I. POLICY:

The Department of Juvenile Justice shall prepare for the successful release and transition of youth to the community beginning at the time of commitment.

II. DEFINITION:

Community Case Manager (CCM): Juvenile Probation/Parole Specialist I, II or III (JPPS) or Juvenile Probation Officer I or II who provides direct supervision and coordination of services for a youth. The Community Case Manager also includes any member of an established case management team who may perform case management tasks.

Detainer: Order of Detention, DJJ Request for Apprehension and Detention, warrant or other legal request that places a hold against a youth and notifies the holding facility of the jurisdiction’s intent to take custody of the youth when he or she is released.

Early Release: Release before the minimum length of stay.

Juvenile Detention Counselor (JDC): The RYDC or YDC employee with case management responsibilities for a youth and who shares joint service planning responsibilities with the Community Case Manager.

Length of Stay: The amount of time a youth is to serve in restrictive custody (secure residential placement), as ordered by the court or specified by DJJ within the term of the court order.

Managing Team: The team that manages a youth’s treatment and service provision. This may be the facility multidisciplinary team, behavioral health treatment team or, in YDCs, the sexually harmful behaviors intervention treatment team.
**Maximum Length of Stay:** The DJJ-calculated maximum amount of time a youth can serve in a YDC.

**Minimum Length of Stay:** The DJJ-calculated minimum amount of time a youth should serve in a YDC.

**Release:** Discharge from any secure or non-secure residential facility or program.

**Youth-Centered Reentry Team (YCRT):** Team responsible for identifying, coordinating, and fostering progress of the youth’s reentry needs. Team members will consist of: the youth, parent/guardian, JDC, Community Case Manager and, where applicable, the Substance Abuse Counselor, Operations Support Managers, Reentry Resource Coordinators, Social Services Program Consultants, Juvenile Sex Offender Certified Counselors or other relevant staff assigned to the youth. Other members of the team may include mentors, community support members, education staff, security staff, administration, and medical staff.

**Youth Status Report:** A written report that summarizes the services provided to a youth and the progress of the youth, and makes recommendations for transition.

### III. GENERAL PROCEDURE:

A. Transition and aftercare planning will begin at the time of commitment. The Service Plan for aftercare services will be completed in accordance with DJJ 18.30, Service Planning, and DJJ 20.31, Needs Assessment and Service Planning.

B. Beginning with the initial admission to a secure facility, the Managing Team will meet with the youth and family to discuss the youth’s identified needs and plan for the youth’s successful transition to the community and aftercare services in accordance with DJJ 18.30, Service Planning.

C. Each facility Director will designate supervisory staff members that are trained in intake/release procedures. Designated staff will approve all releases and ensure that they are conducted in accordance with this policy.

D. Required Release Procedures:

1. Prior to a release, designated staff will verify that a release is properly and legally authorized. Releases may be authorized by court order or other legal documents issued by courts or law enforcement agencies.

2. The Community Case Manager (CCM) or Case Expeditor may authorize a release using the Authorization for Release Form (Attachment A). The CCM or Case Expeditor will scan the Authorization Form into the Correspondence Module of JTS. The Authorization is required for releasing youth from a secure facility to the community or an alternate placement, including non-secure detention. The facility staff will check the release date set by the Office...
of Classifications and/or the Correspondence Module for a scanned Authorization Form before releasing the youth.

3. The assigned Juvenile Detention Counselor (JDC) will review the JTS Legal Module for any holds that may be entered by the Case Expeditor or CCM. If the JDC or CCM becomes aware of a hold that is not entered in JTS, he/she will ensure the information is immediately updated in JTS. Any active arrest warrants will be added in the JTS Alert module.

4. Before release, designated staff will check the youth’s file for any detainers (e.g. holds, charges, warrants, etc.) and contact the filing agency about continued interest in assuming custody.

5. At the time of release, facility staff will verify the identity of the youth (via the JTS picture) to be released and the person or agency to whom the youth is being released. The picture identification of the person to whom the youth is being released will be copied and filed in the youth’s case record, with the exception of law enforcement or DJJ personnel.

6. At the time of release, any stored personal property will be returned to the youth. The property will be verified as correct using the DJJ Personal Property Inventory (see DJJ 15.8, Youth Property, State Issued Items and Personal Hygiene), which requires the signatures of the youth and processing staff.

7. Any youth’s personal property that may remain at the facility will be forwarded to the last known address of the parent or legal guardian.

8. For youth being transported via a DJJ Transportation Officer, property will be transported in accordance with DJJ 10.3, Transportation Requests for Releases and Transfers.

9. Medical records and referrals for youth released from secure facilities to their community will be handled in accordance with DJJ 11.10, Medical Treatment Planning.

10. Youth’s personal mail will be handled in accordance with DJJ 15.6, Access to Mail.

E. RYDC Release

1. Medication administration for youth transported by a Transportation Officer, released to the Division of Community Services, or transferred from one facility to another will be managed in accordance with DJJ 11.26, Medication Administration. The youth’s health record will not be sent with youth who are being transported for the sole purpose of release.
a. The Transportation Officer will contact the CCM/court staff by telephone to give an estimated time of arrival at least one hour before he/she arrives at the youth’s final destination. If the CCM/court staff cannot be reached, the Transportation Headquarters will be immediately notified for assistance. Transportation Headquarters staff will immediately contact Central Office staff in the Division of Support Services and the Division of Community Services.

