

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

Name and Location of Facility: Pottawatomie County Public Safety Center
(Carter Hall)
Shawnee, Oklahoma

Date of Visit: March 6, 2007

Oversight Reviewers: April Simmons and Ellen Harwell, Oversight Specialists

Focus of Visit: Unannounced Visit

Date: April 13, 2007

General Information

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) conducted an unannounced visit on March 6, 2007, at the Pottawatomie County Public Safety Center (Carter Hall), located in Shawnee, Oklahoma. The purpose of the visit was to assess compliance with established responsibilities. The facility was certified for fourteen residents by the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA). On the day of the OJSO visit, the census was fourteen.

Interviews Conducted

- Entry interview and an exit conference with the Juvenile Commander
- Seven residents
- Three direct care staff members

Documents Reviewed

- Personnel files and training records of three direct care staff members
- Files on seven residents
- Office of the Oklahoma State Fire Marshal inspection report, dated April 8, 2005
- Oklahoma State Department of Health inspection report, dated April 2006
- OJA Office of Public Integrity (OPI) monitoring report, dated May 23, 2006
- DHS Office of Client Advocacy quarterly report of incidents
- Facility grievance logs for the past six months
- Facility recreation schedule/log for 2007
- Facility room confinement logs for 2007
- Facility room restriction logs for 2007
- Facility incident reports for residents who were placed on room restriction/confinement

Areas Toured

- Resident rooms
- Resident bathrooms
- Kitchen and dining room area
- Common areas
- Food pantry
- Outside recreational area and equipment

Overview

Interviews

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

- Five interviewees stated that the food served at the evening meals tasted bad, and that on several occasions, the food items served at lunch were also served at the evening meal.
- Five interviewees stated they were placed in room confinement for periods of at least two days.

Three direct care staff members were interviewed. The interview questions pertained to the staff members' perceptions of detention program services, the rights of residents, discipline policies, and other detention program issues. The OJSO did not identify any issues from the staff interviews.

File Reviews

The OJSO reviewed the files on seven residents for compliance with OJA standards. The OJSO noted:

- Documentation regarding the authorization of medical treatment or requests for medical consent was not contained in three files reviewed.
- Signature sheets to indicate the residents received a copy of the Detainee Handbook informing them of juvenile rights, program rules, the grievance process, and discipline policies were not contained in two files reviewed.
- Documented legal authority to accept and detain the juveniles were not contained in two files reviewed.

Three personnel files were reviewed for compliance with OJA detention standards. The OJSO noted that current first aid training and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification were not documented in two files reviewed. Subsequent to the visit, the facility made the corrections and facsimiled the corrected documentation to the OJSO.

Other Documents Reviewed

The OJSO reviewed the grievance log and the grievances for the past six months, the Detainee Handbook, the facility menu for the past two weeks, and the room confinement log and incident reports for room confinement for 2007.

The grievances were complete and were well-documented with detailed information and follow-up documentation that the grievances were resolved. However, the Detainee Handbook, on page 15, under Grievance Procedures, states, "Your grievance will be reviewed but may NOT be considered." The OJSO understands the intent of the statement by the facility, but to a resident, this could be perceived as the resident was not allowed to file a grievance on all issues. The statement in the Detainee Handbook is misleading to the residents. This issue was discussed at the exit conference with the Juvenile Commander.

The facility menu listed the food items served for breakfast, the morning and afternoon snacks, and lunch. The evening meals for Carter Hall were prepared by the Pottawatomie County Public Safety Center (adult jail), and lunches were occasionally provided by the school. According to the Juvenile Commander, there had been times when the same type of food was mistakenly served both for lunch and dinner. This issue also was discussed at the exit conference.

After review of the room confinement records, the facility did provide well-documented details of the initial incidents that led up to the major rule violations for room confinement and the details of when the juveniles were released from room confinement. The documentation included detailed incident reports, observation reports, room confinement reviews, and the room confinement check logs. The documentation provided enough information to conclude what happened, when the fifteen-minute checks and the three-hour administrative reviews were completed, and when the resident was released from room confinement. If the resident was not released from room confinement after the three-hour administrative review, the documentation was sufficient to indicate the reason for detaining the resident longer in room confinement.

Seven incidents of room confinement from the January through March 6, 2007, review period indicated residents were in room confinement in excess of twenty-four hours and up to three days. Although the documentation provided ample reasoning to continue to detain the residents even longer in room confinement, the OJSO is concerned about the lengths of time the residents were confined to their rooms. This was addressed with the Juvenile Commander. The Juvenile Commander agreed to review the room confinement files to ensure that residents are not kept excessive amounts of time in room confinement.

In addition, the OJSO reviewed the Fire Marshal's inspection report, dated April 8, 2005. The OJSO advised the Juvenile Commander of the overdue annual inspection and, in turn, the Juvenile Commander called the Office of the Oklahoma State Fire Marshal

during the oversight and arranged for an inspection. The Fire Marshal's office informed the Juvenile Commander an inspection would be conducted within two weeks. The Juvenile Commander agreed to facsimile a copy of the inspection report to the OJSO. The Fire Marshal inspected the facility on March 24, 2007. The facility was approved for continued occupancy; however, the fire alarm and fire extinguishing systems were to be serviced within thirty days.

Observational Tour

The OJSO conducted a tour of the facility for compliance with standards related to safety, security, quality of life, and other items. A copy of the OJSO Facility Inspection Form was left with the Juvenile Commander. The Juvenile Commander agreed to correct the items listed on the OJSO Facility Inspection Form within thirty days.

Summary

Although there was a need for a few minor corrections, the residents and staff members presented with a positive morale and pleasant atmosphere on the day of the unannounced visit. The OJSO discussed the concerns during the exit conference about the food, Detainee Handbook, personnel files, resident files, and the length of time the residents are kept in room confinement.

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