impact the practice;
   8. Identification of any governing Federal Regulations; and
   9. Identification of any referenced forms, or attachments.

B. An optional philosophy statement related to the DCYF Practice Model;

C. A concise statement of the purpose, or use, of the policy;

D. Definitions of terms and acronyms used in the policy;

E. An outline of policy statements which explain the action, best practice, or requirements to be followed, written at the Department’s recommended reading level (6th grade);

F. A Practice Guidance section with:
   1. Any applicable recommended procedures, which explain the step-by-step process for task completion and identifies the staff who are responsible for the DCYF actions;
   2. Frequently asked questions and answers;
   3. Visualizations of procedures and workflows; and
   4. Resources available for further information.

G. Other information as necessary to implement the policy and procedures.

III. All staff are responsible to be aware of and follow all policies established by the Division for Children, Youth and Families.

   A. Administrators, Program Managers, Supervisors, Attorneys, and State Office staff receive Director-approved Policy Directives relative to their respective program(s) for communication to staff they supervise and implementation.
B. All new staff are responsible for reading the DCYF Policy Manual and asking any questions during orientation.

C. All staff are responsible for maintaining knowledge of policy changes pursuant to 2788 Release of Policy Directives.

IV. The Director of DCYF, or designee, may in his/her discretion waive provisions of the policies contained in the DCYF Policy Manual.

V. DCYF policies shall remain in effect, regardless of any scheduled review date until notice is received from the Director, or designee, to replace, modify, or delete the policy or specific provisions contained in the policy.