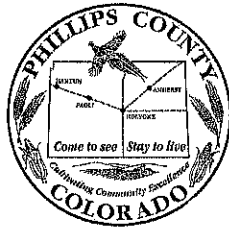


Phillips County Department of Human Services

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Phillips County Department of Human Services Falsification of Child Welfare Records Policy

In accordance with the Code of Colorado Regulations Volume 7.601.81, the Phillips County Department of Human Services shall maintain and utilize a written protocol regarding quality assurance and investigatory processes to monitor for falsification of child welfare records in the comprehensive child welfare information system known as Trails.

Falsification of child welfare records examples can include and are not limited to:

- Representing that a contact occurred when it did not.
- Representing specific content was discussed during a contact when it was not.
- Representing facts about a contact that was not true (e.g., representing that someone was not part of a contact because they were out of the state when they were not).
- Representing that information was sent to a client or collateral (e.g., letter, text, etc.) when it was not sent.
- Representing that someone was present during a contact or meeting when that individual was not present.
- Changing information in an area of Trails then renders the information, or part of the information, inaccurate.

Suspicion of falsification of child welfare records may come to the attention of the Phillips County Department of Human Services in various ways such as a grievance filed or as part of a supervisor's performance review for quality assurance. Regardless of how an allegation of falsification comes to the attention of the agency, the Phillips County Department of Human Services shall initiate a review of the allegation as a personnel matter with the following considerations.

Upon receiving an allegation of suspected falsification of child welfare records the Phillips County Department of Human Services will notify the agency's Director and County Attorney within one (1) working day.

Phillips County Department of Human Services' Director will determine if the employee in question should be placed on administrative leave.

If it is determined the employee will be placed on administrative leave or temporary suspension for the purpose of investigating a suspected incident of falsification of child welfare records, then the Phillips County Department of Human Services shall request that the state department suspend the employee's access to the

comprehensive child welfare information system known as Trails within one (1) working day from the date the employee is placed on leave in accordance with Volume 7.601.81 (B, 1).

During the personnel investigation the Phillips County Department of Human Services shall make reasonable efforts to promptly preserve evidence that a child welfare record has been falsified and supervise or restrict the employee's access to child welfare records including but not limited to the comprehensive child welfare information system known as Trails, hard copy case files, and other child welfare case related documents.

The personnel investigation will be conducted by the Director and shall be completed by the county department even when the employee subject of the investigation resigns, is terminated, or is no longer employed by the county department at the time the suspected falsification of child welfare records becomes known to the county department.

Phillips County Department of Human Services considers a confirmed incident of falsification of child welfare records an ethical violation of the agency's code of conduct.

In accordance with Volume 7.601.81 (A) a confirmed incident of falsification of child welfare records is an incident where, after an investigation by the county department, the county department establishes by a preponderance of the evidence that a person knowingly or intentionally made a false entry or falsely altered information in the comprehensive child welfare information system known as Trails.

When the Phillips County Department of Human Services confirms an incident of falsification of child welfare records the agency will complete the following notifications within the required response times in accordance with Volume 7.601.81.

Within three (3) working days the Director will notify the Division of Child Welfare by email that there had been a confirmed incident of falsification of child welfare records.

Within ten (10) working days the Director will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency and District Attorney with a phone call that there had been a confirmed incident of falsification of child welfare records. A follow up email will be sent.

Within ten (10) working days the Director will notify the court with an email that there had been a confirmed incident of falsification of child welfare records for any open dependency and neglect or juvenile delinquency case associated with the individuals named in the case.

Within ten (10) working days and utilizing both the preferred contact method of the individual and the state approved notification letter which shall be mailed by first class U.S. mail to the last known address of each individual. The director (or their designee) will be responsible for making notifications to the following individuals:

- Notification to the parents and guardians of the child/youth who was alleged or found to be the victim of abuse or neglect or a youth in conflict.
- Notification to the person found or alleged to be responsible for the abuse or neglect.
- Notification to the child/youth if age ten (10) years old or older.
- Notification to the legal counsel and Guardian ad Litem for the individuals involved in an open dependency and neglect or juvenile delinquency case.

Any notice of a corrected child welfare record provided to the individuals named above shall be documented in the comprehensive child welfare information system known as Trails.

The Phillips County Department of Human Service will consider the following actions in the agency's review of this personnel matter (include and not limited to):

- Identifying who all from the agency is involved (names and roles)?
- Pull a comprehensive report of the employee's workload current and past.
- Initiate quality assurance steps:
 - Calls to clients and/or collateral contacts
 - Interview with employee in question
- Determine what is the nature of the falsification:
 - When did the suspected incident(s) occur?
 - How many incidents have been confirmed (breadth and depth)?
 - Did the employee admit to the falsification (if interviewed)?
- Determine if there are any unresolved safety issues that exist for families?
 - Have any assessments and/or cases been reassigned?
- Confirm all required parties have been notified.
- Determine what additional steps the agency needs to take to address this matter?

Policy approval:

Lori Lundgren
Director

8/19/2024
Date

Terry J. Holmstrom
Commissioner Chairman

8-19-2024
Date