

# Supervised Visitation Network



## ***Policy & Procedure Guide***

ALL SVN STANDARDS REQUIRING A  
POLICY OR PROCEDURE

**Program Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Creation/Review Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

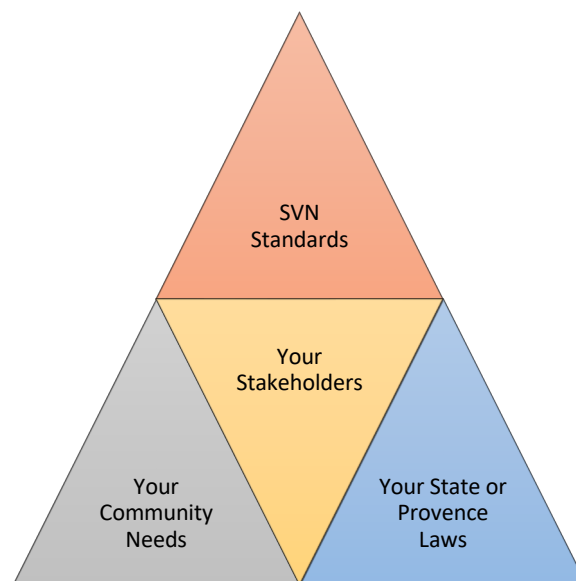
**The SVN Standards are consistent with the mission and values of SVN, the general philosophy of the standards is:**

- 1. Quality and flexibility of service:** The standards are intended to be broad enough to be applicable to all supervised visitation providers operating and administering services and specific enough to ensure implementation of the core values of SVN.
- 2. Safety and well-being:** The underlying premise of these standards is that the safety of all participants is a precondition of providing services. After safety, the well-being of the child is the paramount consideration at all stages and particularly in deciding the manner in which supervision is provided.
- 3. Evolving standards:** The standards will be revised and updated periodically to reflect the evolving practice of supervised visitation services.

**How to use this guide:**

**The SVN Policy & Procedure guide was created to help new and existing programs shape their policy and procedures around the SVN Standards of Practice. As always, your funder, government, agency or other stakeholders' requirements for providing services take precedent over the SVN Standards and it is best practice to review your processes with those stakeholders to assure compliance.**

**Your policies and procedure should be built on the following:**



**Use the spaces provided to take notes or reflect on your current policies. It is important for each policy to understand the philosophical unpinning.**

**Some considerations:**

- ① What are your values and beliefs about supervised visitation?
- ② How did that discussion drive your development of your mission and vision statements? How are they connected?
- ③ Those two previous discussions now form the basis of your topic area discussion.
- ④ How will those value/beliefs ultimately inform your policies?
- ⑤ Then, how will that ultimately inform your procedure – what you will actually DO at the center?

**What is a policy:** A policy is a guideline that is grounded in an organization’s mission and directs **what is to be done and why?**

**What is a procedure:** A procedure is a specific step or method by which a policy can be accomplished; **it states how, where, and when** the policy will be implemented.

Policy	Procedure
Guides decision making	Drives actions
Contains the what and why	Contains the how, when, and where
Broad enough to account for diversity and unique safety needs	Specific and detailed
Board/governing body typically needs to approve changes	Can typically be changed more easily/frequently

**Answer these questions for each SVN Standard Topic Area:**

**What is your policy? What drove this policy/procedure into existence? Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**

# SVN Standards Topic Areas that Require a Policy or Procedure

**Standard Section 4.0** Administrative Functions

**Standard Section 5.0** Program Operations

**Standard Section 7.0** Records

**Standard Section 8.0** Safety & Security

**Standard Section 9.0** Provider's Responsibility For The Child

**Standard Section 10.0** Fees

**Standard Section 11.0** Staff

**Standard Section 12.0** Training & Education

**Standard Section 14.0** Intake & Orientation

**Standard Section 15.0** Staff Preparation For Services

**Standard Section 16.0** Interventions And Ending A Visit Or Exchange In Progress

**Standard Section 18.0** Termination Of Services

**Standard Section 19.0** Special Standards In Situations Involving Child Sexual Abuse And Domestic Violence

**Standard Section 20.0** Reports To Courts And Referring Sources

# SVN Standard Section 4.0:

## Administrative Functions

### 4.3 Personnel Policies

A provider with employees or volunteers must have written personnel **policies** and maintain personnel records.

