

1890's

CIRCULAR OF INFORMATION

CONCERNING

Minnesota School for Feeble Minded,**FARIBAULT.****LOCATION.**

The school is situated upon the east bluff of Straight river, overlooking the city of Faribault, which lies to the west of the river. It is about two miles from the railroad depots, and forms the southern terminus of a line of six public institutions, which are arranged in the following order from the north, viz: Shattuck Military School [Episcopal], School for the Deaf [State], St. Mary's Ladies' Hall [Episcopal], Seabury Hall [Episcopal], School for the Blind [State], and School for the Feeble-Minded [State].

OBJECT.

The school has for its general objects the training of such feeble-minded children as are capable of improvement, and the care and comfort of such as cannot be improved. The former is accomplished by regular school and industrial work adapted to this class; the ultimate aim being to make each child self-supporting, or as nearly so as possible. To accomplish this, all the training is of the most practical nature.

ORGANIZATION.

The school is in reality an institution performing the functions of a school, a home and a hospital. It, therefore, consists of three departments quite distinct in their nature and yet mutually connected, viz: [1] School and Training Department, [2] Custodia or Home, and [3] Epileptic Hospital.

TERMS OF ADMISSION.

All feeble-minded persons, residents of the state of Minnesota, who, in the opinion of the superintendent, are of suitable age and capacity to receive instruction in this school, and whose defects prevent them from receiving proper training in the public schools of the State, and all idiotic and epileptic persons, residents of the State, may be admitted to their respective departments, and receive the benefits of the school free of charge, subject to such rules and regulations as may be made by the board of directors. [Chapter 205 General Laws of 1887.]

[Clothing and transportation are not paid by the State.—See last paragraph of this circular].

METHODS OF OBTAINING ADMISSION.

Application should be made to the superintendent for blank forms, which, when properly filled out, give a correct and detailed description and history of the person for whom application is made to enable the superintendent to determine the eligibility of the case. The applications are numbered and filed in the order in which they are received.

CLASSIFICATION.

Pupils are classified by the superintendent and assigned to their appropriate departments in the institution.

SCHOOL AND TRAINING DEPARTMENT.—*School.*

(DURING SCHOOL HOURS.)

The children are under the guidance of refined teachers, who, while they endeavor to impart the simple elements of an English education, are constantly on the alert to correct improper habits, develop the sense of right and wrong, teach acts of courtesy, and keep all hands busy at something useful. About six hours a day are devoted to school room work and industrial occupations, which vary according to the capacity of the child, from stringing beads and buttons, or matching color and form blocks, to recitations in reading, penmanship, numbers, geography, orthography, composition and other elementary work of the common schools. Music, dancing and calisthenics occupy a portion of the time, and are of primary importance in arousing and maintaining the interest of the sluggish minds and strengthening the feeble wills

Manual and Industrial Occupations.

Properly adapted occupations and games of the Kindergarten are employed for the little children, while manual and industrial training is co-ordinated with the school work for the older ones. Experience has shown with this class, as with normal children, that definite physical effort to accomplish a useful object, if only to do an errand, or button a shoe, tends to mental and moral development, effective in proportion as it involves complexity of movement and thought within the limits of ability to perform the same properly. The program is so arranged as to keep all busy during school hours, the time being divided between literary and industrial occupations. By this means, it is believed, maximum mental development can be realized and each child at the same time, be rendered capable of the greatest degree of self-support.

Brush making, mat weaving, scroll sawing, repoussé work, farming, gardening, and care of stock are some of the industries adapted to the boys and are followed by them at the school.

The girls are employed at plain and fancy needle work, lace making, crocheting, baking, cooking and general house work.

(OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS.)

The pupils are under the care constantly of attendants. Abundant recreation is provided for all out of doors when the weather will permit. It is the earnest endeavor of the management to surround each child with good home influences in school and out. No employe can retain a position in the school whose influence, with the children, is known to be detrimental to them.

Books and periodicals, of a suitable kind, are furnished for the use of the pupils.

ENTERTAINMENT.

Special entertainments are provided for the various holidays of the year for the children, and it has been the custom for the children, under the direction of the teachers, to give one public entertainment each year.

One evening of each week during the school year is devoted to the children's dance and sociable, under the personal supervision of the officers, and one evening of each week is devoted to miscellaneous entertainments, games, stereoptican exhibitions, etc., by an officer or teacher.

CUSTODIA.

Such children as are not capable of improvement, or but slightly so, are cared for separately from those in the school, and every effort is exerted to make their lives as comfortable and happy as possible. A school is maintained in this department so that no case will be neglected, however hopeless it may appear at first.

In this department many of the older and more capable pupils are employed in the care of their more unfortunate brothers and sisters.

EPILEPTICS.

