



STATE OF OKLAHOMA
OFFICE OF JUVENILE AFFAIRS
CENTRAL OKLAHOMA JUVENILE CENTER
700 South 9th Street
Tecumseh, OK 74873-4636
(405) 598-2135

September 23, 2009

Dana Holden, Oversight Specialist IV
Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth
500 N. Broadway, Suite 300
Oklahoma City, OK 73012-6200

Dear Mr. Holden,

The following are responses to areas of concern and violations listed in your report dated August 19, 2009:

Areas of Concern

1. Seven of the thirteen residents interviewed reported they did not feel safe or only felt safe part of the time. The residents attributed their feelings to actions of the staff.

Response: COJC participates in the Performance-based Standards (PbS) program of the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA). PbS states that restraints are significant predictors of juvenile's fear for safety. As a result, a Facility Improvement Plan (FIP) was developed addressing restraints and injuries from restraints. Use of force incidents have been on a steady decline (June 53, July 35 and August 34), which reflects the positive impact our action steps have had in this area. Juvenile's fear for safety should also be on the decline because the use of force incidents have declined. In addition, juveniles have been asked to complete a survey asking if they feel safe, if not why they don't feel safe, and what changes could be made to make them feel safer at this facility. The results of this survey will be analyzed to determine what changes can be implemented to address this area of concern. A copy of this survey is attached.

2. Thirty-one of the 436 grievances reviewed documented resolutions that did not adequately address the issues.

Response: Superintendent Johnson has issued a memo requesting a specific resolution be provided and that every attempt be made to address and resolve the issue or concern noted on the grievance, if possible. A copy of this memo is attached.

3. The OJA utilizes a program in which a resident is discharged from a training school and is transferred to a lower-secure facility to complete the amount of time ordered by the court for the juvenile to remain institutionalized. After completing the lower-secure program, the juvenile is administratively paroled from state custody. If the juvenile does not complete the lower-secure program, the juvenile must return to the training school to complete the amount of time ordered by the court for the juvenile to remain institutionalized.

Response: Potential juveniles are screened for amenability to a lower-secure program. Names are referred to the OJA Institutional Services Division for approval. If a juvenile does not complete the program or is not administratively paroled by the OJA Director, then the juvenile must return to the facility per OJA policy.

Violations:

1. Eight of the thirteen residents interviewed reported that facility juvenile justice staff did not involve residents in the development of the residents' treatment plans.

Response: A Reception Assessment Staffing (RAS) is held within thirty days of admission to the facility. During this staffing, treatment goals are identified, and the juvenile and their family, if present, are encouraged to voice any treatment concerns they might have. Upon completion of this staffing, the juvenile signs indicating he/she agrees and understands these treatment goals. The comprehensive treatment plan (CTP) is also reviewed with the juvenile each month. The Juvenile Justice Specialist reviews the CTP progress with the juvenile and the juvenile signs and dates the CTP each month.

2. Nine of the thirteen residents interviewed reported they had been cursed at or had witnessed other residents being cursed at by facility staff.

Response: Staff using profanity is in violation of OJA policy and is addressed through corrective action. Staff confirmed for violation of policy relative to using profanity are disciplined, as was the case in a recent OCA investigation (CCM-1105), in which a staff person was confirmed for using profanity directed toward a juvenile and received corrective action. In addition, the Superintendent re-issued a memo reminding staff that the use of profanity toward a juvenile or in their presence is a violation of OJA policy and will be addressed through corrective action. Staff were required to sign indicating they fully understood this directive. A copy of this memo is attached.

3. Fifty-one of the 436 grievances reviewed had not been resolved within the required timeframe.

Response: A memo was issued stressing the importance of completing grievances within the required timeframe. Prior to receiving this OCCY report, the Advocate Defender submitted a copy of the grievance log to the Superintendent's secretary at least once a week. Reminders were then sent to those with upcoming due dates and to those with overdue grievances. In an effort to further decrease the number of late grievances, the following step has been added: If a grievance is not completed by the due date, the responsible person is now required to email the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent indicating why the grievance is late, as well as the projected completion date of the grievance. Staff were required to sign indicating they have received and understand the above mentioned.

4. Six grievances appealed to the OJA State Office had not been resolved within the required timeframe and remained unresolved.

Response: Efforts were made to obtain the names on these grievances. However, to date no names have been provided, therefore, no response can be provided for this issue.

If additional information is needed, please advise.

Sincerely,

James Johnson
Institutional Superintendent

attachments