

**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES  
JUVENILE INSTITUTIONS**

Subject: <b>Special Management Unit : Assessment Management Unit</b>		Policy Number: <b>7</b>
Number of Pages: <b>7</b>		Section: <b>XIII</b>
Attachments		Related Standards & References
<p><b>A. Special Placement Form</b></p> <p><b>B. AMU Orientation Form</b></p>		<p><b>ACA 3-JTS-3E-01 ACA 3-JTS-3E-02</b>  <b>ACA 3-JTS-3E-04 ACA 3-JTS-3E-05</b>  <b>ACA 3-JTS-4C-22 ACA 3-JTS-4C-24</b>  <b>ACA 3-JTS-4C-37</b>  <b>USA v. Mississippi 3:03-cv-1354WSu</b>  <b>Memorandum of Agreement</b></p>
Effective Date: <b>July 17, 2006</b> Revised: September 25, 2012		Approved:  <b>James Maccarone, Director</b>

**I. POLICY**

It is the policy of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services, that those youth who are deemed to have special assessment needs, issues requiring special observation, assessment and/or treatment, or are in need of protection from harm may be placed in a special housing unit designed to provide specialized programming needed by those youth.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

As used in this policy and procedure, the following definitions apply:

- A. **Constant Supervision:** A youth will be assigned a staff member who shall provide continuous, uninterrupted, one-on-one supervision within five physical feet, at all times, while the youth is sleeping and awake. A youth under constant supervision must remain within the clear, unobstructed view of staff at all times. The staff member will not be responsible for supervising any other youth while assigned this duty. This will be used for youth on suicide prevention: Precautionary Status or Safety Alert Level 3. (*DYS Policy XIII.12: Suicide Prevention*)
- B. **Behavior Management Isolation:** A “cooling off” period for youth; where placement of youth in a room either locked or unlocked for the purposes of controlling out-of-control behavior, restoring order, correcting undesirable behavior and to achieve compliance with behavioral rules and expectations.
- C. **Special Management Unit (SMU):** A housing unit with special rules and procedures established to manage a unique population of youth requiring removal from the general population. These units have specialized programs and structure designed to address the needs of these youth and have different rules for daily operation and unique security and control features. The Assessment Management Unit (AMU) is a Special Management Unit that is managed by staff with additional mental health and behavioral training.

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- D. **Staggered Intervals:** Regular checks conducted at random intervals, 5 minutes minimum and 10 minutes maximum, to ensure that observation of the youth is on an unpredictable schedule in order to promote youth safety for youth placed on any Safety Alert Level or Precautionary Status.
- E. **Treatment Team:** A group of staff members responsible for developing and coordinating the implementation of a youth's determined Service Plan. (See DYS Policy XIII.4: Treatment Teams for a detailed definition.)
- F. **Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP):** A mental health care provider licensed and sufficiently trained to provide the necessary mental health program services.

### III. PROCEDURE

- A. **Placement** - A youth may be placed in the Assessment Management Unit when circumstances warrant removing the youth from the general population for specialized assessment, observation and/or treatment. Placement in the Assessment Management Unit (AMU) must occur in a timely manner in order to respond to crises and emergency needs. The placement will last only until the youth can be safely moved to a regular housing unit in the general population or other arrangements are made for housing in an alternative facility or placement. The following will apply in regards to AMU placement:
1. **Observation** – A youth may be placed on the Assessment Management Unit for observation and mental health treatment on an emergency basis after an assessment and recommendation of a QMHP for problematic mental health issues. In addition, the multidisciplinary treatment team for a youth presenting mental health issues may recommend placement in the Assessment Management Unit for observation, additional structure and support, specialized programming and treatment, and specialized assessment.
  2. **Suicide Prevention** – Youth who are believed to be potentially suicidal and are awaiting assessment for suicide risk, shall be placed on Precautionary Status and moved to AMU. All youth placed on Safety Alert Level 3 must be placed on AMU. Youth who have been placed on a Safety Alert Level 1 or 2, may be placed in the Assessment Management Unit after assessment and recommendation of the QMHP or at the recommendation of the youth's treatment team. (*DYS Policy XIII.12: Suicide Prevention*)
  3. **Requests for Protection** - Youth may be temporarily placed in the Assessment Management Unit for protection from harm by a JCW Supervisor or the youth's treatment team, while documented evidence is gathered and pending the development of a plan by the youth's counselor and/or treatment team for the youth's continued protection. (*DYS Policy VI: Requests for Protection*)

