

## Green Hill Employee Charged After Allegation of Sex with Student

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A Green Hill School employee was arrested this week after an investigation by the Washington State Patrol revealed allegations that she had sexual relations with an 18-year-old resident at the facility.

Erin Lee Stiebritz, 36, of Centralia, was charged Tuesday with first-degree custodial sexual misconduct at her first appearance in Lewis County Superior Court.

Lewis County Deputy Prosecutor Kevin Nelson asked for \$25,000 bail for Stiebritz, saying the nature of the case made her a threat to community safety. He also asked Superior Court Judge James Lawler to order her to have no contact with children.

“In this particular case the victim was 18 but just 18, and there had been contact prior to turning 18,” Nelson said.

Green Hill School is a medium/maximum security facility for juvenile offenders located in Chehalis and managed by the State Department of Social and Health Services’ Juvenile Justice and Rehabilitation Administration. The facility provides educational and vocational training to older, male, juvenile offenders.

Attorney Joely O’Rourke, who represents defendants at their preliminary hearings, disputed that Stiebritz was a risk to the community, and noted her lack of criminal history.

Lawler imposed \$25,000 unsecured bail, meaning Stiebritz does not have to post cash or collateral. Her next court appearance is scheduled for Jan. 21.

Lawler said Stiebritz presented no danger to community safety and no risk to not reappear in court.



Court: Stiebritz

Erin Stiebritz makes an appearance in Lewis County Superior Court on Tuesday afternoon at the Lewis County Law and Justice Center in Chehalis.

“The rest of what I’m hearing is basically she should be punished for these allegations and (that’s) kind of getting the cart before the horse,” he said.

On Dec. 23, 2015, investigators with the Washington State Patrol talked to the alleged victim, who reportedly admitted to having a sexual relationship with Stiebritz. He told detectives some of the alleged sexual contact happened in Stiebritz’ office at Green Hill, and said it happened after he turned 18 in July 2015, according to court documents.

Stiebritz denied having any relationship with the boy.

Stiebritz was a juvenile rehabilitation resident counselor at Green Hill, but was placed on an alternate assignment at the facility in November 2014, after allegations of inappropriate behavior with residents surfaced, according to court documents.

In Feb. 2015, employees at the facility reportedly intercepted a letter between Stiebritz and the alleged victim, who was then 17. Staff believed the letter writer was Stiebritz, and the Washington State Patrol began an investigation into the incident, according to court documents.

Detectives learned that Stiebritz rented a post office box two days after she was reassigned to a new position in November 2014, and was reportedly using that box to communicate with the alleged victim. Green Hill staff found approximately 30 letters and cards addressed to the post office box in the boy’s cell.

Detectives also obtained recorded phone conversations between Stiebritz and an inmate at Walla Walla Penitentiary that reportedly referenced her relationship with the boy at Green Hill.