

**County of Ventura  
Sheriff's Office**



**Detention Services Division  
Public Information Plan**

Revised: July 2022

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION PLAN**

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Ventura County Sheriff's Office's Detention Services Division is to provide safe, secure, and humane detention for persons lawfully conveyed to our care. We also provide programs and services that reflect our commitment to human rights and individual dignity.

We maintain the highest professional standards for our staff and are committed to investing our resources to enable them to excel in their assignments. Our cooperation with the criminal justice system, social providers and the public is vital to the accomplishment of our primary goals of security, safety and service to the community.

### **Public Information**

This publication is a public document and is for information only. It is not intended for and does not add or create any rights or privileges for inmates other than those provided by statute.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION PLAN

**Section 1045**, Title 15, California Code of Regulations (CCR), states that all facilities shall develop written policies and procedures for the dissemination of information to members of the public, to other governmental agencies, and to the news media.

The following sections of Title 15 are those required to be included in this document. The public and inmates shall have the following material available for review:

### **Section 1061- Inmate Education Plan**

The inmates housed in each of the detention facilities of the Ventura County Sheriff's Office have access to GED, English as a second language (ESL), parenting classes, one-on-one tutoring, vocational training, and a variety of other programs involving basic education, life skills, pre-release planning, as well as substance abuse and AIDS/HIV education. Admission to classes is dependent on screening for length of stay and classification.

### **Section 1062- Visiting**

Inmates shall be afforded the right to interviews by attorneys, bail bondsmen, and other persons concerned about their welfare. Inmates shall also be allowed the privilege of visits with family, friends, and other members of the public. In the implementation of this policy, Detention Services personnel shall ensure the appropriate security measures are observed during the visit/interview process without unnecessarily impairing the rights and privileges of any inmate. **There is no expectation of privacy in the visiting areas. Except for privileged communications, communication may be recorded or monitored in the visiting areas.**

Inmates are allowed two (2) thirty-minute visits per week from members of the public. The number of visitors shall be limited to two (2) at a time. Each facility has its distinctly separate visiting arrangements. Please contact each facility for specific information or go to the Ventura County Sheriff's Office website, [www.vcsd.org](http://www.vcsd.org)

## **Visitors Rules**

- Visitors must follow the rules of the facility and are subject to search at any time.
- Visitors that are disruptive will be asked to leave.
- Visitors are expected to keep their children under control during the visit.
- All visitors shall be dressed in a manner appropriate to a jail environment. Shirts and shoes are required. No suggestive or revealing clothing is allowed. Gang-related clothing is prohibited.

### **Visitors that fall into the following categories shall not be allowed to visit inmates:**

- Persons who appear to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs.
- Those who have contagious disease(s).
- Those who have been arrested for smuggling or attempting to smuggle contraband into the facility.
- Those persons involved in any escape or attempt escape.
- Those unable to provide proper identification.
- Those who are attempting or have attempted entry with the use of falsified identification papers.
- Those under 18 years of age, without an adult escort (parent or guardian). The exception is if the minor is the legal spouse of the inmate and can provide proof of marriage.
- Any person previously convicted of a felony **and** was confined in any California State Prison, is not allowed to be upon the grounds of any custodial facility, without the consent of the Facility Manager.
- Those who have been documented as Persona Non Grata by any Detention Services Manager.
- Those whose visits have been restricted due to unauthorized communication with an inmate or inmates.
- Individuals released from the Ventura County Jail may not return as a visitor for one year.

### **Section 1063- Correspondence (Mail)**

Inmates shall be afforded the right to send and receive enveloped mail and postcards via the United States Postal Service, unless the correspondence would jeopardize the safety, security, order, discipline, or control of the facility. Incoming mail generally takes several days to process and deliver to inmates. Mail will not be accepted if dropped off at any jail facility.

All incoming mail must be properly addressed with the inmate's name, booking number, and mailed to: P.O. Box 6929, Ventura, CA 93006. Legal Mail is opened in front of the inmate, checked for contraband, and then given to the inmate.

Each Inmate is allowed, on a weekly basis, to order a welfare kit, including one postage paid postcard, one postage paid envelope, 2 sheets of paper, one pencil, and one eraser. If an inmate has money in their account, the inmate's account will be debited accordingly. If the inmate has no funds in their account, or insufficient funds, they will still receive a welfare kit, which includes the above-described correspondence items. There will be no limit on the number of postage paid letters to their attorney and to the courts.

All outgoing mail shall have the inmate's custody return address, (Inmate Name, Booking Number, Ventura County Jail, PO Box 6929, Ventura, CA 93006) on the envelope. Any mail not containing this information will be returned to the housing unit for an attempt to locate the sender.

If outgoing mail contains possible contraband, it will be opened, and the inmate will be questioned regarding the contents.

For more information and a copy of the full policy on inmate mail, go to the Ventura County Sheriff's Office website, [www.vcsd.org](http://www.vcsd.org)

### **Section 1064- Library Service**

Inmates have access to the law library to conduct basic legal research. They must complete a Law Library request form (pink kite) and submit it for dissemination to the library. All inmates, including Pro Per and Pro Se, must submit a law library request form. They will be given one hour to utilize the law library. All law library uses, and refusals will be logged.

