

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS



Q: HOW DO I OBTAIN A YOUTH'S MEDICAL INFORMATION?

A: Youth medical information is confidential and protected by several laws including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). You may request a copy of your child's medical information by completing an Authorization for Release of Health Information form which the facility can provide to you.

Q: MY CHILD HAS TOLD ME THAT HE/SHE DOES NOT GET ENOUGH TO EAT. ARE THERE ANY MEALS SERVED BETWEEN BREAKFAST, LUNCH, AND DINNER?

A: DJJ participates in the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and the Wellness Program administered by the USDA. DJJ provides youth with three meals a day, including a mid-morning snack, after school snack, and a bed time snack.

Q: WHY WAS MY VISITATION DENIED OR REVOKED?

A: Denial of visitation will be made when staff has reason to believe the safety and security of the youth, staff, general public, or the facility may be in jeopardy. The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice has the right to refuse visitation to anyone who is suspected of, or caught on the premises with contraband, attempts to introduce contraband into the facility, is deceptive on the significant other form, or who has been repeatedly warned about a particular action, such as inappropriate clothing and/or touching.

DJJ may also suspend visitation privileges to meet special security needs of the facility. If you have questions regarding visitation you may contact the youth's counselor or visit our website.



GRIEVANCE ACTIONS

The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice secure facilities shall afford all youth the right to report any inappropriate or infringing condition, behavior, or actions of staff, volunteers or other youth. Youth who choose to file a formal grievance shall not be subject to any disciplinary sanction or adverse action pertaining to the filing of the grievance.



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

Debbie Carter, Ombudsman

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OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN



Promoting Confidence Through Compassion



Avery D. Niles
DJJ Commissioner

Answering Concerns to Ensure the Rights and Safety of Youth are Protected



MISSION

To foster citizens' confidence in the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice by promoting the principles of *integrity, fairness and accountability.*

VISION

The Office of the Ombudsman will provide the highest level of accountability and transparency for the youth who have been placed in the care of the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice system.

PURPOSE

The Office of the Ombudsman acts as a bridge between concerned citizens and the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice to ensure the rights and safety of youth are protected by investigating allegations, conducting research, educating the community and providing recommendations for improvement.

GOALS

To enhance public trust within the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice by treating all citizens with fairness and respect.

To increase the accountability of the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice by impartially investigating reports of complaints and wrongdoing.

To continuously provide an objective view of challenges faced by the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice in order to focus on resolving issues and to enhance provided services.

OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES



WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE OMBUDSMAN?

The Office of the Ombudsman is a single point of contact for family members, advocates, and other concerned citizens who are interested in reporting complaints on behalf of youth under supervision to the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice.

Complaints may be submitted by written letter or e-mail at djjombudsman@djj.state.ga.us or by calling 1-855-396-2978.

You may also visit our website at www.djjnewsandviews.org/djjombudsman to complete an on-line referral form.

WHEN SHOULD I CONTACT THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN?

Before contacting the Ombudsman you should try to resolve the complaint through the DJJ grievance process. If the problem remains unresolved, contact the Ombudsman's office for further assistance.

Please contact the Ombudsman for immediate assistance if you believe you have a legitimate concern affecting the care and safety of a youth, which may include physical or sexual abuse, threats, harassment, and medical or mental health treatment.

Many concerns can be addressed by the youth's counselor or the facility director. If you need further assistance, the Office of the Ombudsman will make every effort to address your concerns.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)



Q: WHILE MY CHILD IS DETAINED AT THE RYDC, CAN THEIR COMPLETED WORK BE TRANSFERRED TO HIS/HER HOME SCHOOL ONCE MY CHILD IS RELEASED FROM THE RYDC?

A: Yes. As Georgia's 181st school district, we offer youth in our custody the opportunity to earn a high school diploma from a system accredited by both the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and Correctional Education Association (CEA).

Q: MY CHILD HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH DEPRESSION AND HAS BEEN PRESCRIBED MEDICATION WHILE IN DETENTION. WILL MY CHILD BE ABLE TO RECEIVE MEDS? DOES THE DETENTION CENTER HAVE DOCTORS THAT CAN HANDLE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS?

A: Yes. All the detention facilities have a behavioral health program. From the moment a youth enters a detention center, the process for assessing their mental health needs begins. Your child will be evaluated by a masters-level mental health clinician and by a psychiatrist, and you will be contacted to discuss your child's medications.

Q: DOES THE YOUTH HAVE A RIGHT TO RELIGIOUS SERVICES?

A: Yes. Youth attendance in religious services within facilities is voluntary. The DJJ employs a full-time non-denominational chaplain.

Q: WILL MY CHILD'S JUVENILE RECORD BE SEALED?

A: Yes. The youth's juvenile record may be sealed once the case has been closed, by demonstrating a period of two years without any further law violations or pending proceedings for conviction or adjudication. At this time when the youth is deemed to be rehabilitated, the youth may petition the juvenile court to seal their record.