


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

Subject: Special Management Unit - Behavior Modification Unit		Policy Number: 8
Number of Pages: 10		Section: XIII
Attachments	Related Standards & References	
A. Behavioral Modification Plan	ACA 3-JTS-3E-01 ACA 3-JTS-3E-02 ACA 3-JTS-3E-03 ACA 3-JTS-3E-04 ACA 3-JTS-3E-05	
Effective Date: April 04, 2008 Revised: March 23, 2010	Approved:  Kathy Pittman, Director	

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services, to provide specialized services for male youth who need help controlling their behavior. These youth exhibit angry, assaultive and/or aggressive behavior, and have a history of acting out by assaulting people (staff, other youth or the public), threatening to hurt people, and/or losing control and damaging property. Male youth determined to be in need of the aforementioned specialized services will receive these services through placement in the Behavior Modification Unit (BMU).

II. DEFINITIONS

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

- A. **Unit Coordinator** - The unit coordinator is a counselor on staff at the training school who has been assigned to manage a program and the assigned youth and staff.
- B. **Unit Education Coordinator** - The education coordinator is a certified teacher assigned to coordinate the education program, and responsible for conducting educational classes for the youth in the program and assuring that all youth in the program are offered the required houses and type of educational services.
- C. **Unit Senior Juvenile Care Worker** - A direct care worker with specialized training in behavior modification, crisis management, and psycho-educational instruction.
- D. **Unit Treatment Team** - Unit staff members who will meet regularly to evaluate progress of the youth in the program (see Policy XIII.4: Treatment Teams). The BMU Treatment Team will meet initially within three days of the youth's transfer to the specialized unit. The Treatment Team will meet at least weekly to monitor progress and modify treatment services as needed.
- E. **Assigned Housing Unit** - The youth's assigned housing unit after admission to the training school. Until assignment to another housing unit following the completion of intake and orientation, the assigned housing unit will be the Assessment Management Unit (AMU).

Subject	Policy #	Page
Special Mgt Unit – Behavior Modification Unit	XIII.7	2 of 10

- F. **Privilege Level** - Privilege Level is determined by the Treatment Team based upon each youth's participation in all aspects of treatment and progress determined by completion of treatment components and attainment of service plan goals. In the BMU, there are two levels. A third level of care is provided in the Transitional Management Unit (TMU).
- G. **Unit Area** - The area within the training school housing the Behavior Modification Unit (BMU); this consists of the unit pod, individual rooms, day room, control centers, shower areas, and offices.
- H. **Individual Area** - The youth's individual area is the individual room they have been assigned within the unit.
- I. **Unit Pod** - The pod consists of the unit day room and the youth's individual areas.
- J. **Special Management Unit (AMU)** - A housing unit with special rules and procedures established to manage youth who have special needs which can be best met by housing the youth in a special unit with a program and structure designed to address those special needs. The Behavior Modification Program is a Special Management Unit.

III. PROCEDURE

- A. **Program Description:** The Behavior Modification Unit (BMU) is a housing unit designed to provide a high level of supervision and control, help youth learn to manage their emotions and thinking, and to reduce the likelihood of committing acts of aggression or acting out. The following are characteristics of the program:
 1. Purpose: The program is for treatment and control, not for punishment. While the program's structure is designed to reduce the likelihood of aggressive incidents, youth will not be placed in the program for purposes other than control and treatment.
 2. Length: The length of time a youth will spend in the program is determined by their performance in the program, not by the length of time. The desired performance will be defined in the youth's behavior modification plan.
 3. Treatment: The program is based on an integrated set of activities focused on managing behavior while teaching youth in the program academic, cognitive and social skills. In addition to the customized service plan which is developed for every youth in the training school, each youth in the BMU will have a behavioral plan developed to guide how they will be managed within the BMU.
 4. Team Approach: The goal is to create a therapeutic community where all staff (counseling, direct care, education, and recreation) understand the skills being taught and work together to help the youth learn these skills.

Subject	Policy #	Page
Special Mgt Unit – Behavior Modification Unit	XIII.7	3 of 10

