Clark County Goal, Guiding Principles and Purpose

Goal:

To ensure the Clark County juvenile detention facility will provide a humane, safe and rehabilitative environment, Clark County Juvenile Court shall develop and implement detention and risk assessment standards to determine the least restrictive placement of each juvenile, consistent with public safety while remaining in compliance with the laws of the State of Washington and in accord with the goals and policies of Clark County.

Guiding Principles for Secure Detention and Detention Alternatives:

1. Public safety is the overarching guiding principle.
2. Juveniles who violate the law need to be held accountable in a meaningful way.
3. A local detention risk assessment instrument will be used to objectively determine the appropriate use of secure detention.
4. Because non-essential incarceration has been shown to have negative and unintended effects on youth, effective community-based alternatives are necessary.[1],[2]
5. Detention alternatives should be planned, implemented, managed, and monitored using accurate data.
6. A reformed detention system should include a continuum of detention alternatives, with various programs and degrees of supervision matched to the risks and needs of detained youth, their families, and the community.
7. Detention alternatives should be relevant, accessible, and strive to eliminate bias and ensure that all juveniles in the juvenile justice system – regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, economic status or physical or mental ability – are treated fairly and equitably.
8. Detention alternatives should be designed and operated on the principle of using the least restrictive alternative while ensuring public safety.
9. The creation of detention alternatives should not unnecessarily increase the numbers of youth being served.

Purpose of Secure Detention

Governed by the Revised Code of Washington R.C.W. 13.40.038 and 13.40.040 (attached), secure detention is necessary for youth who require detention to protect the public safety.

Consistent with the belief that when a youth has objectively demonstrated an unwillingness and/or inability to appear before the juvenile court for proceedings, detention is permissible to ensure the offender's future appearance; and,

Consistent with the belief that when less restrictive alternatives have been exhausted, are no longer appropriate or available, detention is permissible for the length of time necessary to logically address the seriousness of the offense and/or violation.

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[1] *Justice Policy Institute (2009). The Costs of Confinement: Why Good Juvenile Justice Policies Make Good Fiscal Sense. May 2009. http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/09_05_REP_CostsOfConfinement_JJ_PS.pdf*

[2] *Holman, Barry and Jason Ziedenberg(2007). The Dangers of Detention: The Impact of Incarcerating Youth in Detention and Other Secure Facilities. http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/06-11_REP_DangersOfDetention_JJ.pdf*