



**Media Statement from Memphis and Shelby County Juvenile Court
Chief Administrative Officer Dr. Stephanie Hill
Parent Visitation and Student Learning at the Youth Justice and Detention Center
April 4, 2024**

The Juvenile Court of Memphis and Shelby County wishes to clarify the court's role and actions in working with the Shelby County Sheriff's Office to re-establish parent visitation to pre-Covid standards at the Youth Justice and Detention Center; and explain the school attendance rate as it relates to the center's space and staffing capacity.

On February 28th, Judge Tarik Sugarmon issued a court order directing the Shelby County Sheriff's office to provide a secure space for in-person visitation for parents or guardians to meet with detained youth.

While the Sheriff's office initially indicated their readiness to comply with this order, in-person visitation has yet to resume. We have engaged in multiple discussions with the Sheriff's office urging them to reinstate visitation to pre-Covid standards. We indicated that both in-person and virtual visitation options be available, however, virtual visitation should not supersede in-person.

The Sheriff's office was given the authority to determine the best technology for their facility to provide virtual visitation for youth unable to meet in person. The vendor selected has indicated that they have the information from Juvenile Court needed to implement the system. In addition, the Sheriff's Office has access to information for determining persons allowed to visit youth in the center. The court has provided the Sheriff's Office the necessary directives and information to fulfill this mandate.

Regarding in-school learning and the center's classroom capacity; each of the 9 rooms can accommodate 16 youth, totaling 144. With our current youth population below this capacity, there are no space constraints for having 100 percent school attendance. To ensure full attendance, however, requires the Sheriff's Office assigning 18 staff members to classrooms daily. Staffing challenges at the Sheriff's Office have impacted the ability to safely allow all youth classroom attendance. This has resulted in only 50-60 percent of youth in the Youth Justice and Education Center being allowed to attend school.

Juvenile Court maintains dedication to collaborative efforts with the Shelby County Sheriff's Office in our collective mission to implement interventions fostering positive outcomes for youth and families. With this critical goal in mind, we will continue to work towards a resolution that ensures the well-being of both youth and their families.

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