(1) The CCM/court staff will receive the youth at the intake area of the receiving facility at the agreed upon time.

(2) The CCM will deliver the youth’s medications with the youth at the time of the subsequent placement.

2. For youth being released to the Department of Corrections or a jail, the facility will handle youth’s property in accordance with DJJ 15.8, Youth Property, State Issued Items and Personal Hygiene.

3. The youth will be given a copy of his/her Transition Plan at the time of his/her release.

4. Youth records will be retained in accordance with DJJ 5.1, Records Management.

5. Necessary medical and mental health follow-up appointments will be made in accordance with DJJ 11.10, Medical Treatment Planning, and DJJ 12.20, Treatment Planning. Medications will be handled in accordance with DJJ 11.26, Medication Administration.

6. When a youth who is on close or special observation is to be removed from the facility for any reason (e.g., release to parent/guardian, transportation to court, etc.), the facility staff will provide the receiving officer/person with a copy of the Notification of Precautions Letter (Attachment C) in accordance with DJJ 12.21, Suicide Prevention.

7. Designated facility staff will complete any pending grievances and/or provide information on how to file claims for lost or damaged property prior to the youth’s release (see DJJ 15.8, Youth Property and State Issued Items and Hygiene).

8. Immediately after the youth’s release the facility staff will enter the release into the Juvenile Tracking System (JTS).
9. Victim(s) will be notified, as required by law, in accordance with DJJ 14.10, Victim’s Rights, Services and Notification.

F. The DJJ Office of Classification Services will calculate the youth’s minimum and maximum release dates at the time of placement and enter the date in the JTS placement module.

1. For youth sentenced to a Short Term Program, Secure Probation Sanction, and Designated Felons, the minimum and maximum release dates will be calculated based upon the court order.

2. For committed youth, the minimum and maximum release dates will be calculated based upon the established length of stay for the screening committee’s recommended placement. (See DJJ 20.20, Screening of Youth.)

G. All youth will be released on the minimum release date unless an extension is granted, in writing, by the approving authority.

H. DJJ may extend the length of stay beyond the periods specified by the court within the term of the order see DJJ 18.21, Extension of Youth Time in Secure Facilities. No extension of the youth’s length of stay may continue beyond the youth’s twenty-first birthday.

I. For regularly committed youth, in special circumstances, consideration may be given to the release of a youth before the minimum release date at the request of the youth’s CCM or facility case manager.

J. The Managing Team will make a recommendation for early release in accordance with DJJ 17.22, DF Orders Modifications and Terminations.

K. YDC Releases:

1. Release review for youth in YDC will be conducted in accordance with DJJ 18.30, Service Planning.

2. The youth’s assigned JDC, Social Service Provider, and/or Sex Offender Treatment Specialist will present information developed by the Managing Team to the YCRT. This information will include: treatment and programming engagement, progress, setbacks (if any), and release criteria eligibility.

3. Transition and re-entry of youth to communities will take place in accordance with provisions laid out in DJJ 25.1, YCRT.

4. Information and planning developed at the YCRT meeting will be incorporated into the service plan of YDC youth.
5. In the event the Managing Team determines the youth is in need of additional time to work on specific goals to complete required programming, the extension process will be applied in accordance with DJJ 18.21, Extension of Youth Time in Secure Facilities.

L. In addition to the above requirements, loss of life cases require the following:

1. The release of youth committed by the juvenile court for murder or felony murder (O.C.G.A. 16-5-1); voluntary manslaughter (O.C.G.A. 16-5-2); or homicide by vehicle, 1st degree (O.C.G.A. 40-6-393) will be reviewed no later than 60 days from the minimum release date.

2. Designated facility staff will notify via written correspondence the CCM and the District Director of the 60-day Managing Team meeting. The CCM and the respective District Director will attend the YCRT meeting.

3. The General Counsel or designee will be invited to all loss of life Managing Team meetings.

4. Following the Managing Team meeting, but no later than 30 days prior to the requested release date, the following documents will be forwarded to the Deputy Commissioner of Support Services, through the chain of command:

   - Youth Status Report (Attachment B);
   - Court order;
   - Most recent psychological evaluation, if applicable;
   - DJJ Service Plan;
   - Conditions of Supervision; and
   - Youth’s written statement regarding the occurrence of the offense and his/her feelings about the offense.

5. The YDC will submit an addendum to the Deputy Commissioner of Secure Campuses, through the chain of command, in the following circumstances:

   a. The youth has a guilty or substantiated finding for a charge of escape, attempted escape, sexual activity, or assault/injury to others during a disciplinary hearing.

   b. New information becomes available (e.g., new legal charges, updated information that was not available when the previous report was submitted, major changes to the aftercare plan, etc.).
c. The addendum will be a narrative report that includes the reason for the addendum, progress reports on the youth and the revised aftercare Service Plan.

IV. LOCAL OPERATING PROCEDURES REQUIRED: YES

- Facility Director will designate a supervisory staff member to oversee facility releases.