**Search Policy**

**Purpose:** It is the intent of this policy is to mitigate and prevent the presence of all contraband that threatens the safety and confidentiality of all youth and staff and to ensure the safety of participants, staff, volunteers, and visitors by identifying any and all contraband and appropriately removing it for storage or disposal

**Policy:** Staff may engage in searches on a regular or random basis to assure the security and protection of all. In all cases, staff should be respectful and safe guard participant rights during any search. In no case will a body search be conducted.

Staff must be diligent in their efforts to prevent the introduction of contraband into the shelters. Staying alert at all times, being observant in all supervision and the execution of appropriate search techniques greatly enhances the ability to maintain a safe environment for staff and youth.

**Procedure and/or Process:**

For the safety of all concerned, upon admission the youth and their possessions shall be searched to ensure that items are not brought into the shelter that are illegal, potential safety hazards or otherwise not allowed by program rules.

The use of an electronic metal detecting wand prior to entry into the facility where video surveillance is present is mandatory.

If a participant is suspected to be in possession of contraband not detectable by a wand, agency personnel are to contact law enforcement to conduct a pat-down search. Such items include but are not limited to: any illegal drugs such as marijuana, hemp, or industrial hemp, any controlled substances without a legal prescription, any firearm, any weapon (if the item is considered illegal per Florida Statute), or any explosive substance.

In the event of discovery of contraband, the staff will confiscate the contraband. If the item is legal for the youth to own, but in violation of agency policy, the item shall be confiscated, secured, and may be returned to the youth’s legal guardian or collected by the youth at discharge.

At any time, participants may be asked to empty their pockets and/or take off their shoes.

When returning from any activity outside the shelter, participants are required to allow staff to review the contents of book bags and purses to assure that inappropriate items are removed and either stored in lock-up for the participant or disposed of in a safe manner.

In circumstances where a room search is conducted specifically involving a participant’s possessions, either the participant or another staff member must be present.

If illegal contraband is discovered, staff will handle the situation in accordance with the appropriate state and federal laws. Specifically illegal contraband should be secured and law enforcement contacted to remove the contraband. If illegal contraband is discovered in the possession of a participant, law enforcement should be contacted and the CCC must be called within the two (2) hour timeframe from discovery.

In cases where there is a small amount of substance discovered of unknown origin, it may be destroyed in the presence of at least two staff members and the event documented in the program logbook.