### 4.4 Client Records

A provider **must keep client records** in accordance with section 7.0 of this document. The collection and reporting of data based on client records must not compromise client confidentiality.

### 4.5 Case Review

#### Internal case review

A **provider must review** the status of all open cases, both active and inactive, to monitor client compliance with the service, program preparation for court review dates, if any, and follow up on outstanding issues.

#### Review by the court or referring agency

Subject to each jurisdiction, providers must work with the court or referring **agency to have written policies and procedures for case review** to consider the status of the case, any needed changes to the court order, or whether participation in the service will continue or terminate. Resource information about how to access court services must be made available to clients.

**What is your policy?**

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

**Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**

# SVN Standard Section 5.0:

## Program Operations

### 5.4 Premises

For on-site supervised visitation services, the physical layout of the premises must be designed to protect the safety and security of participants.

### 5.5 Accessibility

A provider must have policies and procedures about accessibility to supervised visitation services in terms of geographic location, transportation, hours of operation, American Disabilities Act and its equivalent legislation in the international jurisdiction, and sensitivity to the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic needs of the community.

### 5.6 Insurance

A provider must obtain and maintain insurance coverage that is appropriate to their business operations and the nature of the work and services provided.

**What is your policy?**

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

**Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**

# SVN Standard Section:

## 7.0 Records

### 7.2 Client Files

1. A provider is responsible **for maintaining, storing, and destroying records** in a manner consistent with applicable government statutes and regulations.
2. **A file must be created** for each family and kept according to standards of confidentiality under section 21.0 of this document. The client file must include:
  1. Names of each parent and child;
  2. Dates of birth;
  3. Address;
  4. Telephone number;
  5. Emergency contact and telephone number;
  6. Referral date;
  7. Source of referral;
  8. Reason for referral;
  9. Provider agreement with clients for use of the service;
  10. If applicable, other persons authorized to visit;
  11. Relevant court orders or signed agreement between the parents;
  12. Consents for release of information (if any); and
  13. Observation notes, reports, and records of the visit (if any).

### 7.3 Records of Parent/Child Contact

A **provider must maintain a record of each parent**/child contact. The record must be factual and must contain at a minimum, but not be limited to:

1. Client identifier;
2. Who brought the child to the parent/child contact;
3. Who supervised the parent/child contact;
4. Any additional authorized observers;
5. Date, time, and duration of parent/child contact;
6. Who participated in the parent/child contact;
7. An account of critical incidents, if any; and
8. An account of ending or temporary suspension of the parent/child contact, including the reasons for ending or suspending the visit.

### 7.4 Protection of Client Information

1. A **provider must set forth in writing**, implement, and maintain policies and procedures regarding the release of case information. Case files must not be released except as provided by law, court order, or consent of the parents.
2. When a request for a case file is received, the file must be reviewed and personal identifying information must be redacted (covered over), except as required by law, as required by the court or subpoena, or when reporting suspected child abuse.
3. When a client is staying in a shelter or other confidential location, especially in domestic violence cases, the provider must not disclose the shelter location or other confidential client identifying information, except as required by law or court order.

## **7.5 Protection of Provider Identity**

**A provider must establish policies** concerning confidentiality and the protection of staff and volunteer's identification in the client file.

**What is your policy?**

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

**Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**



# SVN Standard Section 8.0:

## Safety & Security

### 8.2 General Policy for Safety

1. A provider must have written policies and procedures that seek to provide safety for all participants. The central criterion of safety is that there is a match between the capacity of the provider, the service being provided, and the needs of and the risk presented by the family.
2. A provider cannot guarantee safety; adult clients remain responsible and accountable for their own actions.

