



TN

Department of
Children's Services



Manual for Developing and Maintaining DCS Policies and Procedures

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Tennessee Department of Children's Services | Policy | Rev. July 2016



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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Children’s Services (DCS) Policies and procedures guide employees on decisions that are made and how the work is done according to applicable laws and rules. Policies and procedures increase accountability and transparency and are fundamental in the continuous quality improvement process.

This manual is intended to be a resource guide to facilitate writing effective policies and procedures for DCS. Some methods outlined in this manual are adapted from ***Writing Effective Policies and Procedures: A Step-by-Step Resource for Clear Communication by Nancy J. Campbell.***

The skill of formulating good policies is not always about the writing. It is the **decision making**. If the policy “owners” or persons responsible for subject matter do not have a clear decision about what needs to be done, the policy writer is severely limited. There is only so much that can be done with confusing, incomplete or inconsistent information. Policy “owners” or persons responsible must do their jobs before the policy writers can do theirs. It is imperative to start with a clear decision and then proceed with good writing.

Elements to Assure a Successful Policy Development Process Include:

- ◆ Management’s commitment to the policy development process:
- ◆ Qualified Personnel-writing policies and procedures is more than typing words on a page. It involves:
 - Computer skills
 - Organizational skills
 - Communication skills
 - Research
 - Writing/typing drafts
 - Conducting reviews
 - Obtaining approvals
 - Publishing documents
 - Distributing documents
 - Maintaining documents
 - Improving documents

- Revising documents, and
- Analyzing information
- ◆ Using a consistent document template;
- ◆ Communicating in multiple media forms;
- ◆ Training offered in a variety of formats;
- ◆ Ensuring legal review of all policies/procedures;
- ◆ Auditing; and
- ◆ Conducting a regularly scheduled review of policies and procedures.

PURPOSE OF DCS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

TCA 37-5-105 (c). Powers and duties of commissioner...

(3) Make and adopt rules, regulations and policies for the government, management and supervision of state children's service agencies or facilities, and children's services; prescribe the powers and duties of the officers and employees thereof; and provide for the care of children served by the department; provided, however, that such rules shall be consistent with and subject to licensing approval authority of any other state agency that has responsibility for licensing or approval of any portion of program services or facilities provided by the department;

Policies and procedures are written when there is a need to regulate, direct, inform and guide Department of Children's Services (DCS) practices, operations and services to ensure compliance with State and Federal Laws and Rules, Best Practice and Accreditation Standards, and Management Directives. DCS Policies and Procedures are reviewed and revised at least annually (or as prescribed by DCS) when practices, procedures, legal requirements or regulations change.

More Reasons for Written Policies and Procedures

- **HELP** make instructions and guidelines definite.
- **PROVIDE** quick settlement of misunderstandings.
- **HELP** reduce the range of individual decisions.
- **COVER** recurring situations to make decisions that are consistent every time.

- **SET** boundaries for jobs so that each employee knows in advance what response he or she gets from others when taking actions, making decisions, and giving responses.
- **PROVIDE** protection in the event of an audit or lawsuit.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT UNIT

1. The Policy Development Unit (PDU) provides assistance to DCS Management and programs to facilitate the development of new policies or revisions to existing policies and procedures, protocols, manuals and forms. The PDU may also assist programs with the development of work groups that include all stakeholders and subject matter experts for the subject matter to be discussed and reviewed.
2. The PDU prepares new or revised drafts using a *standardized* format for each document.
3. After program approval of the drafts, the PDU circulates policies and other related documents to applicable DCS employees and management for review and feedback.
4. The PDU maintains policies and forms in a SharePoint database for the management of documents. SharePoint enables the PDU staff to share, save and access documents.
5. Policy review comments and suggestions from the policy reviewers are disseminated to policy owners and managers for review and consideration.
6. The PDU collaborates with staff for revisions to existing, protocols, manuals and forms that may be associated with policies and when applicable, submits documents to OIT Web Development for updating to the appropriate web pages.
7. New forms and manuals are submitted to the Forms Committee for review and recommendations. If the Committee has no issues with forms or manuals, they are moved forward to the next process for finalization. If a meeting is needed to resolve issues, the PDU schedules and facilitates a Forms Committee meeting to review/discuss forms issues.
8. After the policy owners and managers review suggestions/recommendations, policies are submitted to the Policy Review Committee for review and recommendation.
9. The PDU schedules and facilitates a Policy Review Committee meeting.
10. Recommendations from the Policy Review Committee are submitted to the policy owners and managers for review and consideration.

11. After the policies are reviewed by policy owners and managers, policies are submitted for posting to the **"PREVIEW"** Web Page for a fourteen (14) day preview period. This preview period allows opportunity for an in depth review by all DCS staff, external partners and interested persons prior to final implementation.
12. After the fourteen (14) day preview period, any other recommendations are submitted to the appropriate policy owners and managers for review and consideration.
13. The PDU submits final policies to Executive Management (*i.e.*, applicable Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Executive Directors and General Counsel) for review and approval.
14. After review and approval from Executive Management, the PDU submits the policies to the Commissioner/designee for approval/official signature. The official approved policies are stored in the file-sharing system.
15. The PDU collaborates and coordinates with the DCS Office of Information Technology, Forms and Publications Unit and the Web Development Unit to post policies and other documents to the applicable Web Pages. New and revised forms are posted directly by the Forms Management Officer and do not go through the Office of Information Services, Web Development Unit.
16. In addition to development and maintenance, the PDU maintains the DCS Policies and Procedures Internet Web Page through a collaborative effort with the Office of Information Services, Web Development Unit.
17. The PDU provides assistance with legacy policy research for General Counsel, State Auditors and other persons as requested.
18. The policy development unit works with staff and Office of Information Technology to improve processes in regards to the access and retrieval of policies, forms and other documents.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROGRAM SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS

DCS Program Directors/managers or their designees are the owners and subject matter experts of the contents in DCS policies and procedures and other practice-related documents and are responsible for the timely review and updating of policies and procedures in their areas. Program Managers are responsible for collaborating with other programs owners in the event that the policy under revision impacts another program or if the policy has a joint owner. DCS Program Directors/ managers or their designees must ensure that communication, review, interpretation and/or training occurs when new policies/practice documents are formulated or existing policies/practice documents are revised. Employees must be informed and trained on

new or revised processes and procedures applicable to their specific duties to effectively and efficiently do their jobs to reduce the likelihood of potential risk factors.

