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10.6 Phone Call/Voice Mail Policy

Philosophy and Purpose

The philosophy of this policy is to ensure that communication conducted by the Office of Child and Family Services staff is professional, considerate and responsive. Communication should be conducted with genuineness, empathy, and respect that is consistent with the language and intent of the OCFS Practice Model. The purpose of this policy is to clarify and implement expectations regarding returning of phone calls and voicemail greetings.

Standard of Practice


Phone Contact

Phone response is to be professional and clear. Staff shall identify themselves and their position upon answering the phone. Staff shall remain respectful regardless of the tenor of the caller.

Voicemail

Voicemail greetings shall be either a personalized standard greeting when the staff person is in the office or an alternative greeting specifying the person is out of the office and stating when he/she will return.

1. Voicemail messages shall be checked at least twice a day if the staff person is in the office or once a day if the staff person is away from the office.
2. Voicemail greetings shall state that the staff person will return calls by the end of the next workday. Calls shall be returned by the end of the next workday, even if only to acknowledge the call and commit to a future call back for a substantive conversation.
3. Voicemail greetings shall advise the caller to press "0" if this is an urgent situation or if the caller wants to speak with another staff person right away instead of leaving a message and waiting for a reply.
4. Voicemail greetings shall specify name of the staff person's supervisor, in case the staff person should be unable to return the call by the end of the following workday. Program Administrators, Assistant Program Administrators and Central

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Office staff need not identify a supervisor name but will leave an alternate name for contact if out of the office for more than three days.

5. During times a staff person may be out of the office for two or more days (Court, distant well-being safety reviews, travel out-of-state, vacation, sick leave, etc.). messages may be checked upon return to the office. In such situations voicemail messages shall specify the date of return to the office, and by when calls will be returned – usually that same date. It is especially important to leave a message for an alternative response when out of the office for more than two days – “please press “0” if you wish to speak to a duty worker or supervisor”. After relatively long absences, such as a vacation, a staff person may take up to three days to return messages upon return to work, provided that the message states this information so the caller understands when he/she may expect a response.
6. For extended absences advise the caller to call back when you return (give date) or ask for the duty worker rather than leave a message to prevent your voice mailbox being full.

With telephone communication, as well as other matters, everyone deserves to be treated with courtesy and respect.


Sample voicemail messages below may be used as a guide.

Sample Voicemail Messages:

This is Sally Jones, Children’s Services Caseworker. I’m sorry that I’m unable to take your call at this time. If you will leave a message I will return your call by the end of the next workday. Should I be unable to do so, my supervisor’s name is _____ . If this is urgent or you wish to speak to someone right away, please press “0”, and another staff member will assist you.

This is Sally Jones, Children’s Services Caseworker. I will be out of the office on Thursday, January 26. If you will leave me a message I’ll return your call by the end of the next workday. Should I be unable to do so, my supervisor’s name is _____ . If you wish to speak to someone right away, please press “0” and another staff member will assist you.

This is Sally Jones, Children’s Services Caseworker. I will be out of the office from Monday, July 5 through Friday, July 16. I will return on Monday, July 19 and will respond to all messages by the afternoon of Wednesday, July 21. Should I be unable to

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do so, my supervisors name is _____. Please leave me a message and I'll respond when I return. If you wish to speak to someone right away, press "0" and another staff member will assist you.

This is Sally Jones, Children's Services Caseworker. I will be out of the office for an extended time from Monday, July 6 through Friday, July 24. I will return on Monday, July 27, please do not leave a message, as the voice mail folder, if full, may delete messages, but feel free to press "0" and ask for the duty worker or my supervisor _____. Also please feel free to call back the week of the 27th. I apologize for any inconvenience.