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4. **Reporting Placement** - Any placement on AMU shall be reported to the Shift Supervisor. The Shift Supervisor will notify the Facility Director of his/her designee of any emergency placements to AMU.
  5. **Special Placement Form** - The Special Placement Form (*Attachment A*) will be used to document the reason for the youth's placement on AMU and be maintained in the youth's file on AMU.
  6. **Treatment Team** - Placement on AMU as a result of an emergency basis must be reviewed by the treatment team for consideration of continued need for AMU placement at the next available treatment team meeting date. If the treatment team recommends continued placement on AMU, the youth will be transferred to the Youth Service Counselor assigned to that unit. After transfer, the treatment team shall meet weekly while the youth remains on AMU.
- B. Behavior Management Isolation** – During hours when a youth is not asleep, a youth may not be placed in a room in the Assessment Management Unit unless for the purpose of controlling out of control behavior, restoring order, correcting undesirable behavior or to achieve compliance with behavioral rules and expectations. Youth on Behavior Management Isolation in AMU should be carefully watched for any signs of distress and if observed, reported to the youth's counselor, QMHP and/or the Shift Supervisor. The policy and procedures for Behavior Management Isolation (*DYS Policy VI.10*) will apply.
- C. Observations/Room Checks** – During the time a youth is on a Precautionary Status, Safety Alert Level or Behavior Management Isolation, the youth will be observed by staff. The youth will be observed as outlined in the respective policy. (*DYS Policy XIII.12: Suicide Prevention and DYS Policy VI.10: Behavior Management Isolation*)
1. Observations made during staggered interval checks for suicide prevention and all other interactions with staff shall be logged on the youth's Safety Alert Observation Sheet. Positive and negative findings shall be documented (e.g., "Youth verbalizing suicidal thoughts, youth sleeping, youth reading, youth eating, etc.")
  2. Doors to the bathroom/shower areas will be locked at all times. All youth on a Precautionary Status or Safety Alert Level status will be closely observed while utilizing the bathroom/shower area. While providing appropriate privacy, a direct care staff will be stationed in the doorway in constant verbal communication with the youth at all times.
- D. Pod Supervision** – When youth are being housed in the Assessment Management Unit, direct care staff members will be in the day room at all times, except when on a covered break. Entering the control center is defined as leaving the day room. If all youths leave the pod, staff will escort and supervise the youths while they are out of the pod.

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- E. **Searches** – Searches for contraband will take place on a regular basis to assure that youth do not gain access to unauthorized items that they may use to hurt themselves or others.
1. **Entry to Pod** - All youths shall be searched for contraband upon entering the Assessment Management Unit.
  2. **Personal Searches** – All youth on a Precautionary Status and Safety Alert shall be searched and relieved of any objects, materials, shoe laces, belts, etc, which may be used to facilitate suicide.
  3. **Room Searches** – Youth on Precautionary Status, Safety Alert Levels 2 and 3 shall have their room searched before they are placed in their room for the night. All clothing shall be taken and a suicide smock shall be issued to the youth when they are placed in their room for the night.
- F. **Clothing/Property** – Unless circumstances justify, no clothing or property will be taken from a youth during the time the youth is in the Assessment Management Unit.
1. A youth’s clothing will never be taken unless the youth is attempting to destroy the clothing or use it for illegal purposes such as covering a window or plugging a drain (see DYS Policy: XIII.12 Suicide Prevention for specific actions that may be taken with a suicidal or self-injurious youth). The clothing will be returned as soon as the destructive behavior stops.
  2. A youth whose behavior is out of control may have his or her property removed from his or her room until calmed down. Once the youth calms down and the door to the room is opened, the youth’s personal property will be returned.
  3. A youth will be allowed to use writing materials daily while in the day room. The materials (pencils or crayons only) will be taken away upon entering the youth’s room for safety and security reasons.
- G. **Programs/Services** – Services similar to those available to other youth will be provided. However, since safety or security reasons necessitated placement in the Assessment Management Unit, reasonable restrictions may take place.
1. **Orientation** – Each youth, when placed on AMU, will be oriented to the rules, regulations, and programmatic expectations of the AMU by the Juvenile Care Workers and the Youth Service Counselor assigned to that unit.
  2. **Meals** – Meals may be served at the tables in the pod.
  3. **Grievances** – A grievance box will be placed in the pod day room. A youth may file a grievance at any time they wish to do so.

