

Inspection visit to the Emajõgi Training Centre of the Maarjamaa Education Council

From 17 to 18 May 2016, the advisers of the Chancellor of Justice inspected the Emajõgi Training Centre of the Maarjamaa Education Council (hereinafter the Centre). The last time the Chancellor of Justice inspected the centre (formerly known as the Kaagvere Special School) on 23 May 2011.

At the moment of the visit, the Centre had 83 employees. Some of the positions were vacant and the recruitment of staff was in progress. At the time of the visit, 25 girls were enlisted in the Centre. All the children were in the Centre on the basis of a court order: two children were subject to 24/7 special care service and 23 children had been referred to the school for students in need of special conditions of education.

During the visit, the advisers of the Chancellor of Justice and an expert took a on the premises of the Centre, examined the documentation of the institution and talked to the staff members and had a more detailed interview with 14 students.

In December 2015, the new study centre of the Maarjamaa Education Council was opened in Kaagvere. Owing to the new buildings, the living and study conditions of the students and the working conditions of the staff have vastly improved. The Centre values the staff's in-service training and creates opportunities for it. It is positive that the study centre has a medical nurse on working days. The individual planning and coordination of the rehabilitation service for children deserves recognition. Good practice is to collectively analyse extraordinary events in the Centre in detail.

As a result of the inspection, the Chancellor of Justice made the following suggestions and recommendations:

- to ensure that children can use the telephone privately. Also, to be more flexible regarding using the telephone – if necessary, to allow for using the telephone more frequently, for a longer time as well as at other times (e.g. during the standard working time);
- to ensure the privacy of a child placed in the separation room in using the hygiene corner either by stationary means (e.g. a partition wall) or other removable accessories (e.g. curtains, shade). The technical solution of the video surveillance system should be changed so the use of the toilet cannot be monitored using the video surveillance equipment;
- to bring the procedure for using and placing students in the separation room into compliance with the law;
- upon using the separation room, follow the law and release the child immediately after she has calmed down;
- upon placing a child who is subject to the special care service 24/7 in the separation room, follow the legal rules;
- to consider greater involvement of the students in making decisions concerning them. Also, to ensure that the opinion of the children whose native language is not Estonian is heard and they are able to read the rules concerning the organisation of life in the Centre in a language that they understand;
- to terminate the security checks of the students, which do not have any legal ground.

The expert who participated in the visit made the following findings and recommendations:

- to keep the cupboards of medicinal products in the work rooms of the nurse locked at all times;
- to utilise unused medicinal products properly;
- via improved mutual communication between the staff members, to harmonise the implementation of the rules of procedure and ensure flexible need-based revision of the rules.