1. During the development stage of a new policy or revisions to existing policy where practice is affected, the applicable DCS Program Director/Manager must begin developing a training and communication plan on how new/revised policies and procedures and other practice-related information is communicated, or formal training conducted. Also, the Program Director/Manager must clearly define the applicability of the policies and procedures (*i.e.*, identify all employees or persons who are affected by the policy, *etc.*) and the monitoring and auditing requirements that need to be met.
2. When new/revised policies are formulated or existing policies/practice documents are revised, the applicable Program Executive Directors, Deputy Commissioner/designees must approve for the new/revised policy to be implemented.
3. The Office of Learning and Development and Auditing and Monitoring personnel may be contacted to provide assistance in developing a training and communication plan or to ensure compliance with auditing and monitoring procedures and processes.
4. New/revised policies and procedures are initially reviewed by the DCS Policy Review Committee. Managers and Supervisors ensure representation by delegating a designee to attend in the absence of a Committee member.
5. New/Revised policies are placed on the **"PREVIEW"** web page for a maximum of fourteen (14) days to allow for review by all DCS staff, external partners and other interested persons as applicable prior to implementation.
6. This **"PREVIEW"** period allows Managers, Supervisors and staff an opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification and request technical assistance, as applicable. This **"PREVIEW"** period is also an opportunity for Managers and Supervisors to review new/revised policies and procedures and other practice-related documents that are relevant to an employee's position and/or job duties (*e.g.*, Foster care policies are reviewed with relevant foster care employees; CPS policies are reviewed with relevant CPS employees; JJ policies are reviewed with relevant JJ employees.) The review, instruction, and/or training may be accomplished through a formalized communication process (*i.e.*, meetings, on-the-job-training, video conferences, mentoring/training with other employees and computer-based training, *etc.*, or a combination of the above examples.
7. DCS program Directors/Managers collaborate with the DCS Office of Learning and Development on any new/revised policies and practice-related documents that may affect the delivery of required training.
8. DCS Program Directors/managers or designees must provide timely responses to requests for clarifications, technical assistance, training or questions about policies and procedures interpretation and practice ambiguities.
9. Supervisors and/or persons conducting review or training must ensure to document the review, instruction and/or training that has been completed on policies and other practice-related documents, on form [CS-0479, Acknowledgement/Verification of Policy Review and Other Documents](#) and ensure employees sign the form to verify they:

- a) Have read and reviewed the applicable policies and procedures and other practice related documents.
 - b) Have been provided an opportunity to ask questions for clarification and know who to contact when there are questions about procedures and processes; and
 - c) Have received instructions on how to access policies and procedures via the DCS Internet website and/or the location of current DCS policies and procedures manuals and other documents at their worksite office/facility.
10. The performance of Managers and Supervisors on training their employees on applicable policies and procedures and other practice-related documents is documented on their Individual Performance Plan (IPP) and/or monthly performance briefing.
11. Each month the employee completes form [CS-0724, Employee Monthly Training](#) to document all training to receive credit. After completion, the employee submits form **CS-0724** to their Supervisor for approval. After approval, form **CS-0724** must be submitted to the appropriate training coordinators listed below for documentation of training credit to the employee's training record:
- a) Regional Employees- Regional Training Coordinators
 - b) YDC Employees-YDC Training Coordinators
 - c) Central Office Employee-DCS Central Office Training Coordinators
12. Form [CS-0820, Employee Performance Briefing](#) is used by Managers and Supervisors to document an employee's comprehension and understanding of policies and procedures and other practice-related documents applicable to their specific job duties.

PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DCS POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

The DCS Policy Review Committee (PRC) is a multi-disciplinary team that represents all DCS divisions, regional offices, Youth Development Center facilities and Contract Providers for potential implications that may affect programs, consistency with best practice, potential conflicts with best practice, and compliance with Federal and/or State law requirements.

The Policy Development Unit (PDU) staff chairs the PRC. The PRC consists of DCS Employees and includes Contract Providers, External Partners and other interested parties, as applicable.

Committee Members include one (1) appointed person representing the following DCS units:

- ◆ Child Safety
- ◆ Child Health/Protection from Harm
- ◆ Child Programs (Foster Care/Adoptions)

- ◆ Customer Focused Government/Diversity Initiatives
- ◆ Finance and Budget
- ◆ General Counsel
- ◆ Human Resources
- ◆ Juvenile Justice
- ◆ Office of Information Technology
- ◆ Contract Providers
- ◆ Program Operations
- ◆ Quality Control
- ◆ Regional Offices
- ◆ Risk Management
- ◆ Learning and Development

****Each division or facility director ensures representation at the meetings by attending or delegating a designee to attend in the absence of a Committee member.**

The PRC may invite ad hoc members to attend if their input is required based on policy content that affects their area of expertise.

The DCS Policy Review Committee members:

- ◆ Review/discuss policies and procedures with applicable central office, regional and facility staff, if needed;
- ◆ Review/discuss needed training and communication components;
- ◆ Assist with research and brainstorm procedural content, if needed;
- ◆ Review/discuss forms and other documents associated with policies;
- ◆ Ensure issues and resolutions are communicated to regional, facility, providers or Central Office employees, as applicable;
- ◆ Complete all tasks, if assigned, and report back to the committee promptly; and
- ◆ Make recommendations on policy content.

Policy Review Committee Meeting Process

1. The policy review committee meets monthly if there are policy documents to review. Ad hoc meetings may be scheduled, as necessary.

2. The Policy Development Unit submits the meeting agenda and documents for discussion to the committee members at least two (2) business days in advance of the meeting.
3. The policy author/program owner is required to attend meeting and present the draft policy to the PRC. The presentation includes relevant information such as purpose of new policy, and purpose of revisions on existing policies.

Policy Review Committee Recommendations

Upon concluding the policy review, the Policy Review Committee recommends one of the following actions:

Approval of the policy without any changes.

- ◆ **Approval of the policy with non-substantive changes.** The policy author/owner reviews and approve/disapprove the changes. The Policy Development Unit makes the changes and prepare the final document.
- ◆ **Recommendation of Substantive Changes.** Recommends returning the policy to the policy owner for substantive changes before finalization.

If the Policy Review Committee is unable to agree on its recommendation(s), the concerns are forwarded to the Program/Policy Owner by PDU for review. The Policy Review Committee is notified of the program/policy owner's response. A brief review via email may be required to reach consensus.

The Policy Review Committee scribe documents all actions in the meeting.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT, REVIEW, APPROVAL AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS

Who initiates DCS policy and procedures?

DCS Management/designees/staff may propose a new policy or revise an existing policy when there is a need to regulate, direct, inform or guide DCS operations and services to ensure compliance with applicable State and Federal laws, rules, and accrediting standards. If appropriate, Program Managers may appoint an author(s) or a policy writing team(s) relevant to the policy subject matter to include the Policy Development Coordinator, to *develop* and *write* policies and procedures.

The PDU circulates the policy to the Policy Review Committee that is comprised of DCS staff, regional office staff, youth development center staff, contract provider agency staff, external partners and other interested persons, as applicable.

The appropriate program Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, Executive Director/or Director and General Counsel review and approve all new/revised policies.