Inmates have access to current information on community services and resources, religious and education reading materials by submitting a kite to Inmate Services.

Inmates have access to books by way of a book cart that is replenished as needed. Inmates also have the ability to specifically request an individual book from Inmate Services.

Eligible inmates are also issued electronic tablets that contain books for entertainment, self-help, religious and educational reading. The tablet also contains the LexisNexis law library application.

### **Section 1065- Exercise and Recreation**

Inmates shall be afforded an opportunity to utilize the exercise areas and participate in the recreational programs at the Main Jail and the Todd Road Jail. These recreational activities may include, but are not limited to, basketball, handballs, miscellaneous table games, static machines, card games, radio, and television.

Inmates will be given the opportunity for three (3) hours of outside recreation time every seven (7) days.

### **Section 1066- Books, Newspapers, Periodicals and Writings**

Inmates are allowed to receive softbound books, newspapers, and magazines that have been ordered from a publishing company or internet.com bookstore and delivered through the *U.S. Postal Service, FedEx, DHL, or UPS*. These items will be delivered to the inmate providing they are free from articles, words, drawings, pictures, or suggestions of hatred, violence, nudity, jail safety and security compromises, or other content which may jeopardize the legitimate penological interest of the jail facilities.

### **Section 1067- Access to Telephone**

Inmates have access to the telephone during their dayroom time. If an inmate has a special request to use the phone, he/she shall make that request in writing. Inmates are not allowed to receive incoming calls.

Inmates will be allowed access to the telephone upon being booked into the jail per Penal Code § 851.5. Once an inmate is housed, inmates will be allowed to use the telephone in their respective housing areas by either calling collect or by utilizing pre-purchased debit calls. This excludes inmates that have had their dayroom privileges suspended due to a sustained disciplinary finding or court order. Inmates will be able to telephone their attorney when in disciplinary housing by submitting a request via a kite.

Hearing impaired or deaf inmates have the right to communicate by utilizing auxiliary aids and telecommunications devices. All Ventura County Jail facilities have been equipped with T.T.Y. (teletypewriter) telephones and Purple device.

### **Section 1068- Access to Courts and Counsel**

All inmates will be afforded access to the courts, counsel, and to other legal resources to adequately enable them to pursue any necessary legal activities and guarantee their statutory and constitutional rights. This includes access to the Public Defender's Office and attorneys via unmonitored telephone calls, unmonitored visits, and mail; access to the Law Library; receive and submit a Writ of Habeas Corpus; and conditional access to the media. Inmates can place their court case(s) on court calendar by submitting a green Court Kite.

### **Section 1069- Inmate Orientation**

It is the intention of the Detention Services Division to make inmates aware of the standard of conduct by distributing a list of jail rules and prohibited acts. All inmates are given two pamphlets, one titled "INMATE ORIENTATION" and one titled "JAIL RULES" that contain the rules and regulations they are to follow as well as information regarding services, programs, etc. This booklet is printed in Spanish and English. This information is also available on the inmate tablets.

### **Section 1070- Individual Family Service Programs**

Inmate Services provides information and education to inmates in various subjects. This includes courses on parenting, twelve-step recovery

programs and/or a referral to the appropriate community services that is applicable to individual needs. Access to such services is available to all inmates.

### **Section 1071- Voting**

All interested **and** eligible inmates that want to vote in any upcoming election can request all necessary information/documents from Inmate Services. All requests must be made via kite. Inmates can request either an absentee ballot or a voter registration card. If an inmate is booked after the absentee ballot cutoff date and wishes to vote in an upcoming election within Ventura County, he/she can do so by sending a kite to Inmate Services. They, in turn, will have the inmate sign an affidavit authorizing an application for Inmate Services staff to obtain an absentee ballot from the Ventura County Registrar of Voters-Elections Office. After obtaining an absentee ballot, Inmate Services will hand deliver the ballot to the inmate to complete. Voting information is available on the inmate tablets as well as posted in all housing areas.

### **Section 1072- Religious Observances**

The Jail's Chaplain's Office schedules Catholic and Protestant services several times a week for all interested inmates. Any inmate that requests a special religious service through the church of their choice is advised to contact the Chaplain's Office, via kite. Individual counseling, group Bible study, pastoral counseling, and visits by representatives of an inmate's faith are also available by request.

All types of literature are available, free of charge, to any inmate who requests it. All diet requests based on religion, are subject to verification by the Chaplain's Office.

### **Section 1073- Inmate Grievance Procedure**

Detention Services personnel shall maintain consistent and equitable procedures for handling inmate grievances. This is accomplished by providing the inmate with a vehicle for communicating complaints, such as custody treatment, medical treatment, jail policies and procedures, appeal disciplinary related findings, appeal classification, housing related



decisions, or other custody related matters. Grievances can also be utilized to answer questions about the above topics by inmates and reduce the necessity for many legal challenges and inquires.

