

2023 McLean County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

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Executive Summary

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted an annual inspection of the McLean County Juvenile Detention Center on August 3, 2023, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). While there were several areas of strength observed, there were a few areas of non-compliance noted with respect to the sections and specific requirements of 20 Ill. Adm. Code 2602 County Juvenile Detention Standards (“County Detention Standards”).

Areas of Non-Compliance

Section	Requirement
2602.230 Education	A detention facility shall operate a 12-month long schedule of school instruction and programming with appropriately certified teachers that are licensed by the State Board of Education. There shall be a minimum of five hours of instruction per day.
2602.170 Discipline	Room confinement shall not be used for a fixed period of time, but only until the youth is calm enough to rejoin programming without being a risk to the safety of others. Supervisory staff shall be notified immediately when room confinement is used. At no time should room confinement exceed 4 hours without administrators and/or mental health staff developing an individualized plan to address the behavior.
2602.90 Mental Health Services	A service plan shall be developed for each youth that includes: 1) Counseling or psychotherapy to be provided; 2) Behavioral management strategies and goals; 3) Medication; 4) Protocol for monitoring youth's progress; and 5) Needed adjustments to normal detention programs and procedures.

Methodology

- Interviews Conducted
 - Superintendent
 - Assistant Superintendent
 - Program Coordinator
 - Mental Health Practitioner
 - 2 Detention Officers
 - Nurse
 - 3 youth

- Documents Reviewed
 - Sample Youth Files
 - Sample Medical Files
 - Programming Schedule
 - Recreation Schedule
 - Professional Staff Credentials

- Grievance Policy
- Dietary Menus with Caloric Counts
- Resident Handbook
- Therapist Contract
- Youth Grievance Samples
- Fire Drills and Inspection Documentation
- Health Department Inspection Documentation
- Employee Training Documentation

Overview

The McLean County Juvenile Detention Center is a 26-bed facility located in Normal, Illinois. The facility has a main common area with three primary living units. An outdoor recreation space, gymnasium and large classroom are easily accessible from the main common area. The physical plant was in good condition, clean, and had a lot of natural lighting. There were 12 youth detained at the time of the inspection.

Admission Policy and Procedures, Prison Rape Elimination Act

The facility conducts youth intakes 24-hours a day. Youth personal items are collected and stored according to standards. All youth receive a Resident Handbook that includes an overview of resident rights, behavior program information, and the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). An orientation to PREA is conducted by the program manager, and documentation in youth files verify its completion. Interviewed youth were familiar with PREA. The facility implemented the use of an assessment of risk of victimization in late June. The program manager maintains the results and log of youth responses. The assessment is administered by the program manager or other administrators, but there are plans to incorporate shift supervisors into the process as well.

The facility has also entered into a contract with a local organization (Stepping Stones) to serve as a third party to provide access for youth reports of sexual abuse and harassment. Stepping Stones is also on-site once per month to provide youth with sexual abuse educational groups. The facility is still working to place phones in all living units and common areas for resident use, but these are not in place yet. Presently, youth have to receive assistance from staff if they wish to make a phone call to Stepping Stones to make a report.

Recommendations

- Install phones in all living unit dayrooms and programming areas for youth to use when making confidential reports

Personnel, Staffing and Supervision

At the time of the audit, the facility employed 15 Detention Counselors and four supervisors. The facility reports their average daily population is 14 residents. Given the population size, the number of employees working at the facility is sufficient. A standard shift includes four staff for the day shift and

five staff for the evening shift. Because of daily fluctuations in staffing, such as when staff ask for time off, sometimes administrative staff may be pulled to cover line staff duties.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement

The facility has a robust programming schedule, with programming delivered both internally and via external partnerships. The facility employs a Program Coordinator who maintains a programming calendar, including substance abuse groups, leisure groups, life skills groups, art groups and external volunteer programming. The program coordinator tracks youth attendance at all programming activities and documents any youth absences with the reason. In June of 2023, youth attended 49 programming sessions, with an attendance rate of 64%. The volume and consistency of daily programming is a strength of the facility. Youth were very knowledgeable of the daily schedule, reported they felt safe, and have positive relationships with employees of the facility.

