

<b>River Valley Therapeutic Residence Policy and Procedure</b>		
<b>Restricted Items and Searches</b>		
Effective: 4/25/2023	Revised:	Due to Review: 4/25/2025

## **POLICY**

In order to maintain a safe and secure environment and to reduce the risk of harm to all residents, staff, and visitors, RVTR restricts certain items from its residence and may search residents and their belongings to ensure safety. All searches shall be conducted in a manner that respects the resident's dignity and privacy to the greatest extent possible.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### Restricted Items:

- All medications (over the counter and prescribed), alcohol, illegal drugs, toxic substances, and herbal supplements
- Matches, lighters, cigarettes, tobacco products, and other smoking materials
- Guns, knives, and other items that readily lend themselves to use as weapon
- Mirrors, bottles, and other items made out of glass
- Scissors, sewing kits, knitting needles, standard long pencils, razors and other sharp objects
- Keys
- Perishable food when it is in a resident's room
- Caffeinated beverages outside of scheduled times

### Facility Search:

A facility search is a thorough search of all resident rooms and all common areas of the facility. Facility searches shall be conducted as needed. Residents will be given the option of being present when staff conducts a search of his/her room and belongings. When a restricted item is found in the residents' room or belongings, the item will be removed; the incident will be documented on the Environment of Care Variance Reporting form and shall be reported to the Program Director.

### Room Search:

Individual room searches can be conducted whenever there is suspicion of restricted items in an individual's room.

### Resident Search:

A resident search is the search of clothing the resident is wearing and his/her belongings for the purpose of identifying and securing restricted items. Resident searches will be conducted upon admission, and whenever a resident return from unsupervised time out of the residence. The search will include wand, empty pockets, removal of outerwear and removal of shoes.

### Yard Sweep:

A yard sweep is a walk through the yard to visually inspect the area to identify and remove any hazardous or restricted items, or other potential hazards. Yard sweeps will occur daily.

## **PROCEDURE**

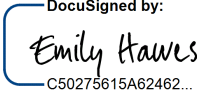
### General Considerations:

- Staff may be present when a resident opens mail or packages and examine the contents.
- When screening for potentially dangerous items brought into RVTR, the staff shall make the initial determination as to whether an item, which is not included on the list of restricted items, could pose a danger. If there is an uncertainty, questions shall be referred to the team.
- Generally, no resident search needs to be done when residents have been out of the facility with supervision. However, if there is concern that a resident may have picked up a restricted item, a resident search can be conducted upon return to RVTR as described below.
- When returning from unsupervised time out of the residence, staff will explain the resident search process to the resident and specifically ask the resident whether he or she has any restricted items in his or her possession. The search will include wand, empty pockets, removal of outerwear and removal of shoes.

- If staff has a concern that there may be a hidden contraband the resident can be scanned with the wand and a request can be made for their shoes to be removed and inspected.
- With clinical team approval and a written order, a resident may have access to a restricted item.
- When there are questions as to whether an item poses a potential risk of harm to self or others, staff will hold the items until the clinical team is able to discuss and determine risk.
- Cooking utensils may be used only with staff supervision.

When Restricted Items Are Found:

- The Program Director or designee shall be notified as soon as possible when hazardous and/or dangerous items are found in the facility. They shall ensure that any restricted items found have been properly secured or disposed of and an Environment of Care Variance Reporting form has been completed.
- Any alcohol that is found during a search for restricted items shall be discarded by pouring down a drain. Marijuana found during a search shall be discarded. The Program Director or designee shall be immediately notified of any illegal restricted items found on premises and shall be responsible for any necessary notification of law enforcement authorities. Illegal drugs shall be secured and turned over to law enforcement ASAP. Other restricted items shall be removed and securely stored.
- Weapons of any kind shall be removed from the resident's possession. Program Director or designee shall contact law enforcement to arrange for the disposal of any weapon taken from the resident.
- Any resident found with hazardous or dangerous items in his or her possession shall be restricted to the facility until such time as the treatment team has an opportunity to reassess the resident's level of autonomy and supervision.

Approved by	Signature	Date
Emily Hawes Commissioner Vermont Department of Mental Health	 <p>DocuSigned by: <i>Emily Hawes</i> C50275615A62462...</p>	4/26/2023