If an inmate does not feel the response, they received from the grievance was satisfactory, they may appeal that response to the next level. There are five levels at which an inmate grievance can be solved. Every effort will be made to resolve the grievance at the lowest level. The five levels are: Housing Deputy (must respond within 24 hours), Level Supervisor (must respond within 24 hours), facility supervisor (must respond within three days, excluding weekends and holidays), Facility Manager (must respond within seven days, excluding weekends and holidays) and Commander (must respond within ten days, excluding weekends and holidays).

Any inmate that submits an excessive number of grievances that are determined to be frivolous in nature may be deemed a "frivolous griever." All subsequent grievances from a designated "frivolous griever" will be forwarded to the Legal Unit for review, routing, or answering. The Legal Unit will have seven days to route or respond to the grievances (excluding weekends and holidays).

If an inmate feels that their grievance has not been answered or properly addressed, the inmate may file a Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus (Writ) after exhausting all administrative remedies (all levels of the grievance process). Once the Writ is filed in Court, the Court will schedule a hearing to make a decision on the issue. An inmate may also file a Writ if they wish to challenge the legality of their confinement or conviction, seeking redress for illegal conditions or treatment, or pursuing remedies in connection with civil legal problems. An inmate may request a grievance or Writ by submitting a kite. All grievances will be distributed and logged by jail housing staff. All Writs will be distributed by the Legal Unit, along with necessary instructions for an inmate to either file the Writ themselves or have the Legal Unit file it for them. The Legal Unit will not give advice or other assistance in inmate legal matters.

Pursuant to Penal Code § 832.5, inmates may lodge a complaint against custody staff via the inmate grievance form. Inmates will not be issued a Citizen's Complaint form. It will be explained to the inmate that all complaints against custody personnel will be documented on the grievance but will be investigated in the same manner as a Citizen's Complaint form.

The inmate if they desire, may write, "Citizen's Complaint" on the top of the grievance.

### **Sections 1080, 1081, 1082, 1083- Inmate Discipline related Policies**

Discipline, for the purpose of this policy, is defined as a systematic process by which compliance to facility rules are obtained. An essential part of the process is the imposition of punitive sanctions, which is not intended as a mandatory step, but as a training tool to be used only when other available dispositions are inadequate to regulate an inmate's behavior within acceptable limits. Violations may also result in criminal action against an inmate if an element of a crime/crimes has been established.

Minor Incidents- a violation of a facility rule resulting in action taken against the inmate, which does not affect his release date. Four (4) minor violations within a 30-day period will result in a major violation. While in disciplinary housing, two (2) minor violations within a 30-day period will result in a major violation.

Major incidents- a violation of a facility rule resulting in action taken against the inmate that may affect his/her release date.

### **Guidelines**

Inmate Rights- In all disciplinary actions, the inmate shall be notified of the offense or infraction of the rules for which he is being disciplined in writing. At their request, the inmate shall be given a minimum of 24 hours before discipline is approved and have an opportunity to defend his actions in written or oral form. An accused inmate has the right to call witnesses on their behalf unless doing so presents a hazard to institutional safety or correctional goals, or the proposed witness testimony is untimely, irrelevant, duplicative, or unnecessary to an adequate presentation of the inmate's case. Witnesses maybe interviewed separately and out of the presence of the inmate. A summary of the witness statements will be included in the disposition section of the discipline status screen. If the hearing officer decides not to interview any of the inmate's named witnesses, the reason must be documented in the disposition section. In cases where an inmate is found to be incompetent to present his case at the disciplinary hearing, they may seek aid from a sufficiently competent

fellow inmate, or request substitute aid in the form of help from staff. Written records of the procedures followed on each case shall be maintained.

## **Forms of Discipline**

The degree of punitive action taken shall be directly related to the severity of the rule infraction. Acceptable forms of discipline may consist of, but not be limited to, the following:

- Loss of privileges (i.e. commissary or visiting)
- Extra work detail
- Removal of work details
- Forfeiture of "good time" credits earned under PC 4019.
- Forfeiture of "work time" credits earned under PC 4019.
- Disciplinary housing, which involves restriction of recreation time, dayroom time, and visitation.

## **Limitations of Disciplinary Actions**

The Penal Code and the State Constitution expressly prohibit all cruel and unusual punishment. Additionally, there shall be the following limitations:

- For each violation, no inmate shall be held in disciplinary housing for longer than 30 days without a consultation with health care staff and a Facility Manager review.
- Under no circumstances shall the safety cell be used for disciplinary purposes.
- No inmate shall be deprived of implements necessary to maintain an acceptable level of personal hygiene.
- Inmates in disciplinary housing during their court or jury trial shall be given an opportunity to shower daily (before or after court).
- Disciplinary housing cells shall have the minimum furnishings (bunk, toilet, wash basin) and the inmate shall be issued standard bedding and clothing. *\*\*Exceptions are those inmates who engage in the*

*destruction of these items. The decision to deprive an inmate of such articles shall be reviewed every 24 hours by the Facility Manager.*

**Section 1200- Responsibility of Health Care Services**

The Ventura County Sheriff's Office contracts its medical services to California Forensic Medical Group. All inmates have access to the services of jail medical, psychiatric, and dental services while incarcerated.