The facility offers in-person family visitation four days per week. Youth families are able to visit on all four days. It is commendable that the facility offers family visitation this frequently. Youth are also able to visit with family virtually.

The facility utilizes a “no fail” behavioral management system, where each day, youth start at the highest behavioral level, “A”, and during the day they may be placed on a lower level based on their behavior. If they remain on “A” level until the end of the day, the youth can earn privileges in the facility if they earn consecutive “A” s. For example, a youth can choose not to participate in group programming once a week after accruing 30 consecutive “A’s.” Levels also impact when a youth goes to bed in the evening, with lower behavioral levels equating to earlier bedtimes.

If a youth engages in disruptive behavior during the day, their level is lowered to a “B” level. If the youth retains their “B” for the rest of the day, they start the next day with an “A.” Youth on “B” level who engage in further disruptive behavior can be moved to “C” grade. Youth who engage in continued, prolonged extreme behavior may be lowered to “Group 3,” which can also entail placement on a special Security Status.

One youth was on a Security Status at the time of the inspection. The youth had been on “Group 3” for almost a month prior to being placed on Security Status the night prior. While on Group 3, youth are separated from the rest of youth for a period of time, spending much of their day in the dayroom. Youth are then slowly re-integrated into regular programming. The youth on Security Status had been placed on the status the night prior after refusing to enter his room and being physically restrained. Youth and staff report youth who are on Security Status are confined to their rooms for 12-24 hours. The youth was confined in his room during the inspection, only exiting to be interviewed by the auditor.

While there are strengths in some areas of behavior programming at the facility, adjustments should be made to the Group 3 and Security Status process. The length of confinement utilized with the Security Status youth is out of compliance with standards, even if it is infrequent. The length of time youth spend on Group 3 should also be reduced, instead incorporating the use of individualized plans to speed up a youth’s return to normal programming. Furthermore, decision-making on a youth’s transition off Group

3 is currently made by shift supervisors. This decision should be changed to be in the hands of administrators or a multi-disciplinary team including mental health and the program manager.

As was the case during the 2022 inspection, interviewed youth reported that the policies concerning behavioral levels were “fair,” and that staff were also fair in the implementation of the behavioral management system. Despite the seemingly lengthy requirement of consecutive days at “A” level in order to receive privileges, youth reported that the privileges were motivating, and that achieving consecutive “A’s” is doable at this facility.

Areas of Noncompliance and Recommendations:

- 2602.170 Discipline states: “Room confinement shall not be used for a fixed period of time, but only until the youth is calm enough to rejoin programming without being a risk to the safety of others. Supervisory staff shall be notified immediately when room confinement is used. At no time should room confinement exceed 4 hours without administrators and/or mental health staff developing an individualized plan to address the behavior.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Reduce the length of time youth spend on Group 3 status.
 - Implement the use of individualized plans when youth are on Group 3 status.
 - Change practice to have administrators and/or a multi-disciplinary team manage re-integration decisions for youth on Group 3 status.
 - End the practice of 12–24-hour confinements for youth on Security Status, instead allowing youth to rejoin programming as soon as the youth is calm enough to rejoin without being a risk of safety to others.

Youth Grievances

The facility has a youth grievance process in place and maintains copies of youth grievances that are submitted. Interviewed youth were familiar with how to get a grievance but expressed concerns with having to turn them into staff members. The facility does not have locked grievance boxes where youth can confidentially place grievances. It is recommended these be installed in all living units and programming areas to prevent youth having to submit them directly to a staff member.

Recommendations:

- Install locked grievance boxes in all living units and programming areas to prevent youth having to submit them directly to a staff member.

