I. POLICY

To ensure a safe environment and secure operations, the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) shall objectively classify and house youth according to standard criteria of risk, age, size, conduct, and offense history.

II. DEFINITIONS

Custody (Security and Stratification) Assessment: An objective assessment instrument that rates the risk of the youth being involved in a subsequent incident while in the facility. The risk is considered when making decisions about the youth’s supervision requirements and housing assignment.

- Low: Youth has a below average likelihood of being involved in a subsequent incident while in the facility.
- Medium: Youth has an average likelihood of being involved in a subsequent incident while in the facility.
- High: Youth has an above average likelihood of being involved in a subsequent incident while in the facility.

Housing (Vulnerability) Assessment: An objective assessment instrument that identifies a youth’s specific housing vulnerability and assigns a housing level. The housing level and the housing matrix (Attachment A) are used to determine the youth’s appropriate housing placement within the facility.

- Low - Youth has a below average likelihood of being victimized while in the facility.
- Moderate - Youth has an average likelihood of being victimized while in the facility.
- High - Youth has an above average likelihood of being victimized while in the facility.
- Override - To alter the objective assessment finding for management considerations that warrant special attention or intervention by staff.

III. GENERAL PROCEDURES

A. Classification and housing procedures will consider the following:

1. Level of Risk presented;
2. Type of housing required;
3. Participation in facility and community programs; and
4. Criteria for changing the housing of a youth when there is an increase in their custody level.

IV. HOUSING ASSESSMENT

A. The Housing (Vulnerability) Assessment will be used to determine the appropriate housing placement within the facility. The Housing (Vulnerability) Assessment will be used for both assessment and reassessment.

1. A current Housing (Vulnerability) Assessment will be required prior to assigning a youth to a room.
2. The Housing (Vulnerability Assessment) will be completed or reviewed every time a Custody Assessment is completed or reviewed.
3. Housing Vulnerability Assessment may only be overridden to a higher housing type, not to a lower housing type. The facility Director or designee must approve overrides in JTS and must include justification for the override. Overrides will occur in the following situations:
   a. Other additional information indicates that the youth needs to be housed at a higher level;
   b. Youth who have an increased victim risk (e.g., sexual assault, child abuse, youth-on-youth altercations);
   c. The size or age criteria dictates a higher housing type;
d. To allow youth who are eligible for “honors” placement to be housed accordingly.

e. All of which must be based upon verified data that is supported by documentation.

V. CUSTODY LEVEL ASSESSMENT

A. The Custody (Security and Stratification) Assessment will be used to establish a youth’s custody level upon admission to a secure facility.

1. The Custody Security and Stratification Assessment must be completed before the youth is assigned to a room or moved from the intake housing area. The assessment must be entered in JTS within 24 hours of the youth’s admission and/or transfer to a secure facility.

2. The Juvenile Detention Counselor (JDC) will review the completed Custody Security and Stratification Assessment within the first working day following the youth’s admission and document their review as a communication note. The JDC must confirm that youth’s legal history is updated in JTS in accordance with DJJ 20.2, Detention Monitoring.

3. The Custody Security and Stratification Assessment must be approved by the Assistant Director (RYDC) or Assistant Director and/or institutional program Director (YDC) after the JDC review is completed.

B. The youth’s progress and behavior will be considered when updating the Custody Security and Stratification Assessment.

1. The Custody Security and Stratification Assessment will be completed at least every 90 days, or as otherwise needed, from the date the previous Custody Level Assessment was completed in JTS.

2. Trained staff will complete the Custody Security and Stratification Assessment within 24 to 72 hours in accordance with the SIR Code requirements (DJJ 8.5, Special Incident Reporting, Attachment I).

3. New information is received that may affect the youth’s custody level (e.g., new legal charges, new dispositions entered in JTS, updated information that was not available when the previous assessment was completed).

4. Prior to a youth’s return to general population from a specialized or behavior management unit.
5. Youth’s managing team may make a determination that a new Custody and Housing Assessment be completed based on the reason and circumstances for the special management plan.

6. For charges that are received while a youth is in a secure facility, the facility Director or designee will develop an LOP for communicating legal charges to the Institutional Program Director (YDC) or JDC (RYDC). The Institutional Program Director or JDC will enter the charges into the JTS legal module within 24 hours of notification and prior to the assessment being completed. The youth must be assessed in JTS within 24 hours of the receipt of the information.

VI. TRAINING

A. All staff responsible for completing/reviewing/approving custody and housing assessments or determining housing assignments must complete the online Custody and Housing Assessment training.

B. All staff involved in the direct care of youth in a secure facility must receive facility training regarding the housing plan. The training will include characteristics of each of the custody levels and housing types and facility procedures for supervising and housing youth based on the custody level or housing type.

VII. FACILITY PROTOCOLS

A. Each secure facility will establish protocols for housing and supervising youth that are based on custody levels. The facility Director or designee will develop local procedures that provide for:

1. Completion/review of the Custody (Security and Stratification) Assessment and the Housing Vulnerability Assessment for each youth upon admission;

2. Completion/review of the Custody (Security and Stratification) Assessment and the Housing (Vulnerability) Assessment every 90 days or more often when required by this policy;

3. Housing decisions for youth on observation after 14 days;

4. The specific staff member(s) responsible for assessments and housing assignments; and

5. Monitoring of a youth consistent with their assigned mental health monitoring level (routine, special, or close), custody level (high, medium, or low), and vulnerability level (high, medium, or low). (See DJJ 8.20, Room Checks, and DJJ 12.21, Suicide Prevention.)
B. The housing plan that is developed by the facility Director will be approved by the responsible Regional Administrator prior to being sent to OCATS for approval. The housing plan will provide for:

1. The safety of youth, the custody levels, and vulnerability levels that may be assigned to each housing unit. If youth with various custody levels and vulnerability levels are blended within a housing unit, the plan will specify how youth will be assigned and supervised by staff.

2. The review and revision of housing plan as needed, but at least annually. The housing plan will be reviewed and approved by the Director and responsible regional administrator prior to being sent to the Office of Classification and Transportation Services (OCATS). The housing plan must be approved by the director of OCATS, who will return the approved housing plan within 14 business days of receipt. The housing plan will also be revised and approved by the facility Director and responsible Regional Administrator prior to any change in the physical plant structure.

3. A copy of the approved housing plan to the facility Director’s supervisor.

4. Ensuring that the housing plan is accessible to all staff.

C. Single-occupancy rooms shall be available for all youth.

D. Disabled youth will be provided with:

1. Housing that provides for the youth’s safety and security;

2. Rooms or housing units designed for their use to provide integration with other youth;

3. Programs and services that are modified and/or specifically accessible to them;

4. Staff members who are appropriately trained to assist youth who cannot otherwise perform basic life functions; and

5. Education, equipment, facilities, and support necessary to perform self-care and personal hygiene in a reasonably private environment.

E. At least monthly the facility Assistant Director will review a minimum of 10% of the custody/housing assessment reports in Juvenile Tracking System (JTS) to ensure compliance with DJJ policy. Inaccurate reports will be corrected the day the inaccuracy is discovered and the youth will be housed according to the corrected assessment.
VIII. LOCAL OPERATING PROCEDURES REQUIRED: YES

- Location of the housing plan within the facility.