



Village House Supervised Visitation and Exchanges Facility

CLIENT'S RIGHTS POLICY

ALL PERSONS INVOLVED IN SUPERVISED VISITATION AND MONITORED EXCHANGE OF CHILDREN SHALL BE RESPECTED

1. THE PRINCIPAL OF THE PROTECTION OF LIFE

Village House strives to insure the safety of all clients. Village House does not claim qualifications exceeding those possessed by its staff, both paid and volunteer. Village House reserves the right not to accept families for whom we cannot provide security for their safety. Village House reserves the right to discontinue services already begun to families for whom we cannot provide security for their safety.

2. THE PRINCIPLE OF FAIRNESS AND RESPECT

All persons, including staff, parents, children, and visitors have the right to be treated with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith. Because of the work of Village House, some individuals must follow rules and requirements as laid down by various authorities (for example, courts, Children Services Agency, Village House, etc.) and their refusal to comply with these rules and requirements will cause Village House to terminate their visits.

On this point, it is the welfare of the child that is of paramount consideration in providing supervised visitation. If a father or mother, accused of abusing his or her child, attempts to act inappropriately toward the child during a supervised visit, the visit must stop and the child must be protected, at the expense of the father's or mother's right to visit.

3. THE PRINCIPLE OF AUTONOMY AND FREEDOM

Village House strives to provide an unbiased setting in which visits or access to the child can occur. The principle of autonomy is intended to convey respect for the importance of each parent and his or her child and to provide supervision in a safe place for the child where contact with the visiting parent does not involve undue conflict or loyalty issues for the child. However, if a parent refuses to abide by the program rules and presents a threat, the staff must intervene and limit the parent's autonomy.

4. THE PRINCIPLE OF LEAST HARM

Village House will choose an option that presents the least harm to all involved in carrying out the service. For example, if a parent attempts to violate a rule by whispering to a child during the visit, Village House will admonish the parent about the rule instead of immediately terminating the visit.

To assure ethical practice of supervised visitation and adhere to ethical principles, Village House will not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or cultural diversity; exceed authority delegated to them; accept gifts, services or favors from those they supervise; provide supervised visitation to someone with whom they have or have had a personal or financial relationship; or engage in a professional relationship with anyone subsequent to providing that person supervised visitation services.

5. THE PRINCIPAL OF NEUTRALITY

The Principal of Neutrality is intended to convey respect for the potential importance of each parent to his/her child (ren) and to make Village House a safe place where a child's contact with the non-custodial/ non-residential parent does not foster feelings of guilt, betrayal or the need to choose between parents.

6. THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Village House Staff members, paid and volunteer, recognize the central importance of human relationships. Village House Staff understand that relationships between parents and their children are an important vehicle for change. The Staff seeks to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals and families.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

Village House Staff members, paid and volunteer, must respect client's rights to privacy. Village House Staff must inform clients of the nature of confidentiality and the limitations of a client's right to confidentiality. Village House Staff will not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to providing exchange or supervised visitation services. Village House would not release any confidential personal identity information unless as required by court of law and/or authorized by the client.

8. THE RIGHT OF A DRUG, ALCOHOL, AND SMOKE- FREE ENVIRONMENT

Village House strives to provide all clients, staff, volunteers, interns, and guests with a drug-free, alcohol-free, and smoke-free environment by prohibiting smoking, drug use, and alcohol consumption on the premises.

(#s 3, 4 per guidelines established by New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Professionals' Handbook on Providing Supervised Visitation)

(# 5, Standards of Practice for Supervised Visitation Services from the Supervised Visitation Network)

(#s 6, 7, Adapted from: Supervised Visitation Network Code of Ethics)