

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

Name and Location of Facility: Pauline E. Mayer Shelter
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Dates of Visit: October 8 and 9, 2009

Oversight Reviewers: Janice K. Sharp, Oversight Specialist, and Joanne L. Verity, OJSO Programs Manager

Focus of Visit: Second Biannual Visit, 2009

Date: October 29, 2009

Introduction

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) conducted an unannounced visit on October 8 and 9, 2009, at the Pauline E. Mayer Shelter (PEMS), located in Oklahoma City. The purpose of the visit was to assess compliance with established responsibilities and facility policy and procedures. The shelter census was forty-two on the first day of the OJSO visit and forty-one on the second day of the visit.

The PEMS is operated by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) and is certified by the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY). On July 8, 2009, the OCCY issued the PEMS a temporary certification to operate as a Residential Child Care Facility for forty-eight residents. The OCCY Emergency Rules, appearing at OAC 135:10-24-1 through 135:10-24-3, pertaining to a certification program for the children's shelters operated by the OKDHS, require the shelters to comply with the current OKDHS Licensing Requirements for Residential Child Care Facilities.

Interviews Conducted

- Entry interview and an exit conference with the facility director and the assistant director
- Four residents
- Three direct care specialists
- One child welfare specialist regarding a resident's request for sibling visitation the OJSO became aware of during the course of the oversight visit
- One child welfare supervisor regarding the facility grievance process
- One recreational therapist regarding the use of volunteers

Documents Reviewed

- Personnel files and training records for three current staff members
- Three resident files
- Office of the Oklahoma State Fire Marshal report dated November 13, 2008
- Oklahoma State Department of Health Food Inspection Report dated February 25, 2009
- OKDHS OCCS Residential Child Care Facility Inspection report dated June 29, 2009
- OCCY Emergency Shelter Certification Inspection report dated July 8, 2009
- Facility tornado and fire drill reports for 2009
- Facility daily population reports for October 8 and 9, 2009
- Facility policy and procedures
- Staff roster
- Memorandum to staff regarding upcoming recreational activities for the residents
- Facility school list regarding the transportation schedule for the residents
- OKDHS forms regarding application to provide volunteer services at the shelter and the facility orientation training checklist for volunteers
- Facility organizational chart
- Facility menu for the week of October 4, 2009

Areas Toured

- Entire facility

Findings

Resident Interviews

The OJSO interviewed four residents. The OJSO noted:

- All four residents reported that they attended public school off-campus.
- All four residents stated they felt safe at the shelter.
- When asked if they had been restrained while at the shelter, each of the four residents answered, "No."
- Two of the four residents stated that the food tasted good; one resident stated that sometimes the food tasted better than at other times; and the other resident stated that the food tasted better than what the resident had expected the food to taste.
- All four residents reported that additional helpings of food were allowed.
- None of the residents interviewed knew of any resident having been injured at the shelter.
- Two of the four residents reported that recreation was provided every day; one resident stated that recreation was provided a lot; and the other resident was not sure how often recreation was provided.
- Two of the four residents stated that they had participated in activities away from the shelter.
- All four residents made positive comments about the staff.

The only concern noted from the resident interviews was that none of the resident interviewees demonstrated knowledge of the facility's grievance procedures.

Staff Interviews

The OJSO interviewed three direct care staff members. The interview questions pertained to the staff members' perceptions of program services, resident rights, discipline policies, and other residential issues. All three staff members demonstrated concern for the residents in their care and described appropriate forms of discipline. The only concern noted from the staff interviews was that none of the staff interviewees demonstrated a clear understanding of their individual responsibility to report the abuse of a resident.

Resident File Review

The OJSO reviewed three resident files for compliance with OCCY certification requirements for residential child care facilities. Two of the three files did not document the custodians' signatures to indicate the custodians had been provided with the facility's resident handbook when the children were admitted into the shelter. No other concerns were noted from the resident files reviewed.

Personnel File Review

The OJSO reviewed the personnel files and training records of three current staff members for compliance with OCCY certification requirements for residential child care facilities. One personnel file contained a criminal history background report the facility had requested regarding the prospective employee. No other concerns were noted from the personnel files and training records reviewed.