Purpose of Policy Review

A policy review is conducted to review existing policies and procedures to ensure they are current and comply with applicable Federal and State Laws, Rules, Court Orders, and applicable Accrediting Standards. All DCS policies and procedures are reviewed at least annually (or as prescribed by DCS Management).

The American Correctional Association (ACA) Standard 4-JCF-6A-15 states that:

Employees participate in the formulation of policies, procedures, and programs for operating and maintaining the facility, its satellites, and operations.

1. *New or revised policies and procedures are disseminated to designated staff and volunteers and, when appropriate, to juveniles and their parent(s) or guardian (as applicable) prior to implementation.*
2. *Policies and procedures are accessible by all employees through manuals or an electronic format.*
3. *Policies and procedures are reviewed at least annually and updated, as needed.*

The Council on Accreditation Standard PA-AM 4.03 states that:

Policy development and implementation responsibilities include:

- a) *Adopting policies;*
- b) *Reviewing policies periodically and when legal requirements or regulations change;*
- c) *Adopting any changes to policies resulting from recommendations;*
- d) *Assuring effective, uniform implementation of policies; and*
- e) *Assessing the costs and benefits to consumers and the state or county implementing policies.*

Writing Effective Policies and Procedures Guide (Nancy J. Campbell) states that:

“Existing policies and procedures need revisions anytime you have new equipment, new programs, new products, procedures, and policies. The same is true if you have new management or a new philosophy or operation.”

To initiate the policy review period, an e-mail is sent to DCS Management that outlines the policy review process. A copy of this e-mail notification must be maintained on file for a period of three (3) years for accreditation/audit documentation.

Expedited Policies

Definition of Expedite: To speed up the progress of something: to ensure that something takes place or is dealt with more quickly than usual.)

Expedited policies are policies that require immediate action outside of the normal policy review process. This includes, but not limited to:

- *A revision to the **POLICY STATEMENT** due to law or legislative mandates requested by DCS Management;*
- *Major procedural revisions that affect practice and need to be implemented immediately due to law or legislative mandates requested by Director, Executive Director and/or Assistant Commissioner/designees; or*
- *Decisions and directives that need to be implemented immediately requested by Director, Executive Director and/or Assistant Commissioner/designees*

Expedited policies are reviewed by the Policy Review Committee and approved by applicable DCS Senior Management and General Counsel. The expedited policy is posted to the “**PREVIEW**” web page for a period of one (1) week, or less, unless otherwise indicated. The timeframe for policy processing and implementation is developed by the Program and the Policy Development Unit.

Procedure Change Notices

Procedure Change Notices are issued when there are **minor revisions** to procedures within a policy. **Minor revisions** for this process include, but are not limited to:

- Revisions that do not have a major impact on practice

- Minor editing/correction revisions
- Updates to revise DCS offices or staff titles
- Addition of forms or other documents that does not precipitate major content or practice changes
- No more than 3 different procedural revisions are permitted within the same policy. (e.g., if the same item is revised 10 times throughout the document, this only constitutes 1 procedural change, etc.).
- *Procedure changes* are reviewed by applicable program staff and approved by Director, Executive Director and/or Assistant Commissioner/designees.
- After approval, the *Procedure Change Notice* information is added to the policy, posted to the Policy Chapter on the Web Page and announced to staff, as applicable.
- During the Departmental Policy Review period, policies that have *Procedure Change Notices* are updated to integrate the changes and at that time are reviewed by the Commissioner for signature approval.

Timeframes for Entire Policy Review Process

In developing policies and procedures, the manager/author must be aware of the vision, mission, values, immediate needs and goals of the department and adhere to time frames set by the PDU. The entire process for policy review to include the fourteen (14) day **"PREVIEW"** period will not exceed sixty (**60**) working days. When the PDU issues the e-mail notification for a policy review, timeframes for the review process is established.

Preferred Revision Marks for Policy Revisions

Revision marks helps to keep track of the policy revisions. The preferred "revision marks" used for DCS policies is a **strikethrough** with yellow highlighting to denote deletions; **red font** is used for revisions or additions. New policies are not "marked-up."

Notification and Access

All DCS employees, contract providers and other persons are notified of new/revised policies and updates via e-mail notification.

New or revised policies and procedures must be made available and communicated to employees as soon as possible. Employees must be provided access to all DCS policies and procedures and other documents.

Hard Copy Policy Manuals

Hard copy policy manuals **MAY** be maintained at the discretion of the local administrator. Employees who are responsible for maintaining policy manuals must keep them updated with current policies and procedures. If a policy cannot be accessed electronically, contact the PDU or *DCS Help Desk* (615) 741-4636 or 888 853-4636).

As required by the American Correctional Association (ACA) Standard **4-JCF-6A-15**, all Youth Development Centers **maintain policies and procedures** through **manuals** or an **electronic format** that are accessible to all employees. Policies and Procedures are reviewed at least annually and updated, as needed.

LOCAL PROCEDURES

Purpose of Local Procedures

Local procedures may be written by DCS regions/facilities when an official DCS policy does not cover a subject or procedure **unique** to the particular region/ facility, or when there is a need to **expand** procedures for the region/facility. All local procedures must be documented on form [***CS-0251, Local Administrative Procedures and Protocols for Facilities/Regions***](#) .

If local procedures are created to accompany an official policy, the local procedure numbers and titles must correspond with the *same number and title* as the *official DCS policy*. **Example:** **Local procedures written to correspond with DCS Policy 1.1 must be numbered 1.1.**

Copies of all local procedures must be submitted to the PDU, applicable Regional Administrator, and Central Office Executive Director/Director/ designees for review and approval.

Local Procedures/Protocols Binders

After review and approval, each region, facility and office maintains local procedures in a binder labeled **"Local Procedures/Protocols"** and kept in a centralized location for access to employees and other persons as applicable. The applicable Executive Director/Director maintains complete and current local directives, procedures and protocols related to DCS policies and procedures within his/her division/region.

If there is a need to develop local directives that do not relate directly to DCS policies and procedures, the directives may be put in manual format and maintained in a binder.

Review and Revision of Local Procedures

All local procedures must be **reviewed** and **revised** at least annually (or as prescribed by DCS Management) when the official DCS policy is revised. The review must be documented by date and signature of the applicable Regional Administrator, YDC Superintendent, or Central Office Executive Director. Revised, approved copies must be forwarded to the appropriate Central Office Executive Director and the Policy Development Unit.

PROCEDURE MANUALS

Purpose of Procedure Manuals

Procedures manuals provide instructions and directions for the day-to-day operation of DCS that

explain in **great detail** the “**who**”, “**how**”, “**when**”, and “**where**” of certain tasks. Procedures manuals may be developed when procedures in a policy become too complex with details.