Medical and Health Care

There is a full-time nurse that works at the facility with an office just off the main dayroom of the facility. All youth receive a physical within seven days of admission. A physician, who is contracted through Advanced Correctional Healthcare, is on-call 24-hours per day and on-site approximately once per week. There is an active process to ensure youth medication continues when they are admitted, with the nurse verifying prescriptions with parents and prescribing doctors. The facility nurse manages medication distribution when she is on-site, otherwise it is managed by supervisory staff. Medications

were stored appropriately. The nurse is also an active contributor to programming at the facility by facilitating regular groups with youth. Recently she has facilitated educational programming on proper nutrition and budgeting for grocery purchases.

Mental Health Services

A Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) has been on contract since 1999. The contract does not have a minimum or maximum number of hours per week; instead, the LCSW is present as needed. She estimates she spends approximately 15 hours per week at the facility. The LCSW runs groups every Wednesday afternoon, lately focused on emotional intelligence, mindfulness, and relaxation. Much of her work with youth is 1:1, primarily helping youth work through the stresses associated with detention and being away from family. She does assessments for all youth identified as a suicide risk and reviews the mental health screenings that are completed by nursing staff during the intake process. She does not do assessments on all youths herself, however. County Detention Standards require that mental health service plans be developed for youth. The LCSW is not creating individualized treatment plans. While it is good groups are being facilitated and youth have access to 1:1 support, implementation of therapeutic interventions guided by an individualized treatment plan would enhance the quality of services available to youth.

Areas of Noncompliance and Recommendations:

- Section 2602.90 Mental Health Services states: “A service plan shall be developed for each youth that includes: 1) Counseling or psychotherapy to be provided; 2) Behavioral management strategies and goals; 3) Medication; 4) Protocol for monitoring youth's progress; and 5) Needed adjustments to normal detention programs and procedures.”
 - Recommendations
 - Develop formal treatment plans when the need is indicated through the assessment process.

Education

The facility has one teacher to provide educational services, an employee of the Regional Office of Education (ROE). Youth at the facility are enrolled through the Normal Illinois School District (Unit 5). The 2022 Inspection Report found deficiencies in the educational services offered at the facility, with youth only attending school for approximately 1.75 hours per day, largely due to only having one teacher at the facility that was only permitted 30 hours of work by the ROE. Since that visit, facility administrators report they have met with the ROE Superintendent to try and address these deficiencies, which persisted through the entirety of the 2022-2023 school year. Administrators report that going into the 2023-2024 school year, the ROE has agreed to have the teacher move to a full-time schedule and add a teacher's assistant. The ROE plans to implement an online curriculum through Edmentum Online Learning. The facility is also adding a wall in the middle of the current classroom to utilize two learning spaces.

These changes, while in development, are not in effect yet. The areas of noncompliance in this area remain from 2022 until they have taken effect and are maintained.

Areas of Noncompliance and Recommendations

- 2602.230 Education states: “A detention facility shall operate a 12-month long schedule of school instruction and programming with appropriately certified teachers that are licensed by the State Board of Education. There shall be a minimum of five hours of instruction per day.”
 - Recommendations:
 - Implement a 12-month long schedule of school instruction.
 - Increase the number of teaching hours offered per week to ensure youth have access to five hours of instruction per day.

Recommendations

Section	Recommendations
Admissions Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install phones in all living unit dayrooms and programming areas for youth to use when making confidential reports
Discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the length of time youth spend on Group 3 status. • Implement the use of individualized plans when youth are on Group 3 status. • Change practice to have administrators and/or a multi-disciplinary team manage re-integration decisions for youth on Group 3 status. • End the practice of 12–24-hour confinements for youth on Security Status, instead allowing youth to rejoin programming as soon as the youth is calm enough to rejoin without being a risk of safety to others.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a 12-month long schedule of school instruction. • Increase the number of teaching hours offered per week to ensure youth have access to five hours of instruction per day.
Youth Grievances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install locked grievance boxes in all living units and programming areas to prevent youth having to submit them directly to a staff member.
Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop formal treatment plans when the need in indicated through the assessment process.