

TO: SYSC & Juvenile Justice Staff
FROM: DCYF Director Joseph Ribsam
DATE: March 20, 2020
RE: COVID-19 EMERGENCY DIRECTIVE – SYSC VISITATION

As a result of the latest developments regarding COVID-19 in the State, the Department of Health and Human Services, Sununu Youth Services Center (SYSC) is temporarily suspending visitation activities for youth at SYSC. SYSC will continue re-evaluate visitation and access to the facility and provide regular updates.

VISITATION AT SYSC

SYSC is suspending in-person visitation, volunteer services, and non-essential access at SYSC effective immediately, Thursday, March 19, 2020 until further notice. This includes all professional visitors including attorneys. SYSC understands the importance of visitation, volunteer programs, interns and attorney/client activity and will be monitoring the situation daily.

SYSC has made arrangements for increased access to video conferencing for visits with family, mentors, and attorneys. Requests for video conferencing will be facilitated by George Dovas or Janelle Lavin. Attorneys with urgent needs should be directed to contact the SYSC Director or her designee.

All other non-essential activities and access to the facility are also suspended until further notice. JPPOs should engage in visits and treatment meetings remotely unless authorized by the Director.

COMMUNITY VISITATION

Non-emergency youth visits to the community are also being suspended effective immediately. All planned furloughs and community visits shall be put on hold until further notice. Parents and families should be given additional opportunities to visit remotely when possible.

IMPLEMENTATION

This Directive shall be effective immediately and remain effective until it is expressly revoked. The SYSC Director shall be authorized to approve exceptions based on the individual needs of a youth. When exceptions occur, the latest CDC guidance and protocols for screening, social distancing, and cleaning shall occur. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>; <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/>

This Directive shall be effective until it is expressly revoked. Where this Directive conflicts with or is inconsistent with current policy, this directive shall be followed. Specifically, this Directive supersedes DCYF Policy 2073, Visitation; DCYF Policy 2070, SYSC Visitors and the Visitation Routine; and DCYF Policy 2340 Youth Trust Status where there are conflicts.