Creation and Review of Procedure Manuals

Consideration must be given to the design elements of a procedure manual so the user can locate information fast. Design elements to consider when drafting a manual include, but not limited to:

- a) Cover Page;
- b) Table of contents;
- c) Introduction;
- d) Content;
- e) List of forms; and
- f) Glossary;

DCS Manuals are reviewed/revised at least annually (or as prescribed by DCS Management) to ensure they are current and comply with applicable Management Directives, Best Practice Standards, State and Federal Laws and Rules.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Guide to Subjects and Verbs

Appendix B - List of Problem Words

Appendix C - Helpful Hints for Writing Procedures

Appendix D – On-Line Design Considerations: Tips on design for maintaining on-line policies and procedures

Appendix E – Template Section Headings

Appendix F – DCS Policy Template

Appendix G – List of DCS Policy Chapters

Appendix A – Guide to Subjects and Verbs

The following verb choices are used in order to state clearly and consistently in DCS policies what the level of responsibility and accountability is for a particular procedure. Please use the following guidelines.

<u>To indicate a...</u>	<u>Requirement</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Choice</u>	<u>Sequence of events</u>
	The employee is held accountable for performing these tasks.	Indicates best practice, but the employee is not held accountable.	The employee may choose among options.	This procedure is to be expected but DCS policy does not compel it.
<u>Use...</u>	<u>Shall/Must</u>	<u>Should</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Does (or the simple present tense of the verb)</u>
<u>Examples...</u>	All Department of Children’s Services policies and procedures			

	Shall/Must be formulated by DCS employees...			
	Managers Must ensure that employees participate in the decision making process.	A written notice and agenda Should be sent to the participants prior to the meeting.	Administrators May choose to have a succession roster.	The Commissioner Schedules a meeting with senior manager at least annually.
	The family service worker Must mail a copy of the signed order to the residential case manager and the youth must be returned home on the appropriate date.		A letter May be substituted for a face-to-face or telephone contact, but only once per quarter.	The court Holds a hearing on such a motion within 3 days of an emergency removal.

Subjects of sentences/active voice constructions

To state clearly and explicitly **WHO** is responsible for a task or procedure, use active voice, which requires that the subject of the sentence be the doer of the verb.

**** Policies are all written in active voice. Eliminate the words “will” or “will be” and substitute words such as “is” or “are”, as appropriate.**

Active voice sentences <i>USE THESE</i>	Passive voice sentences <i>DONT USE THESE</i>
<p>The Assistant Commissioner forwards a copy of each written description and organizational chart to the director of planning.</p> <p>The Director of Planning makes copies available to all DCS units.</p>	<p>A copy of each written description and chart must be forwarded by the Assistant Commissioner to the director of planning.</p> <p>Copies must be made available to all DCS units. (<i>by WHOM? It's unclear</i>)</p>

Appendix B – List of Problem Words

(Adapted from Writing Effective Policies and Procedures by Nancy J. Campbell)

Below are some word pairs with similar spellings but with different meanings that are commonly abused, misused, and confused.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Definition</u>
accept	to admit or agree; to regard as normal or usual, true, or right; to take in stride [<i>a verb</i>]
except	to exclude; an exception to [<i>a preposition</i>]
affect	to influence, to pretend [<i>a verb</i>]
effect	a result [<i>a noun</i>], to accomplish or bring about [<i>a verb</i>]
all ready	all is ready; in a state of readiness
already	existing, completed
all right	[<i>correct form</i>]

alright	<i>[incorrect form]</i>
advise	to offer suggestions
inform	to provide information
between	for two things [<i>as a general rule</i>], for three or more items if each item is considered individually
among	for more than two things [<i>as a general rule</i>]
biweekly	once every two weeks
semiweekly	twice each week
can	is able to, is capable of
may	has permission to
compliment	to praise; to say something favorable, kind, or flattering
complement	something making up a whole; work in accord with; suit well
continual	repeated frequently, lasts but with breaks or pauses
continuous	without interruption
discreet	prudent, knowing when to be silent
discrete	separate, disunited, discontinued
further	more, additional
farther	distance

fewer	a number
less	a quantity or volume
imply	to suggest or hint [<i>done by the speaker</i>]
infer	to surmise or conclude [<i>done by the listener</i>]
insure	to protect [<i>used with finances</i>]
ensure	to guarantee
assure	to pledge or make safe [<i>used with people</i>]
lie	to recline in a prone position [<i>used with people</i>]
lay	to put or place [<i>used with objects</i>]
like	similar to [<i>a literal comparison</i>]
as	in the same degree or amount
precedents	[<i>plural of precedent, meaning a standard or norm, or a significant event that is a turning point</i>]
precedence	precedes or comes first; takes priority over; comes before
principle	a fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption [<i>a noun</i>]
principal	most important or influential [<i>an adjective</i>]
regardless	in spite of, without concern
irregardless	[<i>no such beast- please don't use it!</i>]

stationary	solid, unmoving
stationery	a piece of paper
that	[<i>preposition used with a dependent clause that contains essential information- <u>hint</u>, no commas</i>]
which	[<i>prepositions used with an independent clause that contains nonessential information- <u>hint</u>, commas</i>]
Shall	to make an absolute promise. The word “shall” is only used in the Policy Statement.

Appendix C – Helpful Hints for Writing Procedures

(Adapted from *Writing Effective Policies and Procedures* by Nancy J. Campbell)

