

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

Name and Location of Facility: LeFlore County Juvenile Detention Center
Talahina, Oklahoma

Date of Visit: September 11, 2007

OJSO Reviewer: Dana S. Holden, Oversight Specialist

Focus of Visit: Oversight Visit

Date: October 4, 2007

General Information

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) conducted an unannounced visit on September 11, 2007, to the LeFlore County Juvenile Detention Center, located in Talahina, Oklahoma. The purpose of the visit was to assess compliance with established responsibilities. The facility was certified by the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA) for ten juveniles. The OJA contracted with the LeFlore County Board of Commissioners for the detention center and, in turn, the County Commissioners contracted with Sequoyah Enterprises Inc. for the daily operation of the detention center. The facility provides regional detention services to other counties. On the day of the OJSO visit, the census was ten.

Persons Interviewed

- Entry interview and an exit conference with the Program Supervisor
- Two direct care staff members
- Three residents

Documents Reviewed

- Two staff files
- Files on five residents
- Office of the State Fire Marshal inspection report, dated April 4, 2007
- Oklahoma State Department of Health inspection report, dated February 20, 2007
- Annual assessment report issued by the OJA Office of Public Integrity regarding a visit conducted on April 19, 2007
- Incident reports
- Facility logs on room confinement/room restriction

Findings

Interviews

The OJSO interviewed three residents. The interview questions pertained to the residents' perceptions of safety, detention program services, the rights of the residents, discipline practices, and other residential care issues. The OJSO noted:

- All three residents interviewed stated they felt safe at the facility.
- Most of the residents interviewed stated they had been cussed at by staff; however, the interviewees did not name the staff person(s).

No other concerns were noted from the resident interviews.

Two direct care staff members on-duty were interviewed. Both reported receiving appropriate training and demonstrated familiarity with the facility's policies and procedures and the detention standards. No concerns were noted from the staff interviews.

File Reviews

The OJSO reviewed the files on five residents. The files were essentially complete and well-organized. No issues of concern were noted from the resident files review.

Two personnel files were reviewed. One file did not document the staff member's educational history, certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and completion of first aid training. No other issues of concern were noted from the staff files review.

Room Confinement/Restriction Logs

The OJSO reviewed the room confinement/restriction logs for January through August 2007. The OJSO noted:

- Five residents were placed on room confinement for violations that did not meet criteria.
- Two residents remained on room confinement, after staff documented the residents were calm and were not being disruptive.

Critical Incident Reports

The OJSO reviewed two critical incident reports regarding a resident's escape from the facility on July 15, 2007. Two staff members were on-duty at the time of the escape. According to the incident reports, six residents refused to go to their rooms at bedtime, and one resident began attempting to break out a window on the west end of the dayroom. The resident who was trying to break the window picked up a broom handle

and began swinging it at a staff member. The resident was able to break the lower window of the door, which leads to the recreation area. Once outside of the building, the resident pushed a portable basketball goal over to the fence, climbed to the top, and jumped over the fence. None of the other juveniles were able to get over the fence before law enforcement arrived at the facility. The resident who escaped was apprehended and returned to the facility. According to documentation, the staff supervisor contacted law enforcement for assistance only after the resident kicked out the window, even though six residents were refusing to go to their rooms and one had threatened a shift supervisor with a broom handle.

Inspection Reports

The OJSO reviewed the most recent inspection reports by the Office of the State Fire Marshal, the Oklahoma State Department of Health, and the OJA Office of Public Integrity. No violations were cited in any of the three reports.

Area of Concern

1. The facility had a portable basketball goal, which was used to facilitate the escape of a resident, rather than a goal permanently set in cement.

Violations

1. Five incidents of room confinement did not meet criteria. OJA policy OAC 377:3-13-44, Security and control, (c), (14), Room confinement, (A), states, "Room confinement is used with detained juveniles:
 - (i) for self protection;
 - (ii) to separate juveniles from fighting;
 - (iii) to restrain juveniles in danger of inflicting harm to themselves or others;
 - (iv) to restrain juveniles who have escaped or who are in the process of escaping;
 - (v) to prevent destruction of property if reasonably related to (i) through (iv); and
 - (vi) [to] stop behavior that incites other juveniles which jeopardizes the safety of staff and residents of the facility and is reasonably related to (i) through (iv)."
2. Documentation indicated two residents remained on room confinement after staff recorded that the residents were abiding by the facility rules and were cooperating with staff. OJA policy OAC 377:3-13-44, (c), (15), Procedure for room confinement or room restriction, (D), in part, states, "When room restriction or confinement is used, the juvenile shall be released when staff determines that he or she can safely be returned to the group."

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