

SONOMA COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT			
JUVENILE PROBATION POLICIES & PROCEDURES			
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3.7 JUVENILE BEHAVIOR RESPONSE SYSTEM

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Probation Department that all Juvenile Deputy Probation Officers (DPO) be trained in the use of the Behavior Response System and that it be used consistently with the youth on Probation.

The purpose of this policy is to further the Department's goals of reducing recidivism, safeguarding the community and promoting positive behavior change by providing clear guidance to DPOs in choosing appropriate responses to youth behavior. The guidance is provided in matrix/grid form that matches types of behavior exhibited and the youth's supervision level with a choice of proportional responses. The policy will be implemented in keeping with the principles listed below.

BEHAVIOR RESPONSE PRINCIPLES

1. Responses to youth behavior will be swift, certain and proportional. The Department promotes consistency and transparency in the treatment of individuals supervised by the department.
2. DPOs shall appropriately balance sanctions and positive reinforcement. Both responses are necessary to reinforce positive behavior and reduce problem behavior. Research shows that, to be effective in changing youth behavior, the ratio of positive reinforcements to sanctions should be at least 4:1.
3. DPOs shall consider the safety of the community and protection of crime victims while conserving resources by prioritizing community based responses over the use of detention.
4. Responses should be graduated, meaning measured, not increasing. According to research, the same consequence several times has the same effect as increasingly severe consequences.
5. Interventions to develop positive behaviors should never be characterized as punishment.
6. DPOs will be proactive: they should not wait for the youth to commit a violation to address identified needs/areas of concern with an intervention.
7. DPOs shall consider youths' personal strengths and interpersonal support system. Include their voices in planning and leverage the family/social connections to foster accountability and motivation for behavior change whenever possible.

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PROCEDURES

1. BEHAVIOR RESPONSE SYSTEM

All DPOs will be trained in the use of the Behavior Response System and will use it consistently with the youth on their caseload.

Categories of behaviors defined in the behavior tables attached to this policy should have a response and every response will be guided by the behavior response system.

Responses shall be individualized and should consider the youth's unique needs, responsivity factors, potential impacts on victims and case plan goals.

2. RESPONDING TO COMPLIANT BEHAVIOR

- a. When a DPO becomes aware of a desirable behavior exhibited by a youth, they shall:
 - i. Identify positive reinforcements that can be provided based on the level chart.
 - ii. Consider case plan goals/action steps and current interventions when deciding on a response.
 - iii. Administer positive reinforcements to the youth to increase the likelihood the behavior will be repeated.
- b. The youth will have involvement in their own plan to address behavior. DPOs will identify youth strengths, include their voices in planning, and leverage interpersonal connections (family, community involvement, friends, and employment, etc.) to foster accountability and motivation for behavior change.
- c. Responses will be proportional to the success.
- d. Responses will be swift and clearly explained to the youth.
- e. Identify the interests of the youth, allow the youth to select from a variety of reinforcers or use universal reinforcers.
- f. Reinforcement must be contingent on performing the desired behavior and should be administered consistently, then intermittently.
- g. Reinforcement is most effective when the positive behavior is associated with a case-plan goal and/or addressing a criminogenic need.

3. RESPONDING TO NON-COMPLIANT BEHAVIOR

- a. When a DPO becomes aware of non-compliant behavior, they shall:

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- i. Identify non-compliant behavior on level chart and determine if low, moderate, or high. If more than one behavior is being addressed, choose the most severe.
 - ii. Identify the youth's supervision level as designated in Jrs and determine if low, moderate, or high risk.
 - iii. Consider case plan goals/action steps and current interventions when deciding on a response.
 - iv. Use response grid to determine appropriate response to address non-compliant behavior. A response can be used more than once to address repeat behavior.
- b. The youth will have involvement in their own plan to address non-compliance. DPOs will identify youth strengths, include their voices in planning, and leverage interpersonal connections (family, community involvement, friends, and employment, etc.) to foster accountability and motivation for behavior change.
 - c. Responses will be proportional to the violation.
 - d. Responses will be swift and clearly explained to the youth (at least within 5 days but ideally as soon as possible).
 - e. Interventions should be used proactively whenever possible, but each sanction should be accompanied by an intervention designed to counteract the negative behavior and prevent its recurrence.

4. AUTHORITY TO ARREST

Officer safety and community protection are a priority. While DPOs are expected to follow the behavior response system, they retain their authority to arrest/detain youth in the field and/or in the office when a youth presents a safety concern to the officer, to themselves, to the community or as specified in the "Conditions For Arrest" section of the department's Arrest Policy. Following arrest, DPOs are expected to utilize the "Non-Compliant Behavior Response Grid" to determine an appropriate response to the violation behavior when making recommendations that the youth remain on community supervision.