<p>1. Use active voice, present tense</p>	<p>Place procedures in the sequence in which they should be accomplished by using active voice, present tense. The shortest, clearest, most powerful message you can send in the English language is in active voice, present tense. Compare the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Case Managers complete form CS-1234 within ten (10) days.</i> ◆ <i>Form CS-1234 is completed by case managers within ten (10) days.</i> <p>In the second sentence, passive voice lengthens and makes it harder to figure out who’s responsible for the action. The “who” now comes at the end of the sentence instead of the beginning and when you switch to a verb tense other than present (the most common is future tense), you also add length.</p>
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	<p>The most significant problem with future tense is that it implies the action must be taken <i>sometime</i>, where present tense implies immediacy. Stay with active voice and present tense most of the time. <u>Note</u>: There are some exceptions. Certain procedures, such as software instructions, use passive voice to avoid endless repetition of “you” or “the operator.”</p> <p>When stating to who this policy applies or who is to implement a procedure, make sure that the personnel listed have the authority to implement all the procedures.</p>
<p>2. Clearly identify the level of priority</p>	<p>Clearly identify the level of priority and responsibility ascribed to a procedure by making the following distinctions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Procedures that are absolutely required—use the verb, <i>must</i> b) Procedures that describe best practice but are not absolutely required—use the verb, <i>should</i> c) Steps simply stating the sequence of events—use the simple present tense of the action verb (for example, “the court <i>reviews</i> all documentation”). d) Steps that are at an employee’s discretion (such as choices or options)—use the verb, <i>may</i>
<p>3. Use standard word order</p>	<p>Standard word order is active voice: subject-verb-object. It’s standard precisely because it’s the shortest, clearest way to convey a direct message. In policies and procedures, it is often best to make the subject an “implied” subject (leave it out and start with the verb.) Both of the following sentences use standard word order, but the second sentence shortens by using an implied subject and starting with an action verb.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Employees submit their timesheets bi-weekly.</i> ◆ <i>Submit timesheets bi-weekly.</i> <p>The minute you deviate from standard word order, you begin to lengthen and generally add padding. Some variation in word order is desirable to prevent monotony. The problem is that we tend to get carried away with it and add too many fancy phrases and clauses, too much passive voice and future tense. The bulk of your writing should use standard word order.</p>
<p>4. Use parallelism</p>	<p>Parallelism is a form of consistency that creates a rhythm in the document. It simply means using the same grammar construct for like items. Consider this nonparallel example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Read the document, be sure to sign it, and then it must be returned to Personnel.</i> <p>Nonparallel writing sounds awkward and stops the reader. It breaks the rhythm. Find the key concepts and put them into the same format. Use the same parts of speech (verb with verb, noun with noun). Use words or phrases of approximately the same length. The rhythm returns and the sentence is shorter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Read the document, sign it, and return it to Personnel.</i> <p>Use parallelism in sentences, paragraphs, lists, and headings. It applies everywhere and is one of the most important elements in making a document easy to read.</p>
<p>5. Be Consistent</p>	<p>Pick a few good verbs and nouns, and then use them consistently. It may violate your vocabulary training, but it helps readers feel comfortable. They hate seeing a new word every time. It's just one more thing to cope with unnecessarily. Repetition of familiar,</p>

	useful words increases both comprehension and speed.
6. Use short words and acronyms	<p>If possible stick with words of one or two syllables. Short means fast and easy for the reader.</p> <p>Acronyms (a word formed from the initial letter or letters of each of the successive parts or major parts of a compound term or name) may be used providing that the first occurrence of the word or name is <u>spelled out</u> followed by the acronym, after which the acronym may be used throughout the remainder of the policy.</p> <p><i>Example: Department of Children's Services (DCS)</i></p>
7. Use common words	<p>Don't get fancy. We really don't <u>utilize</u> the hammer, we <u>use</u> it. Common words are common for a reason: They work. Everyone understands them. They're fast and easy and they are usually short.</p>
8. Use short sentences	<p>The absolute maximum is twenty words, but even that's pretty long for this type of writing. If possible, aim for a maximum of fifteen words per sentence; then, even if you occasionally run over, you're still OK. Short sentences help make sure that you're using standard word order and that you're not using too many extra clauses.</p>
9. Use short paragraphs	<p>Use a maximum of one hundred words. Long paragraphs create a heavy, gray look that turns the reader off. If it looks long and complicated, readers assume it is.</p> <p>In procedures, average paragraph length should be much shorter—forty words or fewer.</p>
10. Use lots of lists	<p>Lists are a policy and procedure writer's bread and butter, a staple. They shorten, they force you into good habits such as active voice, and they encourage parallelism. They're also easy on the reader's eye because they indicate a flow and create lots of blank space on</p>

	<p>the page. Readers love lists. Writers should love lists. The whole world loves a good list.</p>
<p>11. Write as you speak</p>	<p>This is probably the best way to avoid pompous language and windy phrases. But old habits keep telling you that it's not good enough to go on paper. In most cases, it's exactly what you do want on paper: simple, clear, to the point, and understood by everyone. Pretend a user has stopped by to ask you how to do something, then answer (yes, it's OK to talk to yourself). Write it down just as you would say it. Then edit out the words or phrases that seem too informal or trendy.</p> <p>It's a lot easier to edit up from the spoken work than to edit down from the pompous language.</p>
<p>12. Get rid of wordy phrases</p>	<p>We use them out of habit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>In an effort to...</i> ◆ <i>In the event that...</i> ◆ <i>In the eventuality of...</i> <p>A lot of this comes from the increasing use of legalisms in our society. A lot of it also comes from that old habit of trying to please the teacher with more words. Ditch these phrases!</p>
<p>13. Get rid of pompous language</p>	<p>Quit trying to impress. It does exactly the opposite. It sounds stuffy and overbearing and turns people off. No one really talks about "<i>commercially hired rental vehicles.</i>" We talk about "<i>rental cars.</i>" Come down to earth.</p>

<p>14. Get rid of flabby language</p>	<p>Flabby language is just too much of a good thing. Where one adjective would do, we use three: "Use the proper, designated, authorized form." It's as if someone found the word trough and couldn't stop gorging. There are so many adjectives that the main idea gets lost. Remember to think in ones: One is better than two, and two is better than three. Avoid excess.</p>
<p>15. Watch the adjectives</p>	<p>This is where a lot of the flab sneaks up on you. Adjectives are fun. They let you get creative and expressive. Unfortunately, that's not what your readers are interested in. Speed and clarity, not creativity and flowery description, are the goal. Keep an eagle eye on the number of adjectives.</p>
<p>16. Get specific</p>	<p>One way to avoid flabby language is to be specific. Replace general descriptors with <u>specific</u> references:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ "Use Form CS-0001" <p>Not</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ "Use the appropriate request form" <p>(Identify by number and title all DCS forms used in a procedure.)</p> <p>Reference to times(s) and locations(s) must be specific:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ "Within one hour" <p>Not</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>“As soon as possible”</i> <p>Identify specific modes of communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>(letter, telephone, FAX, e-mail, etc.)</i> 	
<p>17. Get rid of empty phrases</p>	<p>Empty phrases are usually found at the beginning of sentences or clauses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>There are...</i> ◆ <i>It is...</i> <p>It's OK to use them occasionally, but they often serve no purpose.</p>	
<p>18. Watch out for weasel words</p>	<p>Weasel words are words that sound as if you're trying to wiggle out of a commitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Part A ought to fit into Part B.</i> <p>Not likely to inspire much confidence in the reader, is it? Weasel words tend to destroy credibility. Most common are words like:</p>	
	<p>Could</p>	<p>Probably</p>

	May	Should
	Might	Try
	Most of the time	Usually
	Ought to	Would
19. Use weasel words for flexibility where appropriate	Weasel words aren't always bad. They can make statements elastic. Many policy statements in particular need to retain flexibility. Such statements are intended to cover normal operating conditions, not every conceivable circumstance that may arise. Rather than try to spell out everything, which is impossible, summarize those other circumstances.	
20. Avoid turnoffs	Some words and phrases just make people mad. They include:	
	Absolutely	Of course
	Always	Persist
	Delinquent	Terminate
	Fail	Tolerate
	Never	Unfortunately
	Obviously	
	Any word or phrase that's rigid or sounds like a parent disciplining a child turns readers off.	
21. Avoid redundancies	We're in the habit of using so many words that we don't realize we're repeating ourselves unnecessarily. "Advance planning," for instance. How can you plan for the past? "Almost perfect." Really?	