Inspection Reports Review

The OJSO reviewed the most current inspection reports by the health department, the fire marshal's office, the OKDHS OCCS, and the OCCY certification unit. No deficiencies were noted on the health department report. The OKDHS OCCS report cited the facility for three files not containing current verification of required training. The shelter had submitted a plan of correction to the OKDHS OCCS that had been accepted. The OCCY certification unit's report cited minor violations that the facility was to correct by the final compliance review for certification as a Residential Child Care Facility.

Observational Tour

The OJSO toured the entire facility. The OJSO noted:

- Three light bulbs in the kitchen ceiling fixtures needed to be replaced.
- A couple of ceiling tiles in the dining hall were in disrepair. (The director and assistant director advised that there had been a water leak in the ceiling and maintenance was still working to repair the area.)
- A light bulb in the ceiling fixture needed to be replaced and the floor was dirty in the gym.
- Written notification that identified the local grievance coordinator and explained the grievance system procedures was not displayed prominently in areas of the facility that residents accessed regularly.
- A vent cover was not secured to the ceiling in the day room.
- Two light bulbs in the ceiling fixtures needed to be replaced in the computer lab.
- The sink fixture in the half-bathroom for children was loose.
- Resident room 5 had holes in the wall. (The director and assistant director explained that a clothes bureau had been previously attached to the wall.) The vent cover needed repair.
- Emergency numbers needed to be posted by the telephones in the facility.
- Several electrical outlet safety covers were missing in the areas accessed by the residents under five years of age.
- Plastic bags decorated to depict Halloween ghosts were hanging on some of the doors of the resident rooms; the plastic bags could pose a health hazard for the residents.

Areas of Concern

1. Volunteer tutors sometimes had the opportunity to be left alone with residents without direct supervision by facility staff. The OJSO recommended that the facility administration review this practice to ensure that all volunteers work under the direct supervision of staff, in accordance with OAC 110-3-153.1(c)(3).
2. Two of the three resident files reviewed did not document the custodians' signatures to indicate the facility had provided the custodians with a copy of the facility's resident handbook at the time the children were admitted into the shelter. Even though the OKDHS OCCS Licensing Requirements for Residential Child Care Facilities require the facility to document this receipt by the custodian, the facility administrators indicated that because the custodian was generally the OKDHS, this documentation had not been required by the OCCS in the past. The OJSO is concerned that the shelter was not required to comply with this licensing requirement.
3. The three staff members interviewed did not demonstrate a clear understanding of their individual responsibility to report the abuse of a resident under Title 10A, Section 1-2-101(B)(1) of the Oklahoma Statutes.
4. Although a small sheet of paper was posted in a few locations in the intake area, written notification identifying the local grievance coordinator and explaining the grievance procedures was not posted in a prominent place that is regularly accessible to residents.
5. The grievance procedures for reporting maltreatment allegations delineated in the facility policy and procedures manual had not been approved by the OKDHS Office

of Client Advocacy (OCA). The facility administrators indicated that OCA had said that it did not approve grievance procedures at state-operated facilities.

6. All four residents interviewed indicated a lack of knowledge regarding the grievance procedures. Documentation indicated that the residents had received information regarding the grievance procedures at intake. However, the OJSO recommended that the staff go over the grievance procedures with the residents during their stay and not just at intake.

Violation

1. One of the three personnel files reviewed contained the criminal history background report that the facility had requested regarding the prospective employee. Staff removed the report from the personnel file when the OJSO brought it to their attention. OKDHS Licensing Requirements for Residential Child Care Facilities, OAC 340:110-3-153.1, Personnel, (h), Criminal history investigations, states, "Staff criminal history investigations are maintained in a confidential manner, separate from the individual's personnel record. [10 O.S. § 404.1]."

Summary

The OJSO commends the facility on its new policy of residents continuing to attend their schools of origin after entering the shelter unless a safety risk is indicated. During the OJSO visit to the facility in February 2008, five of the ten residents interviewed had stated that they were not attending school and some residents interviewed were concerned about their grades. Education services had been discontinued at the shelter, and there had been a delay in the process to return the residents to their schools of origin or to enroll the residents in schools in the PEMS district. The OJSO visited the shelter in October 2008 and the issue had not been resolved. The director and assistant director advised during this visit that the schools of origin or the schools within the PEMS district were now transporting the children to their respective schools and returning the children to the shelter each day.

In the exit conference, the OJSO addressed its findings from this oversight visit with the facility director and the assistant director. The OJSO accepted the facility director's plan of correction regarding the housekeeping issues noted from the observational tour.

\js