Epileptic persons whose minds are weak, or in whom this condition is threatened, are assigned a place in the institution and given medical treatment and mental and physical training adapted to their requirements.

SUNDAY OBSERVANCE.

On Sunday mornings regular Sunday School exercises are held by the superintendent and teachers, and on Sunday evening, the superintendent or one of the teachers, instructs by "plain talks" in morality and good conduct. An effort is made to develop strength of character, and to cultivate purity of heart and purpose.

Any pupils, whose physical health or mental peculiarities do not render it inadvisable, may attend church services in the city with teachers or attendants, as approved by the superintendent

The school is non-sectarian and the wishes of the parents will always be observed in the selection of churches for attendance.

MEDICAL CARE.

The school is under the care of a medical superintendent and an assistant physician and the needs of such as require ordinary medical aid are supplied. An oculist and aurist is also supplied who gives necessary attention in this direction. Special surgical and dental work is done at the expense of the parents.

VACATION.

During the months of July and August there is a nominal vacation of the schools, and when it is deemed advisable by the superintendent, children may be returned to their homes for

3

vacation. Unless for urgent reasons it is not generally advisable for children to go home at other times. All expenses for bringing and returning children must be borne by the parents or friends of the children, unless especially provided for otherwise. It is always desirable for parents to visit the school before or at the time their child is admitted, that they may know personally of the school and its methods. When this cannot be done the superintendent may send for the child to be admitted, provided all actual expenses [no fees] are paid by the person or persons interested. The state does not pay the traveling expenses in such cases.

Such of the school children as do not go home during the summer vacation, have the privilege of camping out for a short time in July or August. The summer camps are now an established feature of the school and they contribute immeasurably to the health and comfort of the whole household.

DISCIPLINE.

Sympathy and kindness on the part of officers, teachers and attendants render government simple and easy generally. Cases seeming to require punishment are acted upon by the superintendent or an officer, and corporal punishment is not delegated to any one. If in an extreme case it is required, the superintendent alone assumes the responsibility of such action.

DURATION OF ATTENDANCE.

Admissions are not made for any specified time. Applications may be received at any time during the year, but the best interests of the pupils are consulted in reference to their discharge.

AGE OF APPLICANTS.

There is no age qualification required for admission, though the earlier a feeble-minded child can be received, after leaving the mother's arms, the better the chances are for improvement in most cases.

VISITATIONS.

The institution is open to the public at all reasonable hours on every day of the week except Sunday and Saturday. The school hours are from 8.15 A. M. to 3 P. M., and those desiring to see the children in their school and training exercises should visit within those hours. The children have the time to them-

selves outside of school hours. Parents having children at the institution are at liberty to visit them but must provide their own transportation to and from trains and have their lodging provided for outside of the school.

Food and confectionery should never be given to the children without the advice and consent of the superintendent. Such articles should be left at the office or with the matron who will attend to issuing them at proper times. Clothing and all articles of value must be left at office to be receipted for and marked. *All business matters should be transacted at the office.* This is important, and if observed will prevent many misunderstandings.

The history and characteristics of the children and their family connections are considered confidential matters by the management, and all reasonable means are employed to protect children from curiosity seekers. Children are mentioned to strangers by their first names.

Visitors should refrain from talking of the peculiarities of the children in their presence. Feeble-minded children are often painfully conscious of their infirmity and it is very humiliating and discouraging to such persons to hear themselves discussed by strangers.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Children who have parents or friends interested in them are reported at least once each month, at least during the first year of attendance. Children who are able to write are expected to do so at stated times. When the address of any child's correspondent is changed, the office should be notified of it at once. Do not blame the institution for not replying to correspondence which is regularly answered and sent to some former address, the latest reported. Do not send a letter addressed to "John," "Theodore," "Joe," "Mary" or some other given name and signed "Your Loving Mother," or "Your Brother," etc., as it is often utterly impossible to know to whom such letters belong among several persons of the same name and with equally affectionate relatives.

Always give the name in full of the child and sign the full name and address of the writer in every case, except that letters to children enclosed in a letter to the superintendent need not be so signed.

In many cases after the child has been in the school for some time or where there are no near relatives of the child, no stated

7

reports are sent as they would add unnecessarily to the work of the office, but correspondence from friends and relatives will always be promptly and cheerfully answered. In case of serious sickness, the persons interested will be notified at once.

EXPENSES.

A deposit, not exceeding forty dollars [\$40] per annum, as fixed by the board of directors, is required in advance for clothing and traveling expenses of each child. Relatives of the children are required to file with the superintendent a duly and properly executed bond for the subsequent payment of funds for clothing and traveling expenses, as may be required.

For further information address:

Dr. A. C. Rogers,

Faribault, Minn.