



**Licensed Child Caring Agency Unannounced Site Visit Report
Therapeutic Boarding School**

Licensee: J Bar J Youth Services – The Academy at Sisters

Executive Director: Stephanie Alvstad

Program Director(s): Mindy Elliott / Sandy Vaughn

Board Chairperson: Jeannette McKenzie

Date of Unannounced: October 26th, 2021

Licensing Coordinator: Ed Wyller

Other Regulatory or Accrediting Agencies: Cognia Accreditation / National Association of Therapeutic Schools Programs, Inc (NATSAP) / Council of Accreditation (COA)

Purpose: Per OAR 413-215-0101 (1) (b) Children’s Care Licensing is required to perform at least one unannounced site visit a year where children in care reside.

Previous Findings: Unannounced Site Visit 12-16-2020 No Findings	Repeat Findings Further Action Needed	Comments
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New Findings from Site Visit	Comments
No new findings	N/A

Interview Summary

I interviewed four of the current fifteen students who were on-site during my unannounced site visit. I met individually with each student in a private space to ensure privacy for the interview. Students reported liking the school. One student reported “really loves the school”. Students liked the teachers and the support. Another student reported this is the best they have ever done in school. Another student who had graduated spoke about the opportunities of online Central Oregon Community College. Students reported learning the following skills: coping skills, communication skills, setting and holding healthy boundaries, and good vs. bad relationships in their treatment groups and individual counseling. One student spoke about their joy in working with a horse and enjoys the equine therapy and caring for the horse. Students reported feeling safe. Two reported that when other students scream and yell, they don’t feel safe at that moment but know they are not in danger. Students reported they feel they could talk with staff or therapists if feeling unsafe. Three of the four students reported the food to be good. One student reported the chef is absent and food has become repetitive.

On a scale from 0-10 (0=worst program 10=best program) two students reported program to be a 5 and the other two reported program to be an 8. Both of the 5 students and 8 student thought the program should have more phone calls early on and more incentives at the beginning of the program. One student reported, “Really like it” referring to the program. Staff were reported to be nice and respectful by one student. Other students reported the night staff are “crankier but respectful”. Other student’s reported felt that the night staff are not as caring and nice. Reported when asking questions that these staff are “snippy and moody”. For fun students reported going hiking, shopping mall, walks, movies, wellness center, read, play cards, watch tv, and going to the pool.

Observations

When I arrived I observed students getting ready for lunch. All students and employees were wearing masks during my unannounced site visit. Interactions observed between students and Academy staff were respectful. During the unannounced site visit I noted the following new additions at Sister's Academy: New mattresses, new bunk beds, new smart board in classroom, new science lab in school classroom, 8 new paddleboards / life vests, and new exercise equipment in the wellness center. Another improvement is replacing carpet throughout the Academy. Carpet was in the process of being removed while I was on-site and is going to be replaced with a new durable carpet.

At the conclusion of the unannounced site visit I debriefed with the Sisters Academy Administrative team. I discussed feedback from the four youth interviews. The concern that was articulated was only one phone call per week during orientation phase. The frequency of phone calls will need to be increased, and the team agreed. This led to a discussion regarding revamping the level system regarding incentives that correspond to each level.

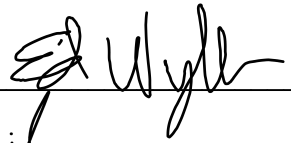
Corrective Actions and Timeframes:

Please submit the following to verify compliance.

Within 45 days of receipt of this report **J Bar J Youth Services** must submit a letter of verification indicating the agency is in compliance with the specific rules cited above and describing how compliance will be maintained going forward. Along with the letter of verification, the agency must submit any and all specific documentation requested in the body of this report. The letter of verification and any additional requested documents can be emailed directly to **Ed Wyller**, Edward.Wyller@dhsosha.state.or.us or sent by regular mail to the following address:

Due to Covid-19 pandemic and working remotely the preferred method is to send directly to Ed Wyller at his email address.

Department of Human Services
Children's Care Licensing Program
Attn: Ed Wyller
201 High St. SE Suite 500
Salem, OR 97301

Licensing Coordinator's Signature:  Date: 11-17-2021
Manager Review:  Date: 11-17-2021