	<p>"Reread again." Hmm...Remember your new status as a word miser and get rid of these nonsensical phrases.</p>
<p>22. Conquer problem words</p>	<p>Everybody has some word pair that's always been a puzzler. Is it <i>affect</i> or <i>effect</i>? <i>Lie</i> or <i>lay</i>? <i>Ensure</i>, <i>insure</i>, or <i>assure</i>? See the list of problem words on page 36.</p>
<p>23. Watch out for jargon</p>	<p>Jargon is simply language that's specialized for an organization or field. It saves time and space for people who are in the know. The danger is that some readers may be left out. So simplify. If there's any way to write it in plain language, do. Remember that even if jargon doesn't confuse, it usually lengthens.</p> <p>Note: This depends, too, on the audience. If the policy or procedure is for chemists in a laboratory, they're expecting the jargon. They want and need it, so use it.</p>
<p>24. Use transitional words and phrases at the start of sentences and paragraphs</p>	<p>These words give readers an instant clue about what's coming. They serve two functions: speed and preparation. When readers see the word "and," they know the paragraph is a continuation. If they see "but," they know an exception is coming. If they see "finally," they know the discussion is winding up. In a split second, you've given them the chance to prepare themselves mentally for the content ahead.</p> <p>Ignore the old rule that said you should never start with a transitional word like "and." Remember, that's the rule for narrative writing. Ditch it in favor of speed and clarity. See the list of transitional words and phrases in the appendices of this manual.</p>
<p>25. Use one-sentence paragraphs</p>	<p>We all know the old rule said never to do this. Forget that rule. One-sentence paragraphs draw instant attention and help you isolate the most important statements in the policy and</p>

	<p>procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Any violation of safety rules is grounds for immediate dismissal.</i> <p>It's hard to miss the message.</p>
<p>26. Limit the number of clauses and phrases</p>	<p>Clauses and phrases are dangerous. Used in moderation, they provide needed variety. But they're a little like rabbits: Turn your back and they seem to multiply in seconds. One phrase turns into three or four. Too many clauses and phrases are a dead giveaway that your sentences are too long and complicated. One, maybe two is OK. Anything more than that is highly suspect.</p>
<p>27. Keep clauses and phrases short</p>	<p>You may occasionally need a lengthier clause of ten words or so. But the general rule is five words or fewer.</p>
<p>28. Start with a verb</p>	<p>Readers want to know what they're supposed to do or know, so tell them with the very first word. This also helps eliminate long sentences, excess clauses, passive voice, inverted word order, and wordy phrases:</p> <p>A written request for a leave of absence, stating the specific reason, the duration of the leave, and the expected beginning and ending dates of the leave, should be submitted to your supervisor for approval.</p> <p>Whew! Readers who make their way through that deserve a medal. <i>Look for the verb.</i> Here it's "submit." Restructure the procedure around that and look what happens:</p> <p>Submit a written request for leave to your supervisor. Include the following information:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>The reason for the leave.</i> ◆ <i>The length of the leave</i> ◆ <i>The beginning and ending dates of the leave.</i>
<p>29. Avoid negative wording</p>	<p>Grammatical negatives make the message harder to understand;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Users should not be concerned if they are unable to meet these requirements without assistance.</i> <p>Is there an interpreter in the house? Grammatical negatives are opposites. They twirl readers around and point them in the other direction. Do it too often and users get dizzy. Focus on what you want them not to do.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Negatives are perfectly legitimate words when used sparingly and properly. They convey important information clearly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Do not add oil.</i> ◆ <i>Do not wait to submit your claim.</i> <p>The goal is to avoid misuse and over use.</p>
<p>30. Avoid misplacement</p>	<p>Misplaced words, phrases, or sentences change the meaning. They can be merely frustrating, but they can also be harmful. What does "it" refer to here?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>When adjusting the valve in the engine, be sure it is shut off.</i>

<p>31. Use gender-neutral language</p>	<p>The great sexism debate still rages. Some readers are highly offended by the use of “he” and “she.” Others think it’s all a tempest in a teapot. Still, it’s a sensitive issue that reduces the document’s credibility and increases reader resistance. It can also become one more point in a legal debate. Err on the conservative side.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>The manager submits his request,</i> <p>But</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Managers submit their requests,</i> ◆ <i>When the employee requests her leave...</i> <p>But</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>When the employee requests leave...</i> ◆ <i>The case manager may submit a claim at any time. He may also submit a secondary claim as needed,</i> <p>But</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>The case manager may submit a claim at any time. One may also submit a secondary claim as needed,</i>

	<p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>The case manager may submit a claim any time. The case manager may also submit a secondary claim as needed.</i>
32. Use an appropriate level of detail	How much do you really have to tell the reader? It depends solely on the audience and the purpose of the policy or procedure. If you have varied experience levels, you need more detail. If everyone is a Ph.D. in chemistry, you may need less detail. Analyze your audience carefully.
33. Use an appropriate reading level	A good range for policies and procedures is sixth- to eighth- grade reading level. This is roughly the same range used by most newspapers, and your purpose is much the same as theirs: speed and clarity. Reading level is basically a matter of simplicity. The shorter the words and sentences, the lower the reading level and the faster users can read.
34. Analyze the audience	You have users and readers. You have experience and inexperience in both groups. Education, background, and expectation level may vary widely. Who your audience is, and what they're used to, helps you decide questions such as reading level, level of detail, and jargon.
35. Remain impartial	This may sound odd, but what happens if you have to write a policy or procedure you strongly disagree with? Your writing tends to reflect your disagreement. The tone becomes harsh and judgmental, short and choppy, or perhaps long and flowery in an attempt to cover up the disagreement. It's perfectly OK to disagree. Work to change the policy or procedure if you want.
36. In procedures, use one action per step	Procedures require special clarity. A misunderstanding can turn deadly. Limiting each step to one action ensures that the reader gets the message clearly. Look for the action verbs, then list one

	per step.
37. In procedures, start with the verb	Procedure users want to know only two things: steps and sequence . Tell me what to do and in what order. Action verbs get to the heart of the matter and eliminate excess wording- no more searching. Use the more than one hundred common verbs in the verb bank in the appendices of this manual.
38. In procedures, assign the action	<p>Don't assume that people know who's responsible at each step. Clarify by adding titles. Avoid pronouns. (Who is that ubiquitous "they," anyway?) If a single actor completes the entire process, you only need to identify the responsible party once. However, many policies and procedures require at least some inter-departmental activity. When responsibility shifts, make it clear.</p> <p>It is not necessary to capitalize or otherwise emphasize position titles in the procedures section unless it has been requested. Be specific throughout the policy. Personal names must never be used in a policy and procedures.</p>
39. In procedures, pack a sentence	<p>This is a good technique for warnings and cautions. Put the punch where people remember it most: at the beginning and end of the sentence. Example 2 is much stronger because the sentence was packed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>During repairs, there is a danger of electric shock if the power is not turned off.</i> ◆ <i>Turn off the power during repairs, or you may receive an electric shock.</i>
40. Within procedures, be consistent in formatting when making references to forms, manuals, and	<p>Identify by number and title all DCS forms used in procedures. Italicize to show emphasis. Be consistent throughout the policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>CS-1234, Type Title of Form After Form Number</i>

