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### State investigating ab slapping of teen boys

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A controversial video appears to show a juvenile justice official in Seminole County striking adolescent detainees in their abdomens.

But although physical contact between officials and detainees is mostly prohibited, the state Department of Juvenile Justice says the boys may have volunteered for the military-style treatment at the Seminole County Juvenile Detention Center.

"There has been speculation that it was used for training purposes," said Frank Penela, a spokesman for the department, who has not yet seen the video.

Nonetheless, the department, which has been stung in recent years by the death of one detainee at a boot-camp-style facility and as well as the discovery of a graveyard containing unidentified graves near another, is investigating the incident.

The video, which was obtained by WKMG-Channel 6, appears to show the official pulling back to strike the boys -- who appeared to be bracing themselves for the blows -- with full force in their abdomens. After contact, the boys continued to stand up straight.

At least one boy later is shown rubbing his belly after being struck.

The television station received the video from an outside source, and juvenile justice officials haven't seen it yet, said Penela.

The department has requested a copy of the video.

"If he was touching kids in an inappropriate way, he'll" be penalized, said Penela.

Penalties could include suspension all the way up to termination from his \$38,000-a-year job.

The official in the video, Omar Bohler, 41, has been employed with the department since 2006. He is a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps.

He only has one disciplinary action on his record with the juvenile-justice department -- for arriving late



to an official meeting.

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