



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

ROBERT GORDON
DIRECTOR

December 10, 2020

Joel Bell
Bethany Christian Services-Southwest MI
6687 Seeco Drive
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

RE: License #: CB390267474
Investigation #: 2021C0212002
Bethany Christian Services-Southwest MI

Dear Mr. Bell:

Attached is the Special Investigation Report for the above referenced facility. Due to the violations identified in the report, a written corrective action plan is required. The corrective action plan is due 15 days from the date of this letter and must include the following:

- How compliance with each rule will be achieved.
- Who is directly responsible for implementing the corrective action for each violation.
- Specific time frames for each violation as to when the correction will be completed or implemented.
- How continuing compliance will be maintained once compliance is achieved.
- The signature of the responsible party and a date.

If you desire technical assistance in addressing these issues, please feel free to contact me. In any event, the corrective action plan is due within 15 days. Failure to submit an acceptable corrective action plan will result in disciplinary action.

Please note that violations of any licensing rules are also violations of the MISEP and your contract.

Please review the enclosed documentation for accuracy and contact me with any questions. In the event that I am not available, and you need to speak to someone immediately, please contact the area manager, Claudia Triestram, at (616) 552-3662.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Heather Reilly".

Heather Reilly, Licensing Consultant
MDHHS\Division of Child Welfare Licensing
22 Center Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
(734) 660-8309

enclosure

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILD WELFARE LICENSING
SPECIAL INVESTIGATION REPORT**

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

License #:	CB390267474
Investigation #:	2021C0212002
Complaint Receipt Date:	10/12/2020
Investigation Initiation Date:	10/13/2020
Report Due Date:	12/11/2020
Licensee Name:	Bethany Christian Services Inc
Licensee Address:	901 Eastern Avenue NE Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Licensee Telephone #:	(616) 224-7610
Administrator:	Joel Bell, Administrator
Licensee Designee:	George Tyndall, Designee
Name of Facility:	Bethany Christian Services-Southwest MI
Facility Address:	6687 Seeco Drive Kalamazoo, MI 49009
Facility Telephone #:	(269) 372-8800
Original Issuance Date:	07/30/2004
License Status:	REGULAR
Effective Date:	01/27/2019
Expiration Date:	01/26/2021
Capacity:	Unknown
Program Type:	CHILD PLACING AGENCY, PRIVATE

II. ALLEGATION

	Violation Established?
The agency collected Youth A's belongings and will not return them to Youth A or his mother.	No

III. METHODOLOGY

10/12/2020	Special Investigation Intake 2021C0212002
10/12/2020	Contact - Document Sent Email to complainant for additional information
10/13/2020	Special Investigation Initiated - Telephone
10/28/2020	Contact - Document Sent Email to complainant for additional information
10/28/2020	Contact - Telephone call made Contact with CA
10/28/2020	Contact - Document Sent Email with CA, Program Manager, Supervisor and Caseworker
10/29/2020	Contact - Document Received Received documentation from complainant.
11/17/2020	Contact - Document Sent Email with caseworker
11/18/2020	Contact - Telephone call made phone interview with Youth A
11/18/2020	Contact - Document Sent Email to FC worker and supervisor
11/20/2020	Contact - Document Received Email from Program manager
12/3/2020	Contact - Document Received
12/4/2020, 12/10/2020	Exit conference

ALLEGATION:

The agency collected Youth A's belongings and will not return them to Youth A or his mother.

INVESTIGATION:

On 10/12/20 it was reported to DCWL that when Youth A entered foster care at another agency, he had a PlayStation 3 game console that belonged to his mother. Youth A was allowed to take the game system with him to his first placement. Later, Youth A received an Xbox One game console as a gift from his mother. The case then transferred to Bethany Christian Services. The mother's parental rights were later terminated. Youth A and his mother were no longer supposed to have contact. However, Youth A contacted his mother and explained that both game systems were taken by his case worker when he moved to a residential facility. When Youth A later moved to a foster home, the game systems were not returned by the agency. In addition, the agency has taken two cell phones from Youth A and has not returned them. The mother contacted the agency and requested to have the items back, if they are not going to return them to Youth A. The agency has not complied with this request.

On 10/13/20 a review of Youth A's case file was completed. Youth A is 17 years old. Parental rights were terminated on 7/29/19. Youth A's case transferred to Bethany on 10/19/2018. His placements were as follows:

- 10/19/18-7/16/19, Foster Home 1
- 7/16/19-7/30/19, Crossroads (residential)
- 7/30/19-11/15/19, Foster Home 2
- 11/15/19-5/27/20, Crossroads
- 5/27/20-6/16/20, Foster Home 3
- 6/17/20-7/29/20, Foster Home 4
- 7/29/20- present, Independent Living

Supervisor

On 10/28/20 the Supervisor stated that the agency has a system in place for children's belongings. The items the agency received for Youth A were kept in storage bins at the office. The Supervisor reported that Parent 1 picked up her belongings from their office on 10/16/20. An email chain among staff was reviewed, detailing the arrangements for Parent 1 to gather the Xbox One and a gaming headset. The PlayStation could not be located; it is unknown when Youth A last had it, as the former caseworker believed he traded it to another youth while placed in a residential facility in 2019.