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4. **Visiting** – During the time the youth is in the Assessment Management Unit, visits will take place in a special area away from the general population. Access to visits will be comparable to youth in the general population.
  5. **Education** - Youth placed on AMU shall receive educational services at the School, unless the youth’s QMHP and/or treatment team determine it is in the best interest of the youth to remain on the unit for educational services. The following will apply to youth on AMU:
    - a. **On Unit Instruction** – If it is determined that it is in the best interest of a youth on AMU to receive educational services on the unit, the following will apply. A teacher will travel to the unit and provide educational instruction to the youth in the dayroom. The educational program will be organized by the teacher as directed by the school principal to include at least 330 minutes of instruction per day. The instruction will be based upon curriculum materials used by the teachers in the School. Instruction will be tailored to the youth’s needs according to their education plans and class assignments.
    - b. **Request for Protection** - Youth on AMU for protection shall not attend School until the treatment team meets, and a determination is made as to whether the youth can safely be protected from harm in the School setting. If the treatment team determines that the youth would be safer receiving services in AMU, these services will be provided on unit as outlined above.
  6. **Exercise** – Youth will be given a minimum of one hour of exercise (large muscle exercise) each day unless circumstances or the youth’s behavior make it unrealistic. Reasons for denying exercise will be documented in the shift log, the youth’s personal file, and the counselor’s progress note.
  7. **Hygiene** – A youth will be allowed to keep personal hygiene items unless they destroy or abuse those items.
  8. **Property** – Youth may possess reading materials unless they abuse those materials. Pens and Pencils will not be allowed in the rooms for safety and security purposes, but pencils may be used on the dayroom floor. All writing instruments will be taken by staff after use or prior to the youth’s entering his or her room.
- H. **Treatment** – After the youth’s original housing unit treatment team has transferred a youth to the Assessment Management Unit, the youth’s treatment and other programming will be managed by the treatment team responsible for the Assessment Management Unit.
1. Youth assigned to AMU shall receive specialized programming to address their individualized needs.

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2. A personal growth plan shall be developed with the youth, the youth's counselor and the assigned QMHP to guide the youth in making progress toward identified treatment goals. The personal growth plan may outline treatment goals of the youth and privileges for obtaining his or her treatment goals and appropriate behavior. The personal growth plan will be reviewed at least weekly during the youth's treatment team meeting.
- I. **Removal** – Placement in the AMU shall end as soon as it is feasible to safely place a youth in a regular housing unit. Any youth who would benefit from close supervision and mental health treatment may remain in the AMU until transfer is recommended by the youth's treatment team.
1. **Observation** – A youth placed in the Assessment Management Unit for observation for mental health issues, specialized assessment and/or special treatment will be returned to a regular pod when the treatment team, which includes a QMHP, determines that placement in the Assessment Management Unit is no longer necessary.
  2. **Suicide Prevention** – A youth who has been removed from Precautionary Status and all Safety Alert Levels shall be placed in the youth's original housing unit, unless it is determined by the treatment team that he or she can be best managed in another housing unit. (See the DYS Policy XIII.12: Suicide Prevention for protocol on how a youth is removed from a Precautionary Status or Safety Alert Level.)
  3. **Requests for Protection** – Youth placed in the Assessment Management Unit for protection shall be removed once all the documented evidence is gathered and plans for the youth's protection from harm can be completed. (*DYS Policy VI: Request for Protection*).
- J. **Special Equipment** – Special equipment will be maintained and available in the Assessment Management Unit.
1. **Cut Down Kits** - Direct care staff working in the Assessment Management Unit will carry suicide cut-down kits on their belts at all times when on duty.
  2. **Air Passageway Devices** - Air passageway devices will be maintained in the control centers.
  3. **Gloves** – Surgical gloves will be maintained in the control centers.
- K. **Documentation** – Comprehensive documentation will be maintained of events that take place on the unit.
1. **Unit Log Book** – A running log will be kept in a hard bound log book. This log will be used to document activities that have taken place in the unit, room or observation checks, completion of tasks delineated in the post orders and any other event or occurrence that may be important.

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2. **Observation Sheets** – All required observation sheets for Suicide Prevention and Behavior Management Isolation, once completed, shall be placed in the appropriate binders located in the control room. *(See DYS Policy XIII.12: Suicide Prevention and DYS Policy VI.10: Behavior Management Isolation)*
  
3. **Maintenance Work Orders** – At the start of each shift, direct care staff will inspect the unit and submit maintenance work orders on any equipment or physical plant deficiencies. *(DYS Policy VI.2: Preventive Maintenance)*  
Copies will be kept in a file in the control center.