<p><i>other policies</i></p>	<p>When making references to other manuals within procedures, underline the manual title for emphasis. Be consistent throughout the policy.</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Manual for Developing Policies and Procedures</i> <p>When making references to other policies within the procedures:</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>DCS Policy 1.4, Incident Reporting</i>
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Appendix D – Online Design Considerations

Tips on design of on-line policies and procedures

(Adapted from Writing Effective Policies and Procedures by Nancy J. Campbell)

<p><i>small blocks of text</i></p>	<p>Scrolling through screen after screen of unbroken text makes it seem as if the policy or procedure is endless. The same is true for pieces of paper, but the effect is exaggerated on a screen. Keep sentences and paragraphs even shorter than normal. If possible use short, simple words.</p>
<p><i>lots of white space</i></p>	<p>In addition to small blocks of text, leave plenty of white space in margins. Separate graphics and text distinctly. Because the screen is harder on the eye than a piece of paper, you have to work harder</p>

	so the reader can use it without straining.
Colors are used, limit colors to two (2)	If colors are used in the procedures, too many colors overwhelm the eye in the small space of a screen. Limit colors to two in both text and graphics.
Graphics simple	The contradiction here is that wonderfully complex graphics can be created on the computer, but they probably can't be used in an on-line system. They create visual clutter. Simplicity is the key to keeping the readers' attention.
Hypertext	Hypertext (<i>i.e.</i> , "linking") is the ability to click on a highlighted word or phrase and instantly access related or supplementary material. It's a tremendous improvement over thumbing through hundreds of pages of a manual or even poring over an index or table of contents.
Not using hypertext, give instructions on how to find related material	Hypertext is ideal, but if the system does not have the capability, tell users exactly how and where to find related material. Can they type in a word or phrase and do a search? Do they have to scan the index or table of contents? Each system is different, so be sure instructions are clear.

Appendix E - Policy Template Section Headings

The policy template (form [DCS Policy Template \(CS-0001\)](#)) is the official form template used for creating DCS policies and procedures. This form template contains the policy statement and the procedures to carry out the policy statement in the same document. *Refer to example of DCS Policy Template at the end of this section.*

The following is a description of the contents and formatting instructions for the sections in the policy document template:

Policy Title: The policy title relates to the policy contents and is the primary means of identifying, locating and referring to a policy. Questions to consider when assigning a policy title

- ◆ Is the title descriptive enough to accurately reflect the main contents of the policy?
- ◆ Is the title easily understood by people not familiar with the policy?
- ◆ Does it contain words that are identified in keyword searches?

1. **Policy Index Number:** Policies are identified by an index number with the policy title at the top of the document. The policy index number is also typed in the footers (in the “Supersedes” section) and headers. The policy index number is comprised of the corresponding policy chapter and a number, i.e., 13.1, “13” denotes the DCS Policy Chapter; “1” denotes the assigned number. Additional policy chapters (other than those listed on page 1 of this manual) and policy index numbers are established by the PDU in collaboration with Management, as applicable.

2. **Procedure Change Notice (PCN):** A Procedure Change Notice is issued when there is a minor change needed for a small portion of the policy. There can only be a maximum of three (3) PCNs per policy. The PCN change to the policy is effective immediately, while the content of the rest of the policy remains the same.

3. **Approval:** Policies and procedures are reviewed and approved by the applicable program Deputy Commissioner, Executive Director, Legal Counsel and other employees as applicable prior to the Commissioner’s final approval. The Commissioner officially approves all DCS policies by original signature. Original approved policies with the Commissioner’s original signature are filed in the policy historical files in the Policy Development Unit. (PDU).

4. **Approval date:** The date the policy is implemented or enforced. The date is entered by the PDU.

5. **Authority:** The legal authority (i.e., laws, rules, etc.) by which a policy is issued is listed in this section. Always include the *Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA)* codes 37-5-105 (3); 37-5-106 and any rules that reference the powers of DCS or other state entities. Questions or information for this section must be directed to the DCS General Counsel.

6. **Standards:** Applicable practice and accreditation standards associated with the policy are entered in this section.
7. **Application:** This section lists the general grouping of employees or persons to whom the policy is directed and the group of employees or persons most specifically affected by the policy (*i.e.*, Family Service Workers; Human Resources Employees; CPS Caseworkers, *etc.*). If children/youth or families are to be allowed access to policy, they are also listed. Position titles listed in the application are capitalized for *emphasis*. If at all possible, use the term "Employee(s)" instead of "Staff."

Example:

Application: To All Department of Children's Services Child Protective Services Employees

8. **Policy Statement:** This section contains the statement of what the department is committed or required to do.

Policies and **procedures** are a set of documents that describe an organization's **policies** for operation and the **procedures** necessary to fulfill the **policies**.

The policy statement is the focal point of the policy. It is a complete sentence, ending with a period, and brief, clear, and concise. Use the verb "**SHALL**" to express DCS's intent and to emphasize a mandatory requirement.

It is imperative that policy statements and procedural statements not be perceived as synonymous. Policy statements declare "**what**" and "**why**" the intent/goal of the DCS; they never contain "who, how, when, or where" information. Procedures do not state the broad intent/goal of DCS; they explain the "**who**", "**how**", "**when**", or "**where**" through which the policy is carried out.

Writing Effective Policies and Procedures (Nancy J. Campbell) defines policies as:

"Policies are guidelines that regulate organizational action. They control the conduct of people and the activities of systems. A policy is actually a type of position statement. It explains the organization's stand on a subject, and why there is a rule about it. It tells the reader how the organization intends to operate."

Questions to consider when writing a policy statement:

- ◆ Does it clearly articulate what the policy is and what it is to accomplish?
- ◆ What is the scope of the policy?
- ◆ Does the statement clearly state accepted practices, guiding principles, or rules that guide organizational operations and services (not procedures)?
- ◆ Are the responsibilities for entities or individuals clearly stated?
- ◆ Is the policy section consistent with the applicable laws, regulations, and other referenced policies?

