

John de la Howe Wilderness Program

Admissions Policy

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 29, 2017

APPROVED BY: BOARD OF TRUSTEES

DATE: March 29, 2017

Purpose of Wilderness Program

The purpose of the JDLH Wilderness Program is to provide to middle-school aged boys an environment conducive to learning how to manage and cope with behavioral and emotional stressors so that they can develop the skills necessary to be successful in their respective homes, communities and school settings.

The 1,200-acre property of the John de la Howe School, located in rural McCormick County, offers camp-type experiences in a natural wilderness setting adequately removed from the distractions and demands found in traditional social settings.

A modified Campbell-Loughmiller model is used to aid and facilitate the positive growth of the youth in the Wilderness Program. Group process teaches the campers how to live and work together in order to solve basic problems and navigate through daily activities associated with camp life. A residential counselor, known as "Chief," operates as an integral member of each small group by teaching basic living and social skills by way of role modeling and mentoring in conjunction with proven behavioral modification strategies and de-escalation techniques.

Admissions Criteria

The JDLH Wilderness Program is designed for and targeted to youth who meet the following criteria:

1. Male gender
 - a. The facilities in the Wilderness Program are best suited for single-gender occupancy.
 - b. There is a higher need for services to the male population making the Wilderness Program better suited for male occupancy.
2. Middle School grade levels 6-8
 - a. Must be in academic grade level of 6-8.
 - b. Ages 12-14 at time of admission. Those who are 11 years old may be considered for admission if they are within 4 months of turning 12.
 - c. Those who are 14 years old at the time of admission must not be within 4 months of turning 15.

Participation

Parents/Legal Guardians must voluntarily submit an application to the JDLH admissions department for any male child they believe would benefit from the program. After receipt and

review of all submitted information, our Admissions Department and Clinical Team will determine eligibility for acceptance at their sole discretion. Participation in all aspects of programming is expected from both the students and the family unit to afford students the best chances of success when re-integrating into their home environments.

Licensing Requirements

The JDLH Wilderness Program must meet the licensing classification in the SC Department of Social Services Regulations for “Level II” congregate care. Individuals accepted into the Wilderness Program must be appropriate for Level II placement.

Behaviors and Offenses Excluding Participation

Out of regard for the safety of all individuals on the JDLH campus and the surrounding community in McCormick County, individuals with a history of the following behaviors or offenses are deemed unsuitable for admission to the JDLH Wilderness Program:

- Violent offenses as defined in S.C. Code Sec. 16-1-60
- Arson/fire-setting (with the intention to harm or destroy property)
- Extensive gang involvement
- Sexual predatory behaviors
- Not passing a physical examination by a medical doctor
- Extreme psychosis
- Extreme substance abuse, such as use of methamphetamines, cocaine, heroin, etc.
- Asperger’s Disorder
- Autism
- Current or Significant Suicidal/Homicidal Ideations with Attempt of Intent to Harm
- Elimination Disorders
- Feeding and Eating Disorders
- Intellectual Developmental Disorders
- Intermittent Explosive Disorder
- Non-Residency (Students who do not reside in the state of South Carolina)
- Paraphilic-like Symptoms or Disorders
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder
- Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders
- Significant Neurodevelopmental Disorders, excluding Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Spectrum Disorder

#

John de la Howe School

Excerpt from State Inspector General's 2013 Review, dated 1/24/14:

More than thirty percent (30%) of the students have been expelled from their local school district as a result of inappropriate behaviors in the school setting; more than sixty-five percent (65%) have documented physical and sexual abuse; and approximately eighty-five percent (85%) are prescribed some form of psychotropic drug. The SIG reviewed 15 current student files, which revealed, without question, these students had substantial behavior issues. The students, as well as their families, were in high levels of distress and despair. These students seemingly were on the edge of a downward life trajectory without help and intervention.

Excerpt from 2015 JDLH Restructuring Report to House Legislative Oversight Committee (the most comprehensive report required by the LOC):

Key Customers [Excel Report]		
1	Residential Youth: Children/adolescents ages 12-18 in the state of SC with moderate emotional and behavioral challenges who are experiencing trauma, abuse, neglect, failure or truancy at school or other situation needing temporary separation from their home, school or community environment. Most youth served are academically "over age and under-credited."	At time of application, age 12-17, an SC resident for at least one year, and one year in an SC school district. Males and females accepted. Referred by parents/guardians, school districts, DMH, DSS, DJJ, or courts. Children in residential care require an array of support services, including supervision at DSS-mandated staffing ratios, shelter, food and nutrition, medical attention, medication supervision, diploma-track education services, sports and recreational activities, and opportunities to develop to their full potential. JDLHS offers the only public school in SC that accepts students expelled from other districts.

Key Customers [Word Report]. Please refer to the "Key Customers" chart in the attached Excel document [above]. In addition, it is worth noting the 2013-14 characteristics of youth ages 12-18 served by the agency:

- Many of the students served by John de la Howe School fit the academic description of "over-age and under-credited."
- At least 66% entered placement with one or more diagnoses from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5).
- Approximately 55% of students in placement have documented trauma such as death of a family member or friend, family separation, and/or emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.
- Approximately 65% are prescribed some form of psychotropic drug
- Approximately 18% have known issues of physical or sexual abuse and/or neglect.
- Approximately 7% have been expelled from their local school districts as a result of inappropriate behaviors in the school setting. Serving children with special needs such as these, JDLHS is the only school in the state that accepts students who have been expelled from their home schools.
- While the agency has a statutorily mandated tuition requirement, at least 65% of families served are unable to pay more than the minimum rate on a sliding scale according to net income. For families living at or below the poverty line, even the minimum is a challenge.
- Of the residential youth served, 69% were boys and 31% were girls.
- Approximately 62% of students served at JDLHS are African-American – 68% boys and 32% girls. Studies indicate the black-white income gap is nearly 40% greater today than it was in 1967 and that black students are three times as likely to be suspended or expelled from school, setting them up for educational failure.

