

2024 Lake County Juvenile Detention Center Inspection Report

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ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Executive Summary

The Department of Juvenile Justice conducted the annual inspection of Hulse Juvenile Detention Center in Lake County on March 7, 2024, pursuant to 730 ILCS 5/3-15-2(b). The center was found to be fully compliant with the requirements of the 20 Ill. Adm. Code 2602, County Juvenile Detention Standards (“County Detention Standards”).

Areas of Non-Compliance

None.

Methodology

- Interviews Conducted
 - Superintendent McMahan
 - Director Edwards
 - Assistant Director Zakaras
 - Deputy Superintendent Clark
 - Deputy Superintendent Miller
 - 2 Educators
 - 1 Nurse
 - 1 Mental Health Staff
 - 2 Juvenile Counselors
 - 5 youth

- Documents Reviewed
 - Crisis Intervention Policy
 - Handle with Care Training Materials
 - Room Time Policy
 - Behavior Motivation Program Policy
 - Behavior Modification Program Training Materials
 - Sample Incident Reports
 - Room Time Log
 - Youth Grievance Policy
 - Youth Grievance Log
 - Resident Handbook
 - Medical Licenses
 - Educator Licenses
 - Menus
 - Programming Schedules
 - Sample Youth File
 - Sample Employee Training Records
 - Food Service Menus and Permit

Overview

The Hulse Juvenile Detention Center in Lake County, Illinois is a 48-bed facility. The facility contains both the juvenile detention center and a residential treatment facility called the FACE-IT Program. At the time of the audit, the facility had 15 residents in the juvenile detention center and three in the FACE-IT Program.

Staffing levels at the facility were adequate at the time of the inspection, with only seven vacant Juvenile Counselor positions. The facility obtained a waiver from the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC) to hire applicants that have completed three years of college. .

The facility was assessed as fully compliant through a formal audit process conducted in November 2021 with Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Standards. The PREA Audit Report, dated 2/20/2022, found the facility compliant with all 39 PREA standards.

The specificity and organization of the facility policy manual and training materials, particularly related to youth confinement, are exceptional. The facility has implemented a process to conduct an annual review of all policies in which policies are either updated or affirmed to be still active. The implementation of this process is commendable and indicative of an internal monitoring and improvement process that is essential for best practice institutions.

Admission Policy and Procedures

The facility continues to accept youth admissions 24-hours per day and has maintained updated procedures for determining the type of search to be conducted. Facility policy affirms the need for strip searches , also known as visual searches, based upon reasonable suspicion of contraband. Such searches require approval from the Superintendent or designee. Facility administrators reported the use of strip searches has been very rare over the past year.

The Resident Handbook provided to youth is thorough and includes information on PREA and grievance procedures consistent with County Detention Standards. Interviewed youth were familiar with the Prison Rape Elimination Act.

Personnel, Staffing and Supervision

The facility is budgeted for 49 total staff. On the date of the audit, the facility had a total of seven Juvenile Counselor vacancies. This is just slightly more openings than at the time of the 2023 inspection. Despite the slight increase in open positions, staffing levels at the facility remain more than sufficient to manage the youth population; with no reports of staffing levels negatively impacting daily facility programming. Staff at the facility have received a 9% salary increase since the 2023 audit.

Detention Programs, Youth Discipline, and Confinement

The facility maintains a consistent daily schedule for youth that includes time blocks for school, meals, daily access to the gym, free time, and groups. Interviewed youth were able to describe the daily schedule and reported very few disruptions. The facility has external vendors that are providing programming that includes pet therapy, music therapy and art therapy programs. Youth and staff described a mindfulness group that is frequently conducted at the start of each day. Juvenile Counselors also facilitate regular cognitive-behavioral groups, usually on the second shift. The facility has Carey Group Guides for use in regular cognitive-behavior groups, which contain a collection of cognitive-behavioral group topics organized in a lesson plan format. Juvenile Counselors have authority to choose a group topic, including topics outside of the Carey Guides curriculum, based on the needs of the group. The facility also utilizes the Effective Practices in Correctional Settings – II (EPICS) cognitive skill-building curriculum that focuses on relationship and problem-solving skill development. Groups are facilitated every Monday-Friday on nutrition facts as well.

