

## Social Media & Electronic Device Use for Children in Substitute Care

### SUMMIT COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

<b>ORC:</b> 5103.162; 2151.315  <b>OAC:</b> N/A  <b>USC:</b> N/A  <b>CFR:</b> N/A	<b>ORIGINAL:</b> 09/2007  <b>REVISIONS:</b> 12/2010; 12/2011; 07/2016  <b>RELATED FORM(S):</b> N/A  <b>RELATED PROCEDURE/POLICY(IES):</b> N/A
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative<br><input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal<br><input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources<br><input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal<br><input type="checkbox"/> Safety & Security<br><input type="checkbox"/> Social Services - All Departments<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Services - Foster & Adoption |
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All Staff      
 Bargaining Unit      
 Non-Bargaining      
 Management

#### **POLICY:**

The use of cell phones and social media may foster normalcy for youth in substitute care; provide opportunities to fit in with their peers, maintain contact with extended family, and learn about available resources. However, Summit County Children Services (SCCS) recognizes that use of social media can also create risks for youth. Subsequently, SCCS works with youth in Agency custody and caregivers to provide education and establish guidelines for social media and internet use.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

Assigned case workers must explain the following Agency guidelines for using the internet and electronic devices to both the child and their caregiver.

Caregivers should consider the following when making decisions regarding the use of the internet and electronic devices for youth:

- The child's age, maturity and developmental level.
- Potential risk factors.
- Best interest of the child.
- The child's emotional and developmental growth.
- Family-like living experience.
- The child's behavioral history.

The assigned caseworker should inform the caregiver if there are any specific prohibitions or limitations regarding a child's use of internet and electronic devices.

**Cell phones:**

SCCS does not provide cell phones to children, however SCCS recognizes that a parent, guardian or substitute caregiver may provide a phone for a child. SCCS asks that cell phones not be given to children under age 13. Substitute caregivers shall monitor and control the use of all cell phones given to children age 12 and under.

The assigned caseworker and caregiver shall review guidelines for cell phone use with all youth in substitute care. Discussion of the guidelines shall include but is not limited to the following:

- The extent of use permitted including how long, and times of the day.
- Children are prohibited from using cell phones after bedtime and it is preferred that caregivers maintain the cell phone during bedtime hours.
- Who the child is permitted to contact.
- The substitute caregiver shall restrict and monitor use when there is a no contact order or a requirement that visitation is closely supervised.
- Education regarding the dangers of "sexting" and photographing him/herself in a state of nudity or in a sexually suggestive manner.
- The substitute caregiver and/or caseworker shall periodically "spot check" the cell phones of youth to monitor appropriate use.

**Internet use:**

SCCS recognizes that children in substitute care often have access to the internet through many opportunities including school, the library and at the home of their substitute caregiver.

The assigned caseworker and caregiver shall review guidelines for internet use with all youth in substitute care. Discussion of the guidelines shall include, but not is not limited to the following:

- SCCS prohibits children the age of thirteen (13) to join social media sites, including but not limited to Facebook, SnapChat, and Instagram. Caregivers may provide access to social media sites for youth who are age 13 or older. Caregivers who allow youth to use social media shall obtain website addresses, login names, and passwords from the youth. Caregivers shall verify that youth have strictest security settings on all social media sites they are using.
- Substitute caregivers are requested to have parental privacy controls and appropriate security settings in place on all devices which youth have access to.
- Computer use must occur in a "common area / central location" within the caregiver's home and not in the child's bedroom.
- Children are not permitted to post caregiver address information online.
- The assigned caseworker and caregiver must educate the child about the dangers of being online and establish guidelines for use.
- Children are prohibited from accessing any sites or material that is obscene, pornographic, designated for adults only, or promotes violence or other illegal activity.

**Other types of media:**

Substitute caregivers shall utilize reasonable parenting judgement regarding a youth's access to movies, books, etc. that may contain adult content, and follow the recommended guidelines for movies rated PG13 or R.

The use of gaming systems such as X-Box and Play Station shall be monitored by the caregiver and should occur in common areas, not in the child's bedroom. Caregivers must monitor all handheld Wi-Fi/internet accessible equipment (such as iPods and DS) and routinely spot check such devices to monitor appropriate use. Caregivers shall take control of such equipment at a child's bedtime.

**Inappropriate Use**

Instances of inappropriate use by a youth of the internet or electronic devices will be reviewed on a case by case basis to determine an appropriate plan of action to address and resolve the issue.