



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
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August 23, 2024

TO: Green Hill School Staff & Residents

FROM: Felice Upton *Felice Upton*
JR Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Green Hill School Update – Aug. 23, 2024

Good afternoon, Green Hill School

We continue to work hard within the Unified Command structure to address the safety and security issues that are resulting from overcrowding at Green Hill School (GHS). I am pleased to share with you our weekly update to help answer questions and concerns. Our top priority continues to be the safety of every staff person and every young person at GHS.

We have received some questions about why we are reinforcing standards at GHS and want to provide context on what we're expected to do as a carceral setting and why.

GHS is tasked with providing a safe, secure location for those in Juvenile Rehabilitation's care and custody while they serve their required time.

This means, while not a prison, there are certain expectations and best practices set out by the federal Office of Juvenile, Justice and Delinquency Prevention as well as federal requirements from the Prison Rape Elimination Act. These expectations are called conditions of confinement.

Due to overcrowding and significant turnover of GHS staff, many with less than three years' experience, certain expectations have become challenging to meet. This impacts cell searches, organized movements, cleanliness and access to programming.

Because the challenges are complex, we are retraining our staff at GHS, reinforcing expectations for both staff and residents, and working on options to reduce overcrowding. Having more space will allow us to create a safer environment for staff and residents.

We have also been asked if staff from the Department of Corrections (DOC) are present at GHS to take it over to run it like a prison. We want to be clear that this is not the case. In last week's message we shared that DOC brings nationally recognized certifications and experience in managing large scale incidents. Their experience working in carceral settings does give them a unique perspective on managing incidents that impact safety and security; however, their presence remains as a support and partnership to collaborate with DCYF and support the safety of everyone at GHS.

While overcrowding remains the most significant hurdle to tackle, the unified command structure at GHS has helped to resume some activities that previously were not possible before.

All week, dinner has been served at the dining hall, rather than in rooms or common areas. Residents say they enjoy the opportunity to sit down for a meal. Some have been inspired to help keep the dining room clean for all and were approved to form a cleaning team, providing important life and job skills to the residents.

Additionally, education is being delivered on campus. The Chehalis High School Fall quarter began on August 21, with many students attending their high school classes in the school building. Centralia College classes are starting August 27, in alignment with the Fall quarter schedule. For some in the BA program who had education disrupted this summer, enrollments have occurred, and our college partners are working on remaining class completion.

The campus is becoming safer since the resumption of searches. These searches have resulted in the removal of dangerous items such as knives and drugs.

We are still exploring options for reducing the overcrowding at GHS so that we can serve more residents safely and provide them the full range of programming and services. We share everyone's desire to find solutions as soon as possible.

We appreciate your cooperation and patience during this time. If staff have questions, they can address them with their supervisor. Residents can reach out to their living unit manager.