

**OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT**

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**Name of Facility:** Canadian County Regional Juvenile Detention Center

**Date of Visit:** February 14, 2006

**Oversight Reviewer:** Dana S. Holden, Oversight Specialist

**Focus of Visit:** Unannounced Oversight Visit

**Date:** May 2, 2006

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**General Information**

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) conducted an unannounced visit on February 14, 2006, to the Canadian County detention center in El Reno, Oklahoma. The purpose of the visit was to assess compliance with established responsibilities and facility policy and procedures, in both the detention program and the sanctions program. The facility was certified by the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA) for twenty-eight juveniles. Sixteen beds were designated for the detention program and, in a separate wing, twelve beds were designated for the sanctions program. On the day of the OJSO visit, the census for the sanctions program was twelve and the census for detention was sixteen.

Interviews Conducted

- Entry interview with the facility's Director and the detention program's Coordinator
- Exit conference with the facility's Director and the detention program's Coordinator
- Five juveniles in the detention program
- Three juveniles in the sanctions program
- Three direct care staff members on-duty

Documents Reviewed

- Files on four juveniles in the detention program
- Files on three juveniles in the sanctions program
- Personnel files and training records of three direct care staff members
- Office of the State Fire Marshal's inspection report, dated December 21, 2005
- Oklahoma State Department of Health's inspection report, dated December 30, 2005
- OJA Office of Public Integrity's monitoring report, dated March 21, 2005
- Facility's room confinement/restriction log for 2006
- Facility's incident reports involving residents who were placed on wing confinement

## Areas Toured

- Entire facility

## **Overview**

### Resident Interviews

The OJSO interviewed five juveniles in the detention program and three juveniles in the sanctions program. The interview questions identified the juveniles' perceptions of safety, detention program services, rights of residents, discipline practices, and quality-of-life issues. The juveniles' responses to the interview questions indicated they:

- felt safe at the facility, primarily because of the security of the facility;
- received appropriate care by the staff;
- participated in recreational activities;
- were knowledgeable of their rights;
- believed the quality and quantity of the food were appropriate; and
- were familiar with the facility's grievance process (however, none of the juveniles interviewed had filed a grievance since arriving at the facility).

No issues of concern were noted from the juveniles' interviews.

### Staff Interviews

The three direct care staff members interviewed:

- reported receiving appropriate training;
- described appropriate knowledge of grievance procedures and suicide precautions; and
- rated the morale as high among residents and staff.

No issues of concern were noted from the staff interviews.

### Review of Resident Files

The OJSO reviewed the files on four juveniles in the detention program and three juveniles in the sanctions program. The files were complete and well-organized. The OJSO did not note any issues of concern with the resident files.

### Review of Staff Files

The OJSO reviewed the personnel files of three direct care staff for compliance with OJA detention standards. The files were complete and well-organized. There were no issues of concern with the staff files.

## Room Confinement/Room Restriction

The OJSO reviewed the room confinement/restriction log for 2006. To date, there were no incidents of room confinement or room restriction; however, wing confinement was used for violations of the facility's rules. Two incidents of wing confinement were reviewed:

- One juvenile was placed on one hour of wing confinement because (according to the incident report) the juvenile's comb had two teeth missing.
- The other juvenile was placed on wing confinement because the juvenile had nodded his/her head instead of verbally answering a question. The facility's Director told the OJSO that the juvenile was placed on wing confinement because the juvenile continually nodded his/her head and refused to respond verbally to staff.

The OJA's monitoring report, dated March 21, 2005, noted the facility's use of wing confinement. The OJA accepted the facility's plan of correction, dated March 24, 2005.

## Observational Tour

The OJSO conducted a tour of the facility for compliance with standards related to safety, security, quality of life, and other items. The facility was clean, had appropriate lighting, and was adequately ventilated. There were no concerns noted.

## **Conclusions**

The OJSO finds difficulty assessing the use of separation and "wing confinement" for the following reasons:

1. "Wing confinement" is not specifically addressed in OJA policy. Consequently, policy does not address time restrictions, purpose of confinement, opportunities to explain and document behaviors, living conditions required for confinement, required documentation of authorization, person responsible for observing the juvenile, and authorization for and time of release.
2. Office of Juvenile Affairs' policy for "separation from general population" [OAC 377:3-13-44, (c), (12)] is unclear to the OJSO. The discipline is described as "an intermediary level of intervention." The policy does not state if separation is intermediary between "room restriction" and "room confinement," or if intermediary implies some other level of restriction and "room restriction." The policy does not describe the kinds or levels of behaviors necessary to utilize this level of disciplinary action, the specified location of the individual separated, the living conditions of the area of separation (OAC 377:3-14-44, (c), (15) specifically refers to "Procedure for room confinement or room restriction" and does not refer to "separation"), or the opportunity for the juvenile to explain his or her behavior.

The term “wing confinement” may suggest that policies for “room confinement” apply, with the exception the discipline requires confinement to the “wing” instead of the “room.” According to policy OAC 377:3-13-44, (c), (14), room confinement is utilized “when the juvenile has been charged with a major rule violation.” However, examples of “wing confinement” found in the Canadian County detention center for the first two months of 2006 included minor rule violations.

## **Finding**

As no clear and specific policy dictates the use of wing confinement, the OJSO finds the Canadian County detention center (and all other detention centers utilizing disciplinary procedures not clearly described in policy) in violation of OJA policy OAC 377:3-13-44, (c), (12)-(15).

## **Recommendation**

### To the Office of Juvenile Affairs:

1. Review and revise the policy for disciplinary procedures, specifically “separation” and “wing confinement,” to address the kinds and levels of behaviors necessary to utilize the recommended level of restriction, time restrictions, purpose of confinement, opportunities to explain behaviors, living conditions of restriction/confinement, and required documentation of authorization, persons responsible for observing the juvenile, and authorization for and time of release.

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