**Communication**

**All communication policies apply to clients while off-site on an appointment, break, pass or for any other reason.**

Phone calls and mail can be a tremendous source of encouragement and motivation for clients. It also can provide a means of fellowship and restoring family relationships. It is very important, however, that clients communicate with only those who are committed to helping them get free of their life-controlling addictions. All clients may receive visits and/or communication from their physician, religious advisor, county caseworker, attorney, and parole/probation officer. These visits may occur at any reasonable hour provided they schedule the visit in advance through the Program Manager who will instruct the charge staff to add their names to the client’s correspondence list. All other visitors are subject to the following policy:

**One Week Limited Communication Period**

After admission to the program, for the first week clients will not be allowed to communicate (phone calls, letters, visits etc.) with anyone other than clergy, legal officials (county caseworker, attorney, and parole/probation officer), or in the case of family emergencies. The only exceptions to this are teen clients who will be allowed to communicate with their parents/guardians and parents who will be allowed to communicate with their minor children. The reason for this is to help the client settle into a daily routine in the program and to prevent the passing of contraband during this critical period. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by the client’s Program Manager and/or Program Director.

**Computer/Internet**

Clients are not permitted to communicate with anyone through email, social media or internet sites (such as Facebook, My Space and others) while in the program. This includes times that clients are away from MnTC on passes, holiday breaks or for any other reason. As a client starts the re-entry process in Level 4, email communication will be allowed. This would apply to such areas as housing, employment, mentors, and church. Email and any internet use associated with it is not intended for casual communications.

**Correspondence List**

Communication by phone and mail is limited to those individuals whose names are listed on the client’s correspondence list. When clients enter the program they will be asked to submit a Correspondence List of individuals with whom they would like to communicate. The Program Manager will review the list and approve those who are believed to be beneficial in motivating and encouraging the client to complete the program. Individuals who may hinder the progress of the client will be disapproved.

Additions to the list

Clients may request an individual be added to their correspondence list by submitting a Client Request form to their Program Manager. The individual will be added to the correspondence list upon approval from the Program Manager.

Deletions from the list

Individuals on the correspondence list who could hinder the progress of the client may be removed from the correspondence list, and are prohibited from further contact with the client.

**Phone calls- Long term Program**

Clients are not permitted to receive incoming calls except in extreme emergencies. The length of outgoing phone calls allowed is based on the client’s level in the program. Privileges increase with advancement to each new level. Staff will observe Level 1 clients dialing phone numbers. Long distance calls are to be made with clients’ calling cards.

Privileges are as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Program Level | Number of Weekly Calls | Length of Call Time |
| Level 1 | 4 | 10 minutes |
| Level 2 | 4 | 15 minutes |
| Level 3 | 4 | 20 minutes |
| Level 4 | 4 | 20 minutes |

Staff will be present during phone times to monitor the area and ensure that the phone guidelines are adhered to. Staff is not present to monitor an individual’s phone conversation and will provide as much privacy as possible for clients during their phone time.

**Mentor Calls**

Clients may make one brief 5 minute call to their mentor once a week to set up a visit or pass without it counting as one of their weekly phone calls.

**Kids Calls**

Women with minor children will be permitted additional phone calls to their children that will not count as a weekly phone call. Women are allowed three 10 minute phone calls a week to their minor children.

**Skype Calls**

Clients with children who are unable to visit their children will be allowed to Skype with them. Clients are only allowed to Skype their children not; spouse, significant other, family or friends. These calls are to be completed during visiting times and need to be pre-approved by the Program Manager. All calls will be monitored by staff.

**Phone Calls- Short term Program**

Clients of Minnesota Teen Challenge are granted five-10 minute phone calls per week and the person being contacted must be on the client's approved correspondence list. Phone times are typically in the evening. No cell phones are allowed at Minnesota Teen Challenge. Clients are not allowed to use visitor’s cell phones.

* There are scheduled phone times, please refer to the daily schedule. Phone calls cannot be made outside of phone time except in the case of business or emergency calls.

Each client receives five 10 minute phone calls per week. Clients with minor children receive one extra call for each two children. Ex: 1-2 children = 1 extra call, 3-4 children = 2 extra calls.