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SENIOR DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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DIRECTOR

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR, BES

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SENIOR DIVISION CHIEF

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR, BR

MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE

SUBJECT: DCFS INTERNET WEB SITE:
RECEIPT OF E-MAIL FROM THE PUBLIC

POLICY #: MD 99-03

EFFECTIVE DATE: JUNE, 1999

CANCEL DATE: NONE

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has an Internet Web Site. The primary elements of the Internet are host computer systems that are linked by a backbone telecommunications network. This network is like a telephone line that is always open and talking to the host computers, which are always on. The computers communicate over the network using the same "language".

Public access information shall be published on the Internet DCFS Web Site, e.g., client success stories, employment opportunities, services provided by the Department, information on becoming a foster parent, adopting a child, frequently asked questions and electronic mail.

This material is being released in a combined Management Directive/Procedural Guide format.

1. DEFINITIONS

A. *Browser*

Application software that gives a graphical interactive interface for searching, find, viewing and managing information over a network.

B. *DCFS Web site*

The DCFS participation in the Los Angeles County's Internet Web site which shall be available for world-wide communication.

C. *E-Mail*

Electronic Mail. A system whereby a computer user can exchange messages with other computer users (or groups of users) via a communication network.

D. *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)*

A list of questions and answers, put together by the experienced to aid the less experienced.

E. *Home Page*

The startup page of a site, containing identity and index information.

F. *Internet*

A world-wide computer network that is made up of many interconnected networks. No single entity - academic, corporate, governmental, or non-profit agency administers the Internet. It exists and functions as a result of the fact that hundreds of thousands of separate operators or computers and computer networks independently decided to use common data transfer protocols to exchange communications and information with other computers, which in turn exchange communications and information with still other computers. There is no centralized storage location, control point, or communications channel for the Internet, and it would not be technically feasible for a single entity to control all of the information conveyed on the Internet.

G. *Intranet*

A "Mini-Internet" for *internal* use exclusively within an organization. Although the Intranet can be made available to the outside world, it is mostly used by corporations to make information available to its employees.

H. *Network*

A system of interrelated elements that are interconnected in a dedicated or switched linkage to provide local or remote communication and to facilitate the exchange of information between users with common interests.

I. *Virus*

A program which replicates itself on a computer system by incorporating itself into other programs which are shared among computer systems.

J. *Web Page*

A unit of information. A page can be as long as one or more chapters of a book or as short as a single work or sentence. The page is the single unit of information requested and received, then displayed at one time in a browser. When you view the Web page in a browser, you often must scroll through the document in order to see the entire page.

K. *Web Site*

A collection of World Wide Web pages, usually consisting of a home page and several other linked pages.

L. *Web Site Monitor/Public Information Office Monitor*

A person who opens and reads the e-mail received from the public on the Internet DCFS Web Site. The Internet is automatically opened with this person's user ID and log-on password at their computer location. This person will respond to general information and determine where the e-mail is to be forwarded.

M. *Web Site Monitor "After-Hours" Alternate*

When the Web Site Monitor signs-off at the end of his/her work shift, the Web Site Monitor Alternate shall take over the responsibilities of the monitor.

N. *World Wide Web (WWW)*

Internet system for world-wide hypertext linking of multimedia documents, making the relationship of information that is common between documents easily accessible and completely independent of physical location.

2. POLICY AND STANDARDS

- A. The protection and safety of a child is always the first priority.
- B. Our primary mission is legal permanency.