### 8.7 Case Screening

A provider's safety policies and security measures are not a substitute for screening for potential risks of harm. Providers must maintain policies and procedures to screen for risk in each case.

### 8.9 Critical Incidents

A provider must have written policies and procedures regarding critical incidents including recording, reporting, and actions taken to resolve the incident. See also section 17.0 in this document.

**What is your policy?**

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

**Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**

# SVN Standard Section 9.0:

## Provider's Responsibility For The Child

### 9.4 Provider Responsibility

1. Children must not be left unattended with a noncustodial parent (their own or any other custodial or noncustodial parent) any time during visitation services. An exception to this rule is during intermittent supervision as defined under [section 2.10](#).
2. **Providers must have written policies and procedures** for parent/child contact not covered by court order or agreement of the parents. These policies for the parent/child contact must not delegate authority entirely to one of the parents.
3. Providers are responsible for the care and protection of a child during the transition of the child from one parent to another.

**What is your policy?**

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

**Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**

# SVN Standard Section 10.0: Fees

## 10.2 General Policy

1. All providers must establish written policies and procedures regarding fees for service, including the amount and collection of fees and consequences for failure to pay.
2. The provider's policies regarding all fees must be discussed with each parent prior to the beginning of service

**What is your policy?**

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

**Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**

# SVN Standard Section 11.0:

## Staff

### 11.3 General Staff Screening

All applicants, both paid and unpaid positions, must complete a criminal background check and child abuse and neglect screening and clearance or the equivalent screening in each local jurisdiction before a final decision to hire the applicant is made.

### 11.4 General Qualifications for All Providers

All staff, including paid and unpaid personnel, must meet the following minimum qualifications:

1. Maintain a neutral role;
2. Have no conflict of interest as outlined in section 3.5;
3. Have no conviction of child molestation, child abuse, or other crimes relating to children;
4. Have no conviction of a violent crime and/or on probation or parole during the last five years;
5. Have had no civil or criminal restraining order issued against him or her within the last five years;
6. Have no current or past court order in which the provider is the person being supervised;
7. Be at least 18 years of age;
8. Be in compliance with local health requirements for direct contact with children; and
9. Be adequately trained to provide the supervised visitation services offered by the provider (see section 12 in this document).

**What is your policy?**

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

**Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**

# SVN Standard Section 12.0:

## Training & Education

### 12.0 General Training Principles

1. The training of a provider must correspond with the services offered by the provider.
2. The training specified below must be completed within 12 months of employment.
3. Any person who has not completed the required training, may provide direct service only under the supervision of a person who has completed the required training.

**What is your policy?**

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

**Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**

# SVN Standard Section 14.0: Intake & Orientation

## 14.3 Intake

1. A provider must conduct interviews with each of the parents prior to the beginning of service. Providers may collaborate with the court or referring agency in conducting the intake.

**What is your policy?**

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

**Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**

# SVN Standard Section 15.0:

## Staff Preparation For Services

### 15.3 Conditions for Parent/Child Contact

1. A provider must have written policies and procedures regarding conditions of supervised visitation, including, but not limited to, issues such as visitors, toys, food, gifts, photo/video/audio recording, cellular phones, pagers, and toileting. Provider's policies and procedures must not delegate decision-making authority over these conditions entirely to one parent.
2. A provider must be able to speak and understand the language being spoken by the parent and the child being supervised. If the visit supervisor cannot speak and understand the language being spoken by the parent and the child, they must be accompanied by a neutral interpreter over the age of 18.

**What is your policy?**

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

**Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**

# SVN Standard Section 16.0: Interventions And Ending A Visit Or Exchange In Progress

## 16.2 General Policies

A provider must have written policies and procedures for intervening in and ending parent/child visits in progress. The policies must include situations in which the provider determines:

1. A child is acutely distressed;
2. A parent is not following the program rules set out by the service agreement; and
3. A participant is at risk of imminent harm either emotionally or physically.