Example: Policy Statement:

DCS shall maintain a child welfare management information system to receive reports alleging child abuse or neglect, and ensure that accurate, relevant, and timely data is provided to employees, supervisors and management.

9. **Purpose:** This section provides the rationale for the policy. A brief statement of why the policy is established. Questions to consider when writing the purpose statement:

- ◆ Does it clearly state the objective(s) of the policy?
- ◆ Does it reflect the mission, values, and strategic directions of DCS?
- ◆ What applicable legal and regulatory laws and rules are being addressed by the policy?
- ◆ What conflicts or problems are being addressed by the policy?
- ◆ What financial, operational, technological needs are being addressed by the policy?

10. **A, B, C Sections:** Sections describe the subject discussed in the procedures.

11. Procedures/Protocols: Procedures/protocols **describe who, how, when, and where.**

Procedures/protocols are brief; together they describe the general **sequence** of events necessary to implement the policy. They direct actions to be taken in a particular situation to perform a specific task within the guidelines of the policy. Policy statements should never contain procedures. Procedures/Protocols are action oriented. Procedures/Protocols also frequently point out the consequences of failure to comply, such as damage, loss, injury, or discipline. Clearly stated consequences help users understand (1) the seriousness of the matter and (2) their responsibility for it.

Procedures and protocols are synonymous in their meaning as described below:

Definition of Procedure: Written instructions that outline the steps for performing a task(s) or operationalizing an administrative or service delivery process. A procedure can be written as step-by-step instructions or as a narrative description of a process. A procedure tells someone how to do something not just what to do.

Unlike policies, procedures do not need to be approved or reviewed by the governing body, and need not be associated with a specific policy. For example, whereas a broad anti-discrimination policy requires grievance or other procedures in order to be operationalized within an organization, assessment procedures do not require a governing body approved assessment policy.

Note: Procedures are sometimes referred to as administrative policies.

Definition of Protocol: Instruments and procedures used to accomplish a particular goal, activity, or purpose.

Questions to consider when writing a procedure/protocol:

- ◆ Are procedures/protocols consistent with the policy statement?
- ◆ Do the procedures/protocols contain the specific actions or steps needed to comply with the policy?
- ◆ Do the procedures protocols contain implementation plans and dates for policies that require a phased implementation?

- ◆ Are procedural/protocol requirements reasonable?
- ◆ Does this section contain only procedures/protocols (not policy)?
- ◆ Are the procedures/protocols consistent with the applicable laws, regulations, and policies listed in the document, authority or standards sections?

10. Forms: All forms used to gather needed information applicable to the policy are listed in this section. If there are no forms, indicate "none." Forms are linked to the forms web page. (Review DCS Policy [7.17 Forms Management](#).)

Example - Forms:

CS-0130, Return to Home Placement

11. Collateral documents: This section lists protocols, procedure manuals, work aids or other documents that provide additional information about this policy. These documents are "linked" to the applicable Web Page.

Example - Manual for Developing and Maintaining Policies and Procedures

12. Original effective date: This is the date on which the policy was originally created. This date remains on the policy for the life of the policy. Use the date format of "**00/00/00**."

13. Current effective Date: This is the date that the policy was revised and is the most current effective date of the policy. The "*Current effective date*" changes each time the policy is revised. Use the date format of "**00/00/00**."

14. Supersedes: (Definition: *To take the place, room, or position of; Replace*) Superseded policies and their effective dates are listed to inform the reader of what policies and their effective date (if any) replaced it.

15. Public Reviewer Comments and Suggestions: When policies and procedures are sent for review, the reviewer submits their comments/suggestions for policy drafts using the web address: https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/policies_under_preview

16. Executive Reviewer Comments and Suggestions: When policies and procedures are sent for Executive review, the reviewer submits their comments/suggestions for policy drafts using the web address: https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/executive_review

a) When submitting policy comments/suggestions, reviewers must:

- ◆ Provide their name and contact telephone number; and
- ◆ Identify the policy by number, title and procedural section

b) PDU compiles all comments submitted by reviewers and submits them to policy owners for review. Reviewer comments are historically maintained for future reference.

Appendix F – Example of DCS Policy Template

Page1

Draft

	<p>State of Tennessee</p> <p>Department of Children's Services</p>
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Administrative Policies and Procedures: #

Subject:		
Approval:	,Commissioner	Approved Date:
Authority:		

Standards:	
Application:	
Policy Statement:	
Purpose:	
Procedures:	
A.	
B.	
C.	

Original Effective Date:

Current Effective Date:

Supersedes:

CS-0001

RDA: SW22

Subject:

Policy #

D.	
E.	
F.	
G.	1.

Forms:	Example: CS-0123, Mary Had a Little Lamb
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Collateral documents:	<i>None (Other supporting documents, i.e., manuals, work aids, etc., or significant policies associated with policy)</i>
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Glossary:	
Term	Definition

Original Effective Date:

Current Effective Date:

Supersedes:

CS-0001

RDA: SW22

Appendix G – DCS Policy Chapters

Chapter No	Policy Chapter Title
1	Administration
3	Fiscal
4	Human Resources
5	Learning and Development
7	Information Technology
9	Child Records
11	Assessment
12	Passes, Reclassification and Release of Juvenile Justice Youth
13	Juvenile Justice Regional Services
14	Child Protective Services
15	Adoption
16 A	Foster Care
16 B	Foster Homes

18	Administrative Services and Programs for Juvenile Justice Facilities
19	Mental Health Treatment and Behavior Support Management
20	Health Services
21	Education Services
22-27	Youth Development Centers
28	Facilities Management
29	Fire, Safety and Emergency Services Operations
31	Regional and Field Services Operations
32	HIPAA
33	DCS Records Disposition Policies

Glossary

<u>Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<u>Expedited Policies:</u>	Policies that require immediate action outside of the normal policy review process. Policies are only expedited when state law, Rules, or Federal mandates require an immediate policy update .
<u>Local Procedures:</u>	Local procedures may be formulated to identify the steps to further expand a subject matter or procedure that is unique to a particular region, facility or DCS office.

<u>Official DCS Policies:</u>	Departmental policies that have been reviewed, approved, signed by the Commissioner.
<u>Policy Development Coordinator:</u>	The policy unit staff member responsible for developing the policy. This staff member is responsible for composition and facilitation in developing a draft of a new policy or a revision to an existing policy.
<u>Policy Review Committee:</u>	The group of DCS staff members appointed by the Commissioner to review and make recommendations to the policy owners on new or revised policies.
<u>Policy Workgroup:</u>	The group of knowledgeable programmatic DCS staff selected to participate in the development of new or revised departmental policies, procedures, or other practice-related documents.
<u>Subject Matter Expert (SME):</u>	The DCS program staff member with expertise in the content topic of the policy.