- C. DCFS case records are confidential pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Sections 827 and 10850. The Los Angeles County Juvenile Court policy on confidentiality sets forth the details of the court's interpretation of these statutory requirements. Failure to follow confidential policy may lead to disciplinary action, including discharge and civil action. Under the provisions of the statutes, a violation is a basis for criminal prosecution.
- D. Internet e-mail usage is for County business only. It is not to be used for activities such as, but not limited to, personal business, outside employment, union-sponsored activities (without prior approval), or the disclosure of information that is sensitive or confidential in nature, e.g., DCFS case specific information, personal matters, etc. **See the Management Directive #98-2, Data Security: Standards and Guidelines issues July, 1998.**
- E. Internet e-mail usage is subject to the policies concerning other forms of communication as well as all other applicable policies including, but not limited to, confidentiality, conflict of interest, general conduct, and sexual harassment. **See the Management Directive #95-06, Acts/Threats of Violence Against Employees in the Workplace.**
- F. Both law and Departmental policy prohibit the theft or other abuse of computer equipment. Such prohibitions include unauthorized entry, use, transfer and tampering with the accounts and files of others.
- G. Failure to adhere to Internet electronic mail policy, or to any part of Internet/ Intranet policy, shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary measures. **See the Management Directive #98-2, Data Security: Standards and Guidelines issues July, 1998.**

3. **PROCEDURES**

A. DCFS employees designated to access, retrieve, forward and reply to Internet e-mail shall be responsible for:

1. Using the Internet for business purposes only; and,
2. Configuring Microsoft Exchange to request that a receipt be sent back when the item has been read; and,
3. Configuring, via the "Help Desk", Microsoft Exchange to archive all "in-box" and "sent" messages after 90 days from the date received; and,
4. Using "Word Viewer" to open all attachments. "Word Viewer" provides virus protection and the capability to view documents sent in another format. e.g., Microsoft Word 95, 97, 98; and,
5. Immediately notifying his/her supervisor and when appropriate, also notify law enforcement, fire department, etc., of any messages received which may be

characterized as threatening, derogatory or sexually harassing. **See the Management Directive #95-06, Acts/Threats of Violence Against Employees in the Workplace.**

B. WHEN: UPON RECEIPT OF AN INTERNET E-MAIL MESSAGE

WHO	HOW
MID Web Site Monitor or Public Information Office	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the DCFS Web Site e-mail “in-box” hourly or when the computer screen message box appears indicating the receipt of new mail.
	<p>NOTE: E-mail is downloaded automatically to the DCFS Web Site Monitor’s computer.</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Open and read all new messages. 3. Review the message to determine the response priority and category. The message categories are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) threat to staff or building, e.g., hate mail, bomb threats; b) child abuse allegation; c) complaint/commendation regarding DCFS staff; d) complaint/commendation regarding a caregiver, foster parent, group home/FFA provider; or e) comment on media coverage; f) request for information; g) letter to the editor/publisher.
MID Web Site Monitor or Public Information Office	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Immediately contact “911” for staff or building threats. Notify your Supervisor and forward the e-mail threat to the designated person(s) at DCFS Headquarters. See the Management Directive #95-06, Acts/Threats of Violence Against Employees in the Workplace. 5. Immediately forward child abuse allegations to the designated person at the CAHL.

WHO	HOW
	<p>6. Determine where to forward the e-mail message. With the exception of threats and child abuse allegations cited above, forward the message to the appropriate person within one (1) hour.</p> <p>a) DCFS Headquarters shall receive all:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) threats on staff or buildings within the above cited time frame; 2) complaints/commendations regarding staff, caregivers, foster parents, group homes/FFA; 3) comments on media coverage; 4) requests for information.

C. WHEN: FORWARDING THE MESSAGE TO THE APPROPRIATE PERSON

WHO	HOW
<p>MID Web Site Monitor or Public Information Office</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine where the message shall be forwarded. See the procedure cited in part B. above. 2. Open the selected e-mail from the “inbox” folder. Click on the forward button. 3. Type or select, from the address book, the name and e-mail address of the designated person to whom the message is to be forwarded.
<p>MID Web Site Monitor or Public Information Office</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Data enter any additional information, e.g., “911” contacted at 10:05 a.m. Click on the properties icon to select the high, medium or low “importance” priority. Click the “send” button to forward the e-mail to the designated person. <p>NOTE: The message will automatically be copied to the “sent items” folder.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. If no receipt was received indicating that an item has

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	been read, contact the designated person(s) within 20 minutes to confirmation that the threat or CAHL referral was received via e-mail or telephone.

