

Chapter No. 4128	Page 1
Issue Date: 09/22/00	
Revised: 02-13-19	

**Notes and
References**

Correspondence/Mail Policy

I. General Provisions

Youth shall be given the opportunity to send and receive mail. They shall be informed of the mail policy during orientation.

A. Definition of Contraband:

Contraband is any object or substance the possession of which would constitute a crime under the laws of California, any object or possession which would pose a danger within the facility, and any object or substance which would interfere with the orderly day-to-day operation of the program and is not routinely allowed in the possession of the youth without supervision.

B. Authority and Procedures Inspect Mail:

1. Incoming and outgoing mail shall be inspected by opening the envelope, unfolding the letter and shaking it out for potential contraband.
2. Staff are not permitted to read, review or scan the written contents of the correspondence unless as there is reasonable suspicion to believe facility safety and security, public safety, or youth safety is jeopardized.
 - a. The reasonable suspicion must not be garnered from the correspondence itself and instead must come from another source.
 - b. The information received that may warrant the further inspection of the correspondence can include:

Title 15
1375

**PROBATION DEPARTMENT
JUVENILE HALL MANUAL**

Chapter No. 4128	Page 2
Issue Date: 09/22/00	
Revised: 02-13-19	

Correspondence/Mail Policy (Continued)

**Notes and
References**

1. Promoting or encouraging specific acts of violence or physical harm to a person currently in custody.
2. Advocating plans for escape.
 - c. Mail may be read and/or inspected by Court order.
2. If contact is initiated by a third party source alleging that one of the above conditions exists, the Sr. DPO should be contacted immediately to gather the information from the source. The Sr. DPO shall contact administration for further direction. The SPO or Manager will make the decision as to whether mail will be read, scanned and/or reviewed.
3. If mail is read, scanned or reviewed:
 - a. Staff who open and screen the mail will write their employee I.D., legibly, on the back of the envelope.
 - b. After the mail is screened and it is found to contain material coming within the above described conditions, it may be withheld. Staff shall inform the sender and intended receiver that the letter is being returned or withheld.
 - c. In instances where specific criminal acts are advocated or threats of violence and harm to a person are made, the Sr. DPO will be notified, the youth's Probation Officer shall be notified by telephone, a copy of the letter sent to them and the information documented in a Worker's Special Report (WSR). It shall be the Probation Officer's responsibility to notify the proper parties (law enforcement and potential victim(s) of the circumstances).

Notes and References

**PROBATION DEPARTMENT
JUVENILE HALL MANUAL**

Chapter No. 4128	Page 3
Issue Date: 09/22/00	
Revised: 02-13-19	

Correspondence/Mail Policy (Continued)

II. Mail Restrictions/Screening

- A. Youth may correspond confidentially with State and Federal courts; any member of the State Bar; any member of the Board of State and Community Corrections or any public office holder. Such mail may be checked for contraband in the presence of the youth by a Sr. JIO or Sr. DPO
- B. Youth are not allowed to send for, receive, or possess magazines, newsletters, etc.
- C. Any identified gang member who is Court ordered not to associate with other gang members will not be allowed to send mail to or receive mail from other individual gang members.
- D. Staff will open and scan all mail to check for contraband and unauthorized correspondences (per court order). Should a violation occur, the specifics will be documented in a chrono unless the mail contains contraband that may lead to criminal prosecution and then a WSR will be written.
- E. Only correspondence received via an official mail carrier (U.S. Postal Service, United Parcel Service, Federal Express, etc.) is permitted.
- F. When screening mail, staff will slit open the envelope and shake the letter and envelope. Any mail accordingly restricted will be documented in a chrono, unless the mail contains contraband that may lead to criminal prosecution and then a WSR will be written and referred to the institution administration for further investigation/action. After mail has been screened and is ready to be given to a youth, the stamp and any stickers will be removed.
- G. Correspondence to youth from persons incarcerated in the Division of Juvenile Facilities, the State and Federal prison systems, and other Juvenile Institutions/facilities or County jails will not be accepted. The only exception would be mail from parents or guardians who are incarcerated.

**Notes and
References**

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**PROBATION DEPARTMENT
JUVENILE HALL MANUAL**

Chapter No. 4128	Page 4
Issue Date: 09/22/00	
Revised: 02-13-19	

Correspondence/Mail Policy (Continued)

**Notes and
References**

III. Outgoing Mail Procedures

- A. Youth at the Juvenile Hall are encouraged to maintain regular correspondence with their family members and there is no limit on the volume of mail a youth may send or receive.
- B. Outgoing mail envelopes will only show the sender's name and return address as well as the name and address of the person to whom it is being sent. (No profane or offensive markings, gang drawings, lettering, symbols, etc.)
- C. Letters are collected at least twice per week. Letters will be given unsealed to a JIO. Staff will ensure that all outgoing mail is properly sealed and delivered to the post office within 24 hours of collection, excluding weekends and holidays.
- D. To protect the confidentiality of the youth, no institutional paperwork with youth's names on it will be sent out.
- E. Youth will be provided, if necessary, free postage for seven letters per week. Upon intake, seven envelopes will be placed in the youth's chrono file. Thereafter on each Sunday the youth is in custody, seven envelopes will be maintained in the youth's chrono file.
 - F. Parents are encouraged to provide additional envelopes with embossed postage (no stamps), to youth who wish to send additional letters. Youth cannot share envelopes with one another.
- G. If requested, staff assistance will be provided to youth who have difficulty writing or reading letters.

Notes and References

**PROBATION DEPARTMENT
JUVENILE HALL MANUAL**

Chapter No. 4128	Page 5
Issue Date: 09/22/00	
Revised: 02-13-19	

Correspondence/Mail Policy (Continued)

IV. Incoming Legal Mail Procedures

- A. Mail received from public officials, judges, and attorneys is considered legal mail and shall be unread by staff.
- B. Youth may receive and send unlimited legal mail.
- C. Mail received from public officials is to be opened and inspected for contraband in the presence of the intended youth by a JIO Sr. or DPO Sr. If contraband is found, it is to be confiscated, a WSR shall be written, and the DPO Sr. will notify the SPO forthwith.

**Notes and
References**

See Section II-A,
this chapter