



WASHINGTON SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF MAINTANENCE REVIEW 2022-2023



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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Licensing Division | Approved for distribution by Ruben Reeves; Assistant Secretary



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Background

State law requires the Department of Social and Health Services Children's Administration (DSHS) to complete a yearly health and safety (maintenance) review of Washington School for the Deaf (WSD) in an effort to enhance child safety, health and well-being. The purpose is to evaluate the extent to which WSD is fulfilling its child protection responsibilities in accordance with the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (Public Law 93-247). This review is done through examining WSD's policies, procedures, and practices that ensure the protection of the students in the residential program. The goal is to provide recommendations that will result in improved health and safety of the children residing on campus. The Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) became its own agency separating from DSHS Children's Administration, so this review was completed through DCYF.

Meeting with Director of Residential Services

During the 2022-2023 school year DCYF's Licensing Division completed the yearly health and safety review for WSD. This task was transferred from the ongoing licensur who had been conducting these reviews since 2018, to a newly created group care team. An entrance interview was held with the Director of Residential Services, Mr. Rick Whitney on May 23, 2023. The agenda included DCYF Licensing Division's mission to evaluate the extent to which WSD is fulfilling its child protection responsibilities and efforts to enhance child safety, health, and well-being. Mr. Whitney was informed that the reviewer was not familiar with his program and had not been previously part of this process. The reviewers then completed a review of the residential program.

Evaluation

Per review of Residential Program Policy and discussion all residential program personnel and volunteer staff must pass background checks that are submitted and completed by the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and stored with their Washington State Human Resources (HR). Staff are provided orientation and training under RCW 72.40

(<https://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=72.40#:~:text=STATE%20SCHOOLS%20FOR>)

and for mandated reporting mandatory reporting requirements of child abuse or neglect,

RCW 26.44.020 (<http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=26.44.020>).

Job Training

After orientation, all new staff receive a minimum of 15 hours of "on the job training" before supervising students. Staff are then required as new employees to complete 32 hours of job-specific training promoting and protecting student personal safety within the first 90 days of hire. Staff are provided with a copy of the Residential Program Procedures. The document cites State laws governing the residential program under RCW 72.40 and Title 148 WAC. The document was last revised and updated June 2022. Upon review, policies were clearly written and in-depth, covering every concern that may arise per this review and is a different operational policy than what was reviewed on their website:

<https://go.boarddocs.com/wa/cdhy/Board.nsf/Public#>

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Student Incident Log

WSD provided a school incident log detailing infractions covering the timeframe of Sept. 12, 2022, to June 2023. A total of 44 incidents were reported. The incident log documentation included students involved, date and time of the incident, description of what occurred, names of any witnesses and the action taken by WSD staff, including notification of the child's parents when needed. All incidents were handled within the school practice as anyone would expect in any other public school setting.

Living Facilities

Reviewers inspected each residential cottage. During the walkthrough, each cottage was clean and in good repair. Toured each residential room, which are in good repair with no noticeable hazards. Most rooms are double occupancy. Checked each cottage bathing facilities finding all facilities clean and organized. Each cottage also has a kitchen area. Each was cleaned and organized, in one cottage janitorial were busy cleaning the floors which occurs when students are attending school. The reviewer found the bedrooms, office, living areas, kitchen, bathrooms, and laundry areas clean and organized. Checked each five-pound fire extinguisher, all were up to date for their review. Rick stated that the Fire Marshal had just conducted their inspection two months prior. Noted they conduct fire drills once per month but admitted being lax on earthquake drills. Each residential facility keeps three separate logs. Spot checked one cottage pass down/shift log documentation that they are up to date. Noted that they also keep specific student behavioral logs which also include student behavioral plan. Discussed the living situation. Rick stated that the facility views their capacity in a "family style." They may have residents with a two-year age difference in the same living situation to provide the opportunity for older residents to mentor. When asked what type of de-escalation training they provide to their cottage staff and Rick said they utilize Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) and Ukeru, both are LD approved trainings.

Student Health Center

WSD Student Health Center is open six days a week to diagnose minor medical concerns and prescribe medication as needed. Policies and procedures are in place for medication disbursement. Medications are securely stored, and First-aid supplies are readily available. The student health center meets and exceeds standards. They utilize an online computer tracking system for all medication disbursement by an RN. The medical center is closed off with a nursing station counter not allowing student access. Rick informed that children come to the medical center for all medication. Asked if they have students on psychotropic medication. Rick replied that students do not have those types of medications and that they attend this school for no other reason than being deaf.

Cafeteria

WSD cafeteria provides a professional kitchen to prepare food for the students. This cafeteria meets all requirements for health standards and is approved by the Department of Health. The cafeteria is much like any other public school. Upon entrance numerous students were seating eating lunch. The school had numerous cafeteria staff providing lunch for an extensive commercial kitchen. Observed ample opportunity for students to have choices for their meals.

While in the cafeteria the reviewer requested that a resident/student be made available for an interview. Rick did not want to interrupt their school day and that the reviewer could interview a student later from the list provided. Also asked for parent contact information which was to be provided later. Contacted Rick on June 20 to set up an interview with Heather White as the interpreter. Informed that all students had gone home. Requested contact information for child and parent. On June 30 provided specific names from the list for contact information. Rick stated that he is out traveling but

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when he returns, he will provide me the contact information. Did not receive further documentation or contact information for parents or residents as requested.

Conclusion

Overall, the Washington State School for the Deaf provides excellent care of their students. When looking at this provider through a group care lens, they provide excellent care and have some of the best facilities that this worker has reviewed. This maintenance visit shows that WSD is a well-run public school regarding their live in students.

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