D. WHEN: WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE RECEIPT OF AN E-MAIL MESSAGE RESPOND TO THE PUBLIC

WHO	HOW
MID Web Site Monitor or Public Information Office	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When the message is forwarded to the appropriate designated person, reply to the e-mail sender. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) do not reply to e-mail messages that are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) threats to staff or buildings; 2) advertisements; 3) non-business information; or 4) attachments suspected of having a virus. b) consult with the Supervisor if there is a question regarding how to reply. 2. Open the e-mail message from the “In-Box” folder. Click the “reply to sender” button. 3. Data enter the reply. Example: This e-mail message was forwarded to our DCFS Headquarters staff.
MID Web Site Monitor or Public Information Office	<p>NOTE: The response shall be general information e.g., Region Office address/telephone number. All case-related messages and/or messages that require an assignment shall be forwarded to the Bureau designated person.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) all messages must be grammatically correct and contain no spelling errors. Utilize the spell-check icon or “F7” key.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) paragraphs and messages should be short and to the point. c) capitalize words only to highlight an important point or to distinguish a title or heading. Capitalizing whole words that are not titles is generally termed as SHOUTING! d) use the International format for listing dates, i.e., MM/DD/YYYY or spell out the date in the following manner, June 24, 2000. e) cite all quotes, references, and sources and respect copyright and license agreements. f) acronyms can be used to abbreviate whenever possible, however, messages that are filled with acronyms can be confusing and annoying to the reader. g) keep in mind that Internet users are from many countries. Do not assume that they will understand a reference to TV, movies, pop culture or current events in your country. Explain the reference if it is used. h) information shall be accurate and up-to-date. Check resources before replying to messages.
	<p>4. Select the send button.</p>

E. WHEN: AT THE END OF THE WORK SHIFT OR NO BACK-UP MONITOR IS AVAILABLE

WHO	HOW
MID Web Site Monitor or Public Information Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact, via telephone, the Command Post TA/EW Web Site Monitor “After-Hours” Alternate before the end of each work shift.

WHO	HOW
Command Post TA/EW Web Site Monitor “After-Hours” Alternate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) explain that control of the DCFS Web Site monitoring is being turned over to the Command Post TA/EW “After-Hours” Alternate Monitor at a specified time. 2. Close and log-off of the Microsoft Exchange. 1. Receive contact from the DCFS Web Site Monitor. 2. Access the Internet at the specified time. 3. Follow the established procedures for receiving, forwarding and replying to Internet e-mail messages cited above.
Supervisor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receive contact from the Web Site Monitor stating that they will not be available for a specific work shift. 2. If a back-up monitor is unavailable, contact the Web Site Monitor Alternate. Explain that it shall be their responsibility to monitor the Web Site for a specified time according to the established procedures for receiving, forwarding and replying to Internet e-mail messages cited above.

F. WHEN: UPON RECEIPT OF A FORWARDED INTERNET E-MAIL MESSAGE

WHO	HOW
Bureau Designated Person	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the DCFS Web Site e-mail forwarded message.

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2. **Determine** if the message requires an assignment, circulation or further re-routing to a source with the most expertise in the area of interest.
 - a) if an assignment is needed, **obtain** an assignment number and **annotate** the control log. **Print** the message and **forward** it to the assigned person.
 - b) if circulation is needed, **print** the message, **obtain** a route slip and forward to the appropriate staff.
 - c) if re-routing is needed, **follow** a) above than **data enter** an explanation and **forward** the message to the appropriate field office.
3. **Set-up** a file-folder directory for messages received.
4. **Control**, as appropriate, for a response or completed assignment.