

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

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**Name of Facility:** Pottawatomie County Public Safety Center/Carter Hall  
**Date of Visit:** May 25, 2006  
**Oversight Reviewers:** April Simmons and Dana Holden, Oversight Specialists  
**Focus of Visit:** Unannounced Visit  
**Date:** October 6, 2006

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**General Information**

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) conducted an unannounced visit on May 25, 2006, to the Pottawatomie County Public Safety Center (Carter Hall) in Shawnee, Oklahoma. The purpose of the visit was to assess compliance with established responsibilities and facility policy and procedures. The facility was certified by the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA) for fourteen juveniles. On the day of the OJSO visit, the census was fourteen.

Interviews Conducted

- Entry interview with the Juvenile Commander
- Exit conference with the Juvenile Commander and the Juvenile Lieutenant
- Three direct care staff members
- Six residents

Documents Reviewed

- Personnel files and training records of three direct care staff members
- Files on six residents
- Most recent inspection reports by the Office of the Oklahoma State Fire Marshal, the Oklahoma State Department of Health, and the Division of Child Care of the Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Most recent monitoring report by the Office of Public Integrity of the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA)
- Room confinement logs for 2006
- Incident reports involving the residents who were placed on room restriction/confinement
- Grievance logs for the past twelve months
- Recreation schedule/log for 2006

- Critical incident logs for 2006
- Use of force/restraint logs for 2006
- Facility policy and procedures manual

### Areas Toured

- Entire facility

### **Overview**

### Resident Interviews

The OJSO interviewed six residents. The interview questions identified the residents' perceptions of safety, detention program services, the rights of residents, discipline practices, and other residential issues. The residents' responses to the interview questions indicated:

- Four interviewees stated they did not get enough food to eat.
- Four stated the evening meals tasted bad and the food was not cooked thoroughly.
- All six stated they did not go outside enough or have enough activities to do during the day.
- Four stated that only residents on higher levels of the level system were allowed to watch television and that the television was located in the same room with all the residents, including the residents who were not permitted to watch the television.

### Staff Interviews

Three staff members were interviewed. No areas of concern were noted from the staff interviews.

### Review of Resident Files

The OJSO reviewed the files on six residents. The OJSO noted:

- Documentation in two files did not indicate two residents had received copies of the facility rules.

No other concerns were noted from the review of the resident files.

### Review of Staff Files

Three personnel files of direct care staff were reviewed for compliance with OJA detention standards. No concerns were noted in the review of the personnel files.

## Recreation Log

The recreation log was reviewed. The log documentation reflected that the residents were not receiving two hours of mandatory recreation time. A revised recreation schedule was forwarded to the OJSO.

## Room Confinement Logs/Facility Incident Reports

The OJSO reviewed the room confinement logs for 2006 and the facility incident reports. The documentation indicated:

- During the period reviewed, five residents were placed in their rooms for three to eight days subsequent to admission.
- One resident was kept in a hallway, located next to the control room, for twenty-seven days. The resident was not allowed in the general population or to participate in the educational or recreational programs during this time.

The OJSO reviewed twenty instances of juveniles having been placed on suicide watch. The times on suicide watch ranged from one hour, forty-five minutes to seventy days. The documentation did not indicate the behaviors preceding placing the juveniles on suicide watch.

## Observational Tour

The OJSO conducted a tour of the facility for compliance with standards related to safety, security, quality of life, and other items. The OJSO noted that three resident rooms had vents with sharp edges that needed to be repaired or replaced. The outdoor fenced-in basketball court had an excess buildup of pine needles. There were no other concerns noted during the tour.

## **Summary**

The OJSO reviewed the most current monitoring report by the OJA Office of Public Integrity, dated May 19, 2006, and noted findings related to institutional operations, grievance requirements, personnel records, and the tour of the facility. The OJA accepted the facility's plan of corrections, dated June 5, 2006.

The OJSO is concerned that residents are placed on room confinement without documentation of their behaviors requiring confinement. In addition, the OJSO is concerned for the amount of time that residents are kept on suicide watch without documentation of therapeutic intervention and/or assessment for need of acute care.

## **Findings**

1. A resident placed on Level 1 suicide watch was confined in a hallway next to the control room and was not allowed dayroom, recreational, or educational privileges

afforded to other residents. Office of Juvenile Affairs policy OAC 377:3-13-44, Security and control, (c), (15), Procedure for room confinement or room restriction, (C), states, "Juveniles placed in room confinement shall be afforded living conditions and essential services approximating those available to the general juvenile population. Exceptions shall be justified in writing by clear and substantial evidence." In addition, OJA policy OAC 377:3-13-45, Program and services, (a), in part, states, "Activities and services are available to juveniles outside their rooms at least 12 hours a day. The facility shall provide or make available the minimum services and programs given in (1) – (7) of this subsection to detained juveniles.

(1) Education. The facility shall provide educational opportunities in compliance with the local school district's rules and regulations and OJA contract requirements. Facilities shall provide or make provisions for an educational program which includes space for education, necessary equipment and supplies, and supervision.

(4) Recreation. Written policy and procedure provide a recreation schedule that includes at least one hour per day of large muscle activity and one hour of structured recreational activities. A variety of recreational materials are made available to detained juveniles and kept in good condition at all times."

Office of Juvenile Affairs policy OAC 377:3-13-46, Physical plant or facility, Space, (1), states, "Single sleeping rooms consist of at least 70 square feet of floor space."

2. The reason a resident was placed on room restriction or room confinement was not properly or adequately documented. The documentation indicated that residents have been kept in their rooms for more than sixty minutes or placed on confinement for something that was not a major rule violation. Office of Juvenile Affairs policy OAC 377:3-13-44, Security and control, (c), (13), Room restriction, states, "Room restriction is one means of informally resolving minor juvenile misbehavior. It serves a "cooling off" purpose and has a short time period (up to 60 minutes) that is specified at the time of the assignment." At the same cite, subsection (c), (14), Room confinement, (A), (i)-(vi), 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. 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)."

Facility policy No. 12-3-3, Recreation Activities and Program Rule/Handbook, section entitled Major Rule Violations, states that major rule violations include verbal assault, physical assault, destruction of property, attempted escape, dangerous contraband, and gang related activity. The same policy limits the use of room confinement to these behaviors.

3. Documentation indicated that three-hour reviews did not occur to reauthorize room confinement, as required in OJA policy. Office of Juvenile Affairs' policy OAC 377:3-13-44, Security and control, (c), (14), Room confinement, (B), states, "Room confinement of juveniles shall be re-authorized every 3 hours, except during normal sleeping hours, by a supervisor/administrator who was not involved in the original incident. Facilities which do not have another supervisor/administrator on site shall receive re-authorization every 3 hours from the on-call administrator. Reasons for continued room confinement shall be documented."

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