5. OVERRIDES OF THE BEHAVIOR RESPONSE SYSTEM

- a. Overrides require supervisor (or acting supervisor) approval.
- b. Acting supervisors may approve overrides for anyone other than themselves.
- c. Supervisors will review all overrides as part of coaching.

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- d. Before requesting an override, the supervising DPO should reassess the youth when they feel the most current risk/needs assessment is not accurate.
- e. When considering overrides, the following factors should be considered: officer safety, community safety, safety of the victim, safety of the youth or a chronic pattern of violations. Consult the chart below for additional guidance.
- f. All overrides, once completed, will be forwarded to the Division Director for review.

Less likely to result in override		More likely to result in override
Unintentional victim contact	Unauthorized victim contact	Victim felt intimidated/threatened
Unrelated to underlying offense	Similar to underlying offense	Clearly related to underlying offense
Series of incidents that ends quickly	Violations occurring over a sufficient period of time/early pattern of violations developing	Chronic pattern of violations

DEFINITIONS

All Proceedings Dismissed (APD): When promoting a positive behavioral response this pertains to successful completion of supervision. The converse applies to negative circumstances when all efforts to intervene effectively in changing a youth's behavior have proven ineffective and supervision will be terminated unsuccessfully, and a custodial sentence imposed.

Behavior contract: A positive-reinforcement intervention that spells out in detail the expectations of the youth as well as the consequences and rewards for subsequent behaviors. [Existing templates](#) are available; however, DPO can also create individualized contracts to address a specific need.

Certainty: Means the response is not a surprise because expectations have been made clear by DPO. The probationer should understand and know the range of sanctions available to his or her DPO and the process by which those sanctions will be used.

Curfew calls: Ordering the youth to call the DPO by a given time, each night, in order to increase accountability and adherence to their court-ordered curfew.

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Enhanced supervision (ES): Placing a youth on GPS monitoring for the purpose of enhancing the level of accountability and structure in the community without the restrictions accompanied with Electronic Monitoring. Youth should not be violated based on GPS information only.

Effective Practices In Community Supervision (EPICS): An integrated model for structuring supervision interactions such that problem-solving approaches and cognitive behavioral interventions are utilized to improve supervision outcomes.

Essay: It may be appropriate to order the youth to write a short essay to address a particular negative behavior. The essay should be related to the behavior and assist the youth in gaining a better understanding of how the particular behavior is in conflict of their case plan goals, or how alternative behaviors would lend a more positive outcome.

Graduated Sanctions: Graduated means measured, not increasing. According to research, the same consequence several times has the same effect as increasing consequences.

Increased PO contact/supervision: This may be given as a short term expectation and youth should be given a definitive period of time.

Incentive: Positive reinforcement of behaviors and/or the delivery of affirmative rewards for positive behaviors or progress with individual case plan goals.

Intervention: Responses that provide the youth an opportunity to address and learn the skills necessary to change negative behaviors. Examples include: counseling/treatment program, EPICS, behavior contract, essay, journal, etc. It is important interventions are not presented as consequences but alternatively, as opportunities for positive change.

Proportionality: Responses should fit the seriousness of the behavior, be appropriate for the person's supervision level, and take into account the frequency of the behavior.

Response: DPO will respond to both positive and negative behaviors to maximize the efforts for behavior change. It is important to keep in mind the differences between a sanction and an intervention and assess whether or not one is more appropriate for a given behavior. Patterns of negative behavior should always be addressed with an intervention when possible; however, interventions and sanctions may also be applied in tandem.

Responsivity factors: Remove barriers to treatment by matching style and mode of delivery to key youth characteristics.

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Sanction: Informal response/consequence to a negative behavior and/or violation of court orders.

Supervision level: Supervision level refers to the youth's PACT assessment and associated risk to re-offend and it is determined that they need a higher level of supervision (contact standards) than what assessment tool indicates. For example: a youth is low risk on the PACT but is supervised by a high risk DPO due to other issues, excluding neighborhood only. This case should reflect high supervision level in Jrs and the case would fall under high risk supervision standards.

Swiftmess: Response has been given as close to the behavior as possible. This helps the youth connect the response with the targeted behavior.

Violation of Probation (VOP): A report submitted to the Juvenile Court alleging one or more violations of supervision conditions, recommending and requiring action by the Juvenile Court Judge.

ATTACHMENTS

Desirable behavior list and response grid
 Non-compliant behaviors list
 Non-compliant responses grid

REFERENCES

Sonoma Probation Research Brief: http://www.sonoma-county.org/probation/docs/reportsandbriefs/brief_EffectiveResponses_20140204.pdf

APPA report: <https://www.appa-net.org/eWeb/docs/APPA/pubs/EROBLLPPS-Report.pdf>

APPROVED BY:

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