Ending a client's parent/child contact may be a temporary measure and is not the same as termination of services.

**What is your policy?**

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

**Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**



# SVN Standard Section 18.0:

## Termination Of Services

### 18.2 Reasons for Termination

A **provider must have written policies and** procedures that set forth the reasons for which services may be terminated, including, but not limited to:

1. Safety concerns or other case issues that cannot be effectively managed by the provider;
2. Excessive demand on the provider's resources;
3. The parent's failure to comply with the conditions or rules for participation in the program;
4. Nonpayment of program fees
5. Threat of or actual violence or abuse.

### 18.3 Refusal of Child to Visit

1. A **provider must have written policies and** procedures for situations in which a child refuses to participate in parent/child visits.
2. If a child refuses to visit with the noncustodial party in such a way or for such a period of time that it raises concerns that continuation of services may be detrimental to the child's safety and emotional well-being, then a provider must suspend services pending resolution of the issue.

### 18.4 Procedures for Termination of Services

When a provider terminates services, **the provider must:**

1. Inform each parent in writing of the reason for termination of services;
2. Provide written notice to the court and/or referring source stating the reason for the termination; and
3. Document the termination and reasons for termination in the case file.

**What is our policy?**

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

**Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**

# SVN Standard Section 19.0:

## Special Standards In Situations Involving Child Sexual Abuse And Domestic Violence

### 19.2 Child Sexual Abuse

1. A provider must have written policies and procedures for the supervision of cases with allegations or findings of sexual abuse that provide for the safety of all participants using the service.
2. Any provider supervising the parent/child contact when sexual abuse has been alleged or proven must have specific training in child sexual abuse and its effect on children.
3. The contact between the visiting parent and the child must be supervised continually one-on-one so that all verbal communication is heard and all physical contact is observed.
4. If there is an allegation of sexual abuse that is under investigation, providers must not accept a referral or must suspend service unless there is a court order to the contrary or an opinion by a sexual abuse expert involved in the case.

### 19.3 Domestic Violence

A provider must have written policies and procedures for supervision of cases with allegations or findings of domestic violence that provide for the safety of all participants using the service.

A provider must:

1. Develop and implement a plan for safe arrival and departure and safe use of the service for the client at risk;
2. Refer any victim of domestic violence to a resource expert that can assist and help the victim in developing a personal safety plan.
3. Develop and implement policies and procedures that address no shared decision-making, unless in a specific case shared decision making has been explicitly ordered by the court; and
4. Develop and follow policies regarding no contact or interaction between the parents, unless in a specific case contact or interaction is allowed by order of the court.

**What is your policy?**

# SVN Standard Section 19.0: Special Standards In Situations Involving Child Sexual Abuse And Domestic Violence Continued

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

**Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**

# Standard Section 20.0:

## Reports To Courts And Referring Sources

### 20.2 Factual Reports

1. A provider must have written policies and procedures regarding writing and submitting reports to the court or referring source or other entity.
2. A provider who submits reports must ensure all reports are limited to facts, observations, and direct statements made by the parents and not personal conclusions, suggestions, or opinions of the provider.

### 20.3 Cautionary Note on All Reports or Observation Notes

When submitting any reports or copies of observation notes, a provider must include a cautionary note stating the limitations on the way the information should be used.

A provider must have written policies and procedures regarding confidentiality and the limits of confidentiality, including but not limited to the submission of observation notes or reports.

A provider must have written policies and procedures regarding parents' right to review case files in accordance with local, state/provincial and federal laws.

Requests from professionals to observe A provider must develop policies and procedures concerning requests from professional practitioners to observe a visit, including the conditions for the observation of the parent/child contact.

**What is your policy?**

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

**Does this policy/procedure still meet the needs of the families you serve?**

# Additional Sheets for Policy and Procedures

**What is your policy?**

**What drove this policy/procedure?**

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