

April 15, 2025

Sacred Journey
c/o Elizabeth Morales
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

License Number: 861030705

RE: Notice of Investigation Closure
Licensing Complaint PN00007743

Dear Sacred Journey:

This letter is to confirm that the Arizona Department of Child Safety (ADCS), Office of Licensing and Regulation (OLR) has concluded its investigation of a licensing concern raised to OLR about a possible violation of Title 21, Chapter 7, Child Welfare Agency Licensing Articles 1 and 2. The Department determined whether the issues raised in the complaint complied with the rules, statutes or policies that regulate the above reference facility.

The Licensing Complaint alleged:

[REDACTED] youth [REDACTED] ran away from a Sacred Journey, Inc. group home. Staff notified [REDACTED], the Placing Entity, and made a police report. Staff did not call the DCS Hotline to report her as a runaway.

The Department's Licensing Specialist may have conducted interviews with staff of the facility, clients, and anyone else who may have been able to provide pertinent information. The Licensing Specialist may have also conducted observations during their time at the facility and reviewed records. OLR conducted a thorough review of the agency's policies, the Incident Report submitted on [REDACTED], and a record of DCS Hotline calls made by Sacred Journey.

It was concluded that the DCS Hotline was not informed on the date when [REDACTED] went missing in violation of R21-7-207.

R21-7-207. Notification of Unusual Incidents and Other Occurrences indicates

C. The licensee shall immediately notify the Centralized Intake Hotline:

7. When a child's whereabouts are unknown including a child who has run away from a Facility.

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This Licensing issues is closed with a disposition of valid and a recommendation was made for *Training and Review of Policy and Procedures*.

The following actions need to be completed by the Sacred Journey:

1. Establish a dedicated section within their policies to outline the procedure for notifying the DCS' Centralized Intake Hotline as per the guidelines outlined in R21-7-207 concerning Notification of Unusual Incidents and Other Occurrences.
2. Revise Section 11 of the Sacred Journey's AWOL Policy to mandate notifying DCS' Centralized Intake Hotline for all children, irrespective of the identity of the placing entity. This section should also include any relevant stipulations from R21-7-207, R21-209 that may not be currently addressed in the context of runaway incidents.
3. Ensure incident reports pertaining to all runaway cases are submitted to the Office of Licensing and Regulation, regardless of the youth's legal guardian and/or placing entity.

Upon the completion of updates to the policies, Sacred Journey shall forward the revised policies to the assigned Licensing Specialist, Diana Colin, for her review. Following her approval, all staff shall receive training on the changes implemented.

The timeline for the policy updates shall be established as one week from the receipt of the notification. Training for staff must be conducted within two weeks of the Licensing Specialist's approval of the updated policies.

Failure to comply with the terms outlined in this letter (if applicable), or any further violations, may be grounds for OLR to deny, suspend, or revoke a license in accordance with R21-7-114.

A copy of this letter will be placed in your licensing file. Please rely on the guidance of your Licensing Specialist and do not hesitate to seek clarification as needed.

Sincerely,

Myriam Villarreal

Myriam Villarreal | Child Welfare Licensing Manager
Phone: 480-521-3727 | Email: myriam.villarreal@azdcs.gov

cc:

Diana Colin, DCS/OLR
Rochelle Larry, DCS/OLR
Courtney Watson, DCS/OLR
Tanya Abdellatif, DCS/OLR
file

R21-7-207. Notification of Unusual Incidents and Other Occurrences

A. The licensee shall have a written policy and procedure consistent with the requirements of this Chapter, regarding documentation of, and reporting requirements for unusual incidents.

B. The licensee shall maintain a record of each unusual incident in a separate log that permits the Department to easily locate the documentation of each incident that occurred.

C. The licensee shall immediately notify the Centralized Intake Hotline:

1. Of any incident of alleged physical or sexual abuse of a child in care;
2. Upon the death of a child in care;
3. When a child in care suffers an injury, illness, or psychiatric episode that is severe enough to require emergency medical intervention, treatment, hospitalization or emergency services for the child;
4. When a child in care attempts suicide;
5. Substance abuse by the child in care that results in emergency medical treatment, hospitalization, or overdose;
6. When a child in care is arrested by law enforcement;
7. When a child's whereabouts are unknown including a child who has run away from a facility;
8. When the facility requires an emergency evacuation; or
9. When the licensee is affected by a fire or natural disaster with or without the need of emergency evacuation.

D. The licensee shall immediately call emergency services and within two hours of the licensee's knowledge of the death of a child in care:

1. Notify the Placing Entity or, if no Placing Entity, parent or guardian who placed the child with the Agency;
2. Cooperate in any arrangements for examination, autopsy, and burial; and
3. Provide written notice to the Department.

E. If a child in care suffers a serious illness, serious injury, or a severe psychiatric episode requiring hospitalization, the licensee shall notify the Placing Entity or, if no Placing Entity, parent or guardian who placed the child with the Agency and the Department within 24 hours of the licensee's knowledge of the occurrence.

F. If a child suffers a severe psychotic episode, or exhibits suicidal ideation, homicidal ideation, a threat of self-harm, or other mental health crisis that places the child or others in immediate danger, the licensee shall immediately contact a crisis hotline or the licensee's internal licensed counselor with training in crisis management. The licensee shall notify the Placing Entity or, if there is no Placing Entity, parent or guardian who placed the child with the Agency within 24 hours of the licensee's knowledge of the occurrence.

G. The licensee shall comply with the statutory obligation to report child abuse or neglect, under A.R.S. §13-3620.

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H. The licensee shall comply with any reporting requirements set forth in the licensee's contracts and shall give the Department written documentation on the form provided by the Department within 48 hours:

1. Of any fire or a natural disaster affecting the licensee, Agency, or facility with or without the need for emergency evacuation;
2. When pest infestation has been discovered at a facility;
3. When law enforcement involvement occurs in which a formal complaint is filed by or against the licensee;
4. When sexual contact or physical aggression occurs between children;
5. When a threat or altercation occurs involving a child in care;
6. When self-harming behavior occurs;
7. When a child in care receives emergency medical treatment;
8. When adverse medication reactions occur which may or may not result in medical intervention;
9. When medication is administered in an emergency situation;
10. When an accident or incident occurs involving injury or trauma to a child in care, including transportation related accidents;
11. When damage or theft of property occurs to or by a child in care;
12. When a child in care is involved in an incident that results in law enforcement contact;
13. When restrictive behavior management is used on a child in care;
14. Knowledge of substance use or abuse; and
15. When a call is made to the Centralized Intake Hotline involving a child in care

R21-7-209. Runaway and Missing Children

A. The Agency shall have written policy and procedures, consistent with the requirements of this Chapter, for responding to a child in care who has run away or is otherwise a missing child.

B. The Agency's policy and procedure shall meet the following minimum requirements:

1. The Agency's strategies for making children feel safe and welcomed;
2. Notification shall be provided to the:
 - a. Local law enforcement agency,
 - b. Placing Entity or person who placed the child with the Agency, and
 - c. Administrator of the child's facility or that person's designee;
3. Timeframes for notification to the entities detailed in R21-7-207;
4. How to submit an incident report to the Placing Entity or person who placed the child with the Agency; and
5. Ensure the safety of a runaway or missing child who returns to the licensee, including:
 - a. Interviewing the child to determine the factors that led to the child's absence from the facility;
 - b. Determining the child's experiences while absent from care, including whether the child is a victim of a crime or sex trafficking; and
 - c. Determining substance use by the child in care that could result in emergency medical treatment, hospitalization, or overdose.

C. The Agency shall provide direct care staff information on reasons why children run away.