The Supervisor noted that the Foster Care worker was assigned to this case from 10/19/2018 to 8/14/2020. However, Parent 1 somehow obtained the worker's personal phone number and began threatening her. Most recently Parent 1 obtained

the worker's home address and went to the worker's home in the middle of the night demanding the game systems. This resulted in a Personal Protection Order and a change of worker. The worker also installed a home security system due on ongoing threats and harassment from Parent 1.

Parent 1

Youth A's mother was contacted on 10/12/20 and 10/28/20 for additional information. On 10/29/20, Parent 1 reported that she requested the missing items from the former case worker on several occasions, but did not receive a response. Parent 1 was eventually contacted by the office manager and arranged to obtain the game system on 10/16/20. Parent 1 picked up a bag from the agency which contained the Xbox One, one game, and two headsets. Parent 1 stated there was about \$1,000 worth of games and equipment missing, although she did not have any details about the missing items, games and equipment.

Parent 1 reported that she was previously able to obtain one cell phone from the agency, after threatening the caseworker with a lawyer. Therefore, as of 10/29/20 Parent 1 reports the current missing items to be a PlayStation and a second cell phone.

Youth A

On 11/18/20 Youth A was contacted on his personal cell phone and interviewed. Youth A confirmed that he had a PlayStation, which belonged to his mother (Parent 1), when he first entered care. Youth A later received an Xbox One as a gift from his mother. Youth A stated that he last had the two game systems while living in a foster home, prior to his last stay at a residential facility. The Foster Care Worker took the Xbox and put it in to storage. Youth A could not recall what happened to the PlayStation. Youth A stated he had two cell phones at one point, but he could not recall when he last had those. Youth A stated that his worker said he could have his belongings back once he moved out of the residential placement. However, Youth A is now in an independent living placement, and has not received the game systems or cell phones.

Program Director

On 11/20/20 the Program Director (PD) was contacted regarding the agency policy/procedure about the storage of youth's personal belongings. The PD reported that the agency does not keep a specific inventory of the items stored in the office.

The PD reported that a cell phone, which was in Youth A's possession previously, was returned to Parent 1 during parenting time on 12/28/18.

The PD reported that Youth A packed his own belongings, and had two gaming systems and a cell phone when he went to Crossroads residential facility (7/16/19-7/30/19). That cell phone was never placed in the care of Bethany. When parental rights were terminated in July 2019, Parent 1 demanded to have the PlayStation returned to her. The previous FCW returned the game system.

Youth A was then placed in a foster home from 7/30/19-11/15/19, where he had all of his belongings. When Youth A moved to residential on 11/15/19 he packed his own belongings at the foster home and unpacked at the residential facility. Youth A determined what items he wanted to keep in his possession, including his cell phone. The other items, including the Xbox, were then immediately returned to the office, packed in a tote, and locked in storage.

The Program Director stated that the agency generally does not store many items for children. However, when required, they have a locked shed outdoors, where youth belongs are kept in labeled totes. The key for this shed is held by the office manager and removal of items is monitored. Regarding Youth A, this procedure was followed, except for the Xbox system. Youth A's FCW was concerned about the game system being in the cold, therefore the system was locked in the Program Director's office.

After leaving residential, Youth A requested to have his Xbox returned. The former FCW denied his request at that time and kept the Xbox in storage. This decision was made for a few reasons: Youth A did not have a stable placement; Youth A needed to focus on his goals and safety planning due to the risks presented by his parents regarding his safety and well-being; Parent 1 had previously utilized technology to track Youth A and his sibling, to determine the location of their foster home and communicate with the children when it was not allowed.

Recently, when Youth A began Independent Living all of his belongings were returned to him, except for the Xbox. This was an admitted oversight by the agency, simply because it was not in the tote with his other belongings.

The Program Director noted that she received text messages around 1:00AM on 10/12/20 from the previous FCW, stating that Parent 1 was sending her threatening messages on her personal cell phone, and standing outside of her house. The messages were regarding the Xbox. Following that incident, arrangements were made to have Parent 1 pick the Xbox up in the agency lobby. Parent 1 picked up the game system on 10/16/20.

Documents reviewed

A copy of the 10/13/2020 PPO against Parent 1 was reviewed.

The agency's policy regarding personal possessions was reviewed and found to focus on adequate clothing for youth while in care. The policy does not address additional personal items, as the rule does not specifically require this. However, TA was provided to the agency to add this information, as contract/policy does require this information.

APPLICABLE RULE	
R 400.12303	Policy and procedures.
	(2) Policies and procedures shall cover all of the following areas and be on forms provided, and in a manner prescribed, by the department: (m) Personal possessions.
ANALYSIS:	<p>Regarding the allegation of missing items, Parent 1 confirmed receiving one game system and one cell phone. However, due to conflicting information from Parent 1, Youth A, the agency, and a lack of documentation to support either side, it could not be determined what happened to the other cell phone and game system.</p> <p>A violation is found due to the agency failing to document the youth's personal belongings on the form provided by the department (DHHS 3377), and in a manner prescribed by the department. FOM 903-09 states the DHHS 3377 must be completed "within the first 30 calendar days of every placement and again at every placement change". This form was not completed at placement changes to document the youth's belongings.</p>
CONCLUSION:	VIOLATION ESTABLISHED

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Upon receipt of an approved corrective action plan, I recommend no change to the current license.



Heather Reilly
Licensing Consultant

December 4, 2020
Date

Approved By:



Claudia Triestram
Area Manager

December 9, 2020
Date