The facility utilizes a token economy system to promote positive youth behavior. The facility has made some modifications to the program over the past year by expanding the number of incentives available to youth. These changes include permitting books and personal photos to remain in a youth's room overnight and improved hygiene products and soda available for purchase based on token economy earnings. Youth earn points throughout the day which determine one of three daily behavior levels (referred to as A-Group, B-Group, and C-Group). Youth have access to different privileges based on their level. The length of time a youth spends on A-Group can open up further privileges.

Facility Policy HDC 11E "Room Time" governs the use of confinement at the facility. The policy is reflective of the County Detention Standards in that confinement is only used as a temporary response to behavior that threatens the immediate harm to the resident or others. The policy also places Unit Managers as the responsible party to ensure confinement does not last for more than three hours without the development of an individualized plan. There is a specialized training on the appropriate use of confinement that clearly articulates the requirements on the use of confinement. The facility tracks youth confinements, clearly indicating the start and end times of confinements, approving supervisor, and reason for the confinement. The use of confinement at the facility is well within County Detention Standards.

A Specialized Individual Programming Plan (SIPP) is developed when youth engage in serious behaviors. When a SIPP is needed, the facility convenes a multi-disciplinary team to develop a SIPP for the youth. SIPP plans and youth progress are now documented within the facility case management system (Tracker), inclusive of completed Carey Guide Assignments.

The facility utilizes Handle with Care as the method of physical restraint at the facility. The facility policy that governs restraints (Policy HDC 1I "Crisis Intervention") is very thorough, describing the crisis response continuum and tension reduction cycle. The policy clearly articulates de-escalation techniques and affirms that Handle with Care is not to be used as a form of discipline or punishment. It also describes a debriefing and review process as part of every physical restraint event to target training and feedback to employees. The facility tracks all uses of physical intervention.

Medical and Health Care

The facility contracts with Wellpath for medical services. There are two primary nurses assigned to the facility on-site 8am-6pm seven days per week. The contract also includes psychiatric and physician services. All youth receive an initial medical screening upon intake, and a full physical within seven days of intake. Prescriptions are verified, prescribed by a medical doctor, and administered exclusively by nursing staff. The medical room at the facility is orderly and medications are appropriately stored .

Mental Health Services

The facility has a part-time therapist that provides approximately 20 hours of services per week. Youth are assessed using the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (CSSRS) upon admission to the facility. Results are shared with the facility MHP who conducts further assessment for youth based on scoring. The MHP meets with youth who need services or request to see her when she is onsite. She also meets with all youth who are on a SIPP or crisis watch status. The volume of mental health services available to youth is sufficient given the population size of the facility. There is an additional program therapist and psychologist that work with the FACE-IT program. There is also a probation therapist working in the community who sees youth in the facility if they are on his caseload. He also does suicide assessments if the primary MHP is not available.

Youth Grievances

The facility youth grievance policy (Policy HDC 7C “Grievance Process”) describes a process that is consistent with County Detention Standards. The facility maintains a grievance log for tracking purposes. The facility processed a total of 59 youth grievances in 2023. Nearly all of the grievances were addressed within one day of receiving the grievance. Interviewed youth were familiar with the grievance process, knew where to obtain a form, and the locations of the confidential grievance boxes

Education

Education at the facility is managed by the Regional Office of Education. The facility has a total of four teachers, three for the detention center and one teacher for the FACE-IT Program. The facility also has four teaching assistants available to assist youth. The FACE-IT teacher acts as the primary liaison between the detention center and youth home schools. The teacher reaches out to home schools to obtain transcripts and IEPs, which are distributed to the rest of the education team. The FACE-IT teacher also collates daily attendance for all youth in the facility. Most of the educational services at the facility are delivered via the APEX online credit recovery system. One youth at the facility graduated while detained and is taking college prep courses through APEX.

Recommendations

None