- B. Eligibility:** Youth will not be placed in the BMU unless their behavior demonstrates there is a serious safety risk to staff, other youth, and/or the facility. It is expected a youth will meet one or more of the criteria defined in this section. However, just because a youth meets the criteria for eligibility does not mean he will automatically be transferred to the BMU; it means he is eligible and may be considered for transfer to the unit if the placement is in the best interest of the youth and the facility.
1. Serious Assault – The youth has assaulted another person within the last thirty days and the assault resulted in physical injuries to the victim of the assault.
 2. Multiple Minor Assaults – The youth has engaged in two or more minor fights or assaults within the past sixty days.
 3. Major Disruptive Behavior – A youth may be placed in the BMU who has two or more major incidents of disruptive behavior. Examples of major disruptive incidents would include causing property damage over \$200, acting out in class which requires the vacating of the classroom, and waving a potential weapon, forcing staff to take emergency action to protect themselves or others.
 4. Multiple Disciplinary Convictions – A youth may be placed in the BMU following multiple (three or more convictions within 30 days) for acts that threaten others, cause property damage, and/or disrupt the orderly operation of the facility.
 5. Instigating/Leading a Riot or Serious Disturbance – A youth may be placed in the BMU for behavior which caused a riot or serious disturbance. There must be a formal investigation by the Division of Program Integrity that document the youth’s inappropriate behavior and a disciplinary conviction.
- C. Assignment:** Youth who meet the qualifications for the BMU may be assigned to the unit upon the recommendation of the unit Treatment Team, and the approval of the Facility Administrator.
1. The Treatment Team from the assigned housing unit will carefully review the youth’s disciplinary records and personal history to determine if a transfer is warranted and appropriate. If the youth meets the criteria and it is felt that placement in the BMU is appropriate, they will recommend placement in the unit. The unit Treatment Team will assess the youth’s appropriateness for placement in the program.
 2. The Treatment Team from the assigned housing unit will examine all relevant documents such as disciplinary records, personal history, and all evidence assembled pertinent to the youth’s need for special services and make sure that copies of those documents are in the youth’s master file.

Subject	Policy #	Page
Special Mgt Unit – Behavior Modification Unit	XIII.7	4 of 10

3. The recommendation for placement in the BMU will be forwarded to the Facility Administrator. The administrator will approve or deny the request for transfer to the program.
4. Youth assigned to the BMU will be transferred to the unit within 24 hours of transfer approval by the administrator.
5. Upon admission to the program, youth will be advised (verbally and in writing) of the unit procedures, unit schedule, and unit rules. Youth will be afforded an opportunity to discuss these documents with the unit Treatment Team.
6. Upon three working days of admission to the program, the unit Treatment Team will meet with the youth to begin devising an individual behavior modification plan and a service plan to address the specific needs of the youth.
7. Within five working days, a behavioral modification plan will be developed to manage the youth's disruptive behavior.
8. Initially, the youth will be assigned to Level II (high risk).

D. **Behavior Modification Plan:** A Qualified Mental Health Professional (QMHP) will work with the unit Treatment Team to develop a customized behavior management plan for the youth. The information will be documented on the Behavior Modification Plan (Attachment A) by the QMHP. This plan will include the following:

1. History – A brief history of the youth's problem behavior will be provided. This brief history is not intended to repeat social history or information that may be found elsewhere in the youth's file, but is intended to summarize the behavior that needs to be addressed in the behavior modification plan.
2. Individual Program – The specific educational and treatment (psychiatric, psychological, and counseling) services that the youth is receiving while in the BMU is to be defined in this section of the behavioral plan.
3. Privileges/Restrictions – Any special privileges and/or restrictions that apply to the youth shall be delineated. This should include special access to or restrictions from routine programming and any special requirements for transportation or movement within or outside of the facility.
4. Behavioral Contingencies - Any unique behavioral rewards and sanctions for day-to-day management of the youth shall be defined. Any medical conditions which restrict the use of mechanical or chemical restraints on a given youth are to be noted in the list of behavioral contingencies.
5. Step Down Following a Major Incident – The specific actions to be taken if a youth commits a major disruptive incident (assault on staff or another youth,

Subject	Policy #	Page
Special Mgt Unit – Behavior Modification Unit	XIII.7	5 of 10

attempted assault with a weapon, damage to property in excess of \$200, etc.) are to be defined. These actions may include:

- a. Number of steps – The number of steps to be included in the return to normal programming should be provided.
 - b. Length - How much time a youth will spend on each step will be specified. (No step should last longer than 24 hours if the youth is cooperative and meets the programming requirements for that step.)
 - c. Behavioral expectations – What a youth is expected to do to earn movement to the next step shall be defined. This might include willingly completing instructions from staff, written educational or cognitive learning assignments to be completed in a youth’s room, and cleaning assignments.
 - d. Programming or treatment to be provided – The special counseling to be provided shall be detailed.
6. Release Plan – The actions that need to be taken to prepare the youth for release from the unit and enhance success in the general population shall be defined.
- E. **Parental Involvement** – The youth’s parents will be contacted and informed when consideration is being given to placing the youth in the BMU, when the behavior modification plan is being developed, and when the youth is being transferred out of the BMU.
- F. Staff Assignments within the Unit: In order to provide appropriate supervision for youth assigned to the program, a Juvenile Care Worker will be in the day room between the hours of 6:00 AM and 10:00 PM when youth are out of their rooms and in the day room. One or more additional staff will be assigned to help in the day room or to operate the control center. From 10:00 PM until 6:00 AM, the Juvenile Care Worker assigned to the BMU will move throughout the entire unit checking on youth to make sure they are safe, inspecting doors and security devices, and monitoring the operation of the unit.
- G. Youth assigned to the program will meet formally with the unit’s Treatment Team a minimum of once a week. Additional Treatment Team meetings may be held if needed. The Treatment Team will, based on the youth’s behavior, assign the youth to one of three levels of privileges and structure based on the youth’s behavior on the unit.
1. Level I: Level I will be used to manage youth during the specific period of time they are irrational or refusing to follow directions. On Level I, the following structure will apply:

