

Alabama Department of Youth Services Emergency Actions Regarding COVID-19

In order to minimize the impact of COVID-19, the Alabama Department of Youth Services has instituted the following measures to ensure the safety of the staff and youth in our care. These measures follow the directive from Governor Kay Ivey and the guidance issued by the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Center for Disease Prevention and Control as well as the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force. See below and refer to www.alabamapublichealth.gov and www.cdc.gov for additional guidance.

- All admissions to DYS are suspended until April 6th, 2020.
- Releases prior to April 6th will be on a case by case basis and only with the committing court or JPO's knowledge and approval.
- Effective immediately, all non-essential persons will not be allowed on our facilities. This includes volunteers and visitation. Because of this additional hardship, youth will have increased phone time to talk with their families. If officers of the court need access to meet with their youth, we request that it be coordinated through the DYS Legal office.
- DYS has sent out a copy of the DYS Policy (12.10) on Communicable and Infectious Disease management to all DYS contracted facilities. The Infection Control Guidelines from the CDC has also been shared with all nursing staff at these facilities. DYS has requested that each Head Nurse provide a training on this information and document that their nurses have received this information/training.
- DYS will conduct a daily surveillance of vital signs/symptoms on all youth who have entered DYS in the last 14 days and recommends that all DYS contracted facilities conduct a similar procedure. DYS is also screening all staff entering our facilities for symptoms on a daily basis.
- The DYS School District is closed until further notice. DYS will monitor guidance provided by Public Health, the Governor's Office, and the State Department of Education.
- All essential staff are reporting to work and non-essential staff have been sent home or asked to work remotely if possible. Staff in Central office will work staggered or rotating shifts to ensure their areas of administrative support are covered.
- DYS continues to stress using universal precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and any contagious disease (handwashing, sanitizing surfaces, etc.).
- DYS has developed a facility medical contingency plan to limit the exposure of youth on our campuses and respond in the event of a child with symptoms or positive case.

For additional information on the Alabama Department of Youth Services emergency response protocols for COVID-19, please contact Shannon Weston at Shannon.weston@dys.alabama.gov or 334-215-3804.