

April 13, 2009

Larry Hicks, Director
Oklahoma County Juvenile Bureau
5905 North Classen Court
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73118

Dear Mr. Hicks:

Thank you for your response concerning the Office of Juvenile System Oversight's (OJSO) most recent oversight visit to your facility. From an administrative viewpoint, I always welcome receiving information regarding the OJSO's processes and practices, as our overall goal is to make the system better for children and youth.

Your feedback is important, and we will consider your suggestions as we work to provide quality monitoring services to each of the programs and facilities caring for Oklahoma's children. In regard to your specific facility, I have asked the lead oversight specialist to respond to your identified concerns in the enclosed correspondence, as he has the information and documentation to address the issues that you have raised.

We clearly do not want our process to be adversarial in nature, and we try to balance the role of independent monitoring with our agency assisting a facility or program to function at the best level possible. I apologize for the delay among the dates of the OJSO's initial visit, the exit conference, and the issued report. We have put a system in place to remediate any delays.

Please contact me should you have any questions or comments. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Lisa L. Smith
Executive Director

LLS:js
Enclosure

April 13, 2009

Lawrence Hicks, Director
Oklahoma County Juvenile Bureau
5905 North Classen Court
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73118

Dear Mr. Hicks:

Thank you for your prompt response to the Office of Juvenile System Oversight's (OJSO) report dated January 14, 2009. I do apologize for the amount of time that elapsed between the last day of the oversight visit and the exit conference.

1. OJSO's reply to the third paragraph of facility's response:

I understand that the American Correctional Association (ACA) auditors were at your facility in May 2008, and I would have been surprised if the facility had not scored well on issues of confinement and documentation. Prior to their visit, your ACA Manager informed me that she had been working overtime to get everything in order for the ACA audit.

2. OJSO's reply to Item 1 of facility's response:

Detention Center staff provided the resident files for review, so resident names were identifiable.

3. OJSO's reply to Item 2 of facility's response:

The OJSO cited the facility for placing residents on room confinement for "incidents that did not meet criteria". Staff documentation failed to indicate criteria for confinement were satisfied. I have informed the facility that I am willing to make myself available to your staff to assist with training in the area of report writing at no cost to your facility. To date, the facility has not availed itself of this offer.

4. OJSO's reply to Item 3 of facility's response:

The OJSO cited the facility for locking residents in their rooms in excess of twelve hours per day. Your staff responded by stating that the resident may have been locked in his/her room for "varied participation based on the resident's behavior". Again, staff documentation was inadequate. Detention Center staff provided the resident files for review, so resident names were identifiable.

5. OJSO's reply to Item 4 of facility's response:

The OJSO cited the facility for not documenting reviews every three hours to assess a resident's behavior. The review cited in this violation is different from the "administrative review" cited in your first paragraph. The first paragraph refers to an "administrative review" conducted by the facility administrator or designee after a twenty-four-hour time limit. The review in this paragraph refers to a review by staff to determine whether room confinement should be continued due to the resident's behavior at that time. These reviews have a different process and purpose so they are not the same thing.

6. OJSO's reply to Item 5 of facility's response:

The OJSO cited the facility for removing the resident's personal property and bedding when placed on room confinement. Your staff responded by stating that they removed the resident's personal property to "eliminate the possibility of the resident destroying property and to deter their negative behavior and for reasons of safety and security for residents and staff." During the exit conference, I pointed out that personal property can be taken when the property or the resident is in danger. Staff indicated they removed property to "eliminate the possibility".

7. OJSO's reply to Item 8 of facility's response:

The OJSO cited the facility for staff cursing at the residents. Your staff is concerned that I relied on the word of residents to make this finding. It is unlikely that staff will document, or admit during an interview, of cursing at the residents. The identities of the residents interviewed are protected under state law.

8. OJSO's reply to Item 9 of facility's response:

The OJSO cited the facility for keeping residents "in their rooms in excess of two hours each day for reasons other than shift change or rule violations." This was documented in the facility's files, which could be randomly examined by your administrative staff.

9. OJSO's reply to Item 10 of facility's response:

The OJSO cited the facility for exceeding its maximum capacity of residents for twenty-six of the thirty-nine days during the period of November 1 through December 9, 2008. This has been a chronic problem, which has been cited numerous times in oversight reports by the OJSO and monitoring reports by the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA). The OJA returned the facility's permanent license only because the facility began operating within its certified capacity. The OJSO has noted that since mid-December, the facility has been operating at or under its certified capacity.

Larry Hicks, Director
Page Three
April 13, 2009

Thank you for your response.

Sincerely,

Dana S. Holden
Oversight Specialist IV

DSH:js
Attachment

c: Gene Christian
Mike Heath
Donna Glandon
Shelly Waller