Subject	Policy #	Page
Special Mgt Unit – Behavior Modification Unit	XIII.7	6 of 10

- a. The youth will be placed in their individual room during the time they are out of control and refusing to follow directions and instruction.
 - b. Placement on Level I will be a short term measure and is not a level to which a Treatment Team shall assign a youth for an extended period of time (one week, or more).
 - c. The placement on Level I may be made by any staff person in the unit. However, continued placement on Level I beyond one hour must be approved by the shift supervisor, duty administrator, or by the Facility Administrator.
 - d. When on Level I, staff will conduct six random interval checks separated by no more than 10 minutes an hour to assure the youth is physically okay. The staff will talk to the youth at the time of the check, provide counseling and work to help the youth regain control and resume normal functioning.
 - e. Following minor incidents of acting out, a youth will be released from their room and placed back on Level II once the youth has calmed down, follows directions, and completes assignments that have been provided.
 - f. Meals will be provided in the youth's room while on Level I.
 - g. Educational and recreational programs will be provided to the youth in his room during the time a youth is on Level I.
2. Level II: Youth at this level are considered a high risk for violence or aggressive behavior. Youth assigned to Level II will be closely supervised and placed in a highly structured environment. They will receive the following structure and privileges:
- a. Attend recreation at least one hour per day under the supervision of the recreation coordinator within the unit area;
 - b. Be afforded one hour outside the Unit for fresh air and exercise in the unit yard when other youth are not present (unless bad weather prohibits doing so);
 - c. Eat their meals in the Unit;
 - d. Be out of their individual rooms during normal waking hours (6:00 AM to 9:00 PM). They will be under line of sight supervision during this time.

Subject	Policy #	Page
Special Mgt Unit – Behavior Modification Unit	XIII.7	7 of 10

- e. See their visitors during regular visiting hours in a separate area than where regular visiting is taking place. This may be in the dining room, a classroom, or other area where other youth are not present.
 - f. Attend school within the Unit.
3. Level III Youth at this level are considered a moderate risk for violence or aggressive behavior. While outside the housing unit, youth assigned to Level III will receive the same level of supervision provided to other youth in the training school. Youth assigned to Level III will have the following structure and privileges:
- a. Attend recreation one to two hours per day under the supervision of the recreation department;
 - b. Be afforded a maximum of one to two hours outside the unit for fresh air on the campus grounds;
 - c. Eat their meals in the housing unit;
 - d. See their visitors at regular visiting hours in the designated campus visiting area;
 - e. Attend regular educational classes in the training school’s education area; they will be escorted to and from the school by unit staff; and
 - f. Attend group counseling with other facility youth.
 - g. Complete their treatment program in a specialized “step-down” setting called the Transitional Management Unit.

H. Level Advancement and Reduction: Movement within the program will be based on behavior within the unit and the completion of the special program developed to help youth learn the cognitive, social and educational skills needed to function within the regular campus population. Criteria used to make decisions about movement between levels are as follows:

- 1. **Disciplinary Convictions:** Conviction of a major or minor disciplinary infraction is grounds for reduction in assigned level, or to not advance the youth to a higher level.
- 2. **Chronological Notes:** All staff working in the unit and/or with the youth housed in the unit shall complete and submit short chronological notes (c-notes) daily that document a specific component of behavior that is noteworthy. This may be a positive component of behavior or a negative component of behavior. A record of all submitted chronological notes will be maintained in the youth’s file.

Subject	Policy #	Page
Special Mgt Unit – Behavior Modification Unit	XIII.7	8 of 10

