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State: Child Abuse Occurred At Boarding School

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PRINEVILLE, Ore. -- The license of a boarding school for troubled teenagers has been temporarily suspended after investigators found evidence of child abuse and neglect, state officials said.

Department of Human Services said there are nine allegations of abuse against the Mount Bachelor Academy, which is based in the central Oregon town of Prineville and owned by the Aspen Education Group.

Investigators with the DHS said they found students were forced to take part in "emotional growth" workshops where they had to reenact traumatic events such as physical or sexual abuse. The curriculum included sexualized role play in front of staff and peers, according to the official complaint.

Gene Evans, a spokesman for DHS, said authorities determined there is a "serious and immediate health or safety risk to the children." He said parents were being asked to make arrangements for their children to be removed from the academy.

According to the official complaint, the DHS first received reports of abuse on March 20 and then began the investigation.

Sagewalk, another Aspen Education Group program, has been closed since August when a 16-year-old boy collapsed and died while on a hike in Lake County.

The Web site for the Mount Bachelor Academy redirected to Aspen Education Group on Thursday.

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