3. Educational Achievement: Youth are expected to attend the unit’s special program composed of academic subjects, cognitive skill development and social skill development. They are expected to progress and demonstrate skill gain through completion of school assignments and through their behavior in the housing unit.
 4. Level Specific Performance: Movement from level to level will generally be based on the following criteria:
 - a. Level II to Level III: Movement to Level III should be granted if the youth has no disciplinary convictions for a week, has no pending charges, and has approximately as many positive chronological notes as negative chronological notes for the past week. Movement to Level III affords an opportunity to practice skills acquired in the intensive BMU treatment program in a less restrictive environment. Structure and privileges will provide a foundation for return to the Unit I school and to transfer to a regular housing unit based on Treatment Team recommendation and Facility Administrator approval.
 - b. Movement out of the BMU: Movement out of the BMU should take place if the youth has completed the assigned program of education and cognitive learning called for in the behavioral modification plan, has no disciplinary convictions for the last two weeks, has no pending disciplinary or criminal charges, and has approximately as many positive chronological notes as negative chronological notes for the past two weeks. The initial movement will be from the BMU to the “step-down” program of the Transitional Management Unit (TMU).
- I. **Unit Master Activity Schedule** – The unit staff will develop a master activity schedule which will outline the daily routine for the unit. This schedule will be developed weekly and submitted to the Facility Administrator for approval. The schedule will begin on Monday and run through the following Sunday. The unit’s master activity schedule will be posted in the unit’s control room on a bulletin board or in a location where the youth can easily see and read it. The schedule will include the following:
1. Hourly Activities - A breakdown of the activities to be completed during each hour of waking time will be provided.
 2. Programming/Recreation – Hours of school, treatment groups, recreation, and other activities will be defined. A schedule of specific treatment, recreational, or hobby craft activities will be developed to fill the hours of 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm each evening, and during the days on weekends and holidays. Unstructured time in the day room watching television, playing board games, and/or pursuing individual interests is not an acceptable schedule of activities. In general, it is expected these activities will be conducted in the unit day room.

Subject	Policy #	Page
Special Mgt Unit – Behavior Modification Unit	XIII.7	9 of 10

3. Cleaning – A specified time for unit cleaning may be delineated.
 4. Television – Television will not be used as a unit activity except between the hours of 8:00 pm and 9:00 pm. Allowed exceptions are special events such as major election coverage, special sporting events, such as the Olympics or the Super Bowl, or news coverage of a major crisis or world event.
- J. **Unit Disciplinary Procedures:** Youth assigned to the program will follow the campus disciplinary procedure and be entitled to the same rights and subject to the same sanctions as youth assigned to the general population.
- K. **Level Change:** The unit Treatment Team will meet at least twice a week with each youth to determine the youth's progress within the Unit.
1. The unit Treatment Team will interview the youth and review the chronological notes and disciplinary logs to determine the youth's progress. The team will make decisions about changes in level and movement in and out of the BMU.
 2. The unit Treatment Team will be responsible for all youth level placements within the program subject to administrative review as has been noted.
- L. Youth who have progressed through Level III and are determined by the unit Treatment Team to no longer be in need of special services will be referred to the Facility Administrator for re-assignment.
1. Upon determination by the BMU Treatment Team that a youth is no longer in need of, or is benefiting from, the special programming provided within the unit, as evidenced by the youth's progress toward treatment goals and disciplinary logs, the unit Treatment Team will submit, in writing, a request for transfer to the Facility Administrator. The request for transfer will include:
 - a. a summary of the youth's disciplinary log;
 - b. a summary of the youth's progress toward treatment goals; and
 - c. a recommendation for placement in another pod or cottage.
 2. Upon receipt of a request for transfer, the Facility Administrator will review the youth's records and approve or disapprove the request.
 3. Upon approval of the request for transfer, the Facility Administrator will order the transfer of the youth to another pod or cottage and the staff of that housing unit will assume responsibility for the care and treatment of the youth.

Subject	Policy #	Page
Special Mgt Unit – Behavior Modification Unit	XIII.7	10 of 10

4. Upon disapproval of the request for transfer, the Facility Administrator will provide, in writing, a recommendation for additional programming to the unit Treatment Team.

M. Program Instruction: Instruction within the BMU will be provided by unit staff with support from the department of recreation, physical education, and all other therapeutic staff as designated by the unit management.

1. Youth assigned to Levels I and II will be offered at least 330 minutes of instruction per day within a specialized education program designed to meet the needs of the youth in the areas of behavior control, social skills, English, science, math, and social studies. A manual of all specialized instructional materials will be maintained which contains academic lesson plans, cognitive group teaching guides, and activity guides to be used by recreation staff and others. Copies of this manual will be maintained on the unit and in the Facility Administrator's office. Regular curriculum materials used by all teachers on campus do not need to be maintained on the BMU.
2. Youth assigned to Level III will attend regular education classes at the training school. The youth will also attend individual counseling and/or therapy or psycho-educational groups offered to youth within the facility which address treatment needs identified during the youth's initial assessment or a re-assessment and are called for in the youth's service plan.
3. All extra curricular activities will be designed to reinforce the program curriculum (i.e. help the youth gain a greater understanding of behavior control, promote appropriate social interaction, stress reduction, cognitive restructuring, impulse control, etc.)
4. Students who are transferred to TMU will receive specialized individual and group counseling; individual behavior modification plans; and evidence-based individual and group therapy services, as needed.