

REPORT ON THE  
INSPECTION OF

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# INDIAN RIVER JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION

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INSPECTION DATE: FEB. 13, 2026



**DAVE YOST**

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL



# Indian River Juvenile Correctional Facility

Inspection Date: February 13, 2026

Acronym: IRJCF  
Address: 2775 Indian River Rd. S.W. Massillon, Ohio 44646  
Warden/Superintendent: Kenneth Black

CFIS Team Members Present: J. Wesson / D. Drummond / B. Forrest / D. Thompson

## FACILITY INFORMATION

Date Institution Opened: 1972

Population Type:  Male  Female

Security Level Type:  Minimum  
 Medium  
 Special Management  
 Restrictive Housing  
 Death Row  
 Juvenile

Total Acres: 40  
Total Buildings On-Site: 4

Total Custody Staff: 141 Youth Specialists  
Total Service Area Staff: 39  
Total Staff: 295

Total Approved Volunteers: 57

## INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL INFORMATION

Current Count: 137  
Total Available Capacity: 165  
Incarcerated Person Age Range: 14 years of age through 20 years of age  
Incarcerated Person Average Age: 17.8

IRJCF is a cell-housing style facility, divided into eight units (one currently closed for renovations), each with a maximum capacity of 23 youths. On the day of the inspection, each unit housed 22 youths.

## RECENT INTERNAL MANAGEMENT AUDIT

IRJCF’s most recent Internal Management Audit (IMA) was conducted from September 29-October 1, 2025. The IMA is an annual audit conducted by an independent auditor who reviews a facility’s compliance with the American Correctional Association’s (ACA) 5<sup>th</sup> Edition Standards and the 2025 Ohio Standards and Observations for correctional facilities, in preparation for the next ACA Audit. All institutional work, industries, vocational, and educational programs are audited. The table below illustrates IRJCF’s rates of compliance for the previous three (3) years:

IMA Audit Scores	2025	2024	2023
ACA Mandatory	95%	92%	100%
ACA Non-mandatory	97%	88%	97%
Ohio Standards	68%	58%	61%

### IRJCF External Inspection Results

Indian River Juvenile Correctional Facility Fire Safety Inspection Report	
Inspection Date	June 30, 2025
Total Violations	1
Corrected	1

## OVERVIEW OF CFIS INSPECTION

On Friday February 13, 2026, CFIS completed an unannounced inspection of Indian River Juvenile Correctional Facility.

Upon arrival, CFIS members were greeted by IRJCF staff. CFIS staff were escorted to the superintendent’s conference room and proceeded to an opening session with Chris Freeman, Direct Deputies David Robinson and Cheryl Cook. Mr. Freeman spoke of DYS focusing on the image of IRJCF and that the facility has been working with an imaging consulting group. He indicated that IRJCF is focusing on additional safety and security measures, such as more frequent pat down searches, a revised facility schedule, and eliminating items that could be used as weapons against staff. After initial introductions, the inspection began.

Per Ohio Revised Code Section 109.39, CFIS’s mandatory areas of inspection are food services, the grievance process, and an educational or a rehabilitative program. In addition to these mandatory areas of inspection, R.C. 109.39 empowers CFIS to inspect any other areas that it deems appropriate. While at IRCJF, the CFIS team also inspected the following:

- Medical services
- Recreation
- Library/law library
- Visitation
- Living unit(s)
- Education/ technical / career
- Staff roll call/briefing are

The inspection of IRJCF was an unannounced (no prior notice) inspection. Upon arrival CFIS inspectors requested that the staff produce copies of the following:

- Current facility incarcerated population count (racial breakdown, avg age)
- Use of force/assault totals (youth on staff/ youth on youth)
- Current facility security threat group numbers
- Facility drug testing (previous quarter)
- Previous months' grievance totals
- Information on the transitional separation hours (previous month)

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE (DYS Policy 159-YRI-07)**

DYS's grievance process is designed to help address youth complaints relating to any aspect of institutional life. This may include complaints regarding the application of policies or procedures, conditions of confinement, or the actions of institutional staff. The process begins when a youth files a completed DYS youth grievance form (form DYS2069) by placing a hard copy in the locked grievance box. DYS Policy 159-YRI-07- Youth grievance process. The facility investigator/grievance coordinator has 14 business days from receipt to respond to a standard grievance, and 48 hours to respond to an emergency grievance (a grievance alleging actual or imminent sexual abuse). These time periods may be extended by the inspector/coordinator for good cause, with notice to the youth and approval by the chief inspector.

Upon receiving the grievance, the investigator/ coordinator meets face-to-face with the youth to discuss the complaint and to gather any additional information that was not provided on the written form.

The facility investigator/grievance coordinator determines the merits of the submitted grievance and indicates the decision on the grievance form. At this initial stage, there are a few possible outcomes. By the time the initial meeting with the youth occurs a grievance might have already been resolved without the investigator/coordinator's involvement (e.g. by the unit manager) and can be closed. Alternatively, the investigator/coordinator may determine that the grievance has no merit and close it, or determine that it needs further investigation.

Any grievance filed against the facility investigator/grievance coordinator, superintendent or regional administrator, must be handled by the Chief Inspector's Office

Once the grievance response has been provided (after 14 days or the extension period) to the youth, he may appeal the decision by completing a grievance appeal (DYS2062) and submitting it the chief inspector's office. The chief inspector or appointed designee has ten business days from receipt of the appeal to affirm, reverse or modify the decision. Within three business days of the appeal decision, the facility investigator/grievance coordinator informs the youth of the outcome and obtains the youth's signature.

**Are the incarcerated youths issued tablets with access to the grievance procedure:** Yes No N/A

**Are facility staff answering grievances within policy:** Yes No N/A

If issued tablets are not available, are there other measures in place to provide access to the grievance procedure (paper grievance, and speaking to investigator): Yes No N/A

Upon reviewing responses, are there any issues with timelines or lack of substance within the responses to the grievance: Yes No N/A

**Additional Notes:** While inspecting IRJCF, CFIS ensured that the staff is systematically logging and tracking grievances as they were filed by the youth, that staff is timely in responding to grievances, and that the grievance response is within policy guidelines. No violations of DYS’s grievance policy observed. CFIS also looked for any indication of retaliation against any youth for filing grievances, checked to ensure that the appeals process is accessible, looked for any trends with grievances, and viewed grievance response(s) to ensure that each response appropriately quotes the policy being cited within the response.

Secured grievance boxes were strategically placed on each unit and in high-traffic areas such as food service, education, and recreation for the youth to submit their grievances. CFIS was informed that the boxes are checked numerous times throughout the day by identified personnel to ensure timely responses and to address any reported issues.

Youths do not receive a physical copy of their grievance disposition post-investigation. Instead, the investigator or grievance coordinator meets with the youth in person on their unit to discuss their complaint and the findings before reaching a conclusion.

CFIS staff conducted a thorough review of randomly selected grievances. Notably, none of the grievances reviewed indicated any retaliatory behavior by IRJCF staff, and no discernible patterns were observed. All of the grievances reviewed complied with DYS policy.

## FOOD SERVICE AREA INSPECTION (160-FSM-06)

The food service department was inspected to ensure compliance with DYS policy (160-FSM-06), Food Service Safety, Sanitation and Inspections.

Executive staff/supervisors conducting unannounced rounds: Yes No N/A

### A. SANITATION

Dining room(s) meet DYS policy for cleanliness: Yes No N/A

Serving line(s) meet DYS policy: Yes No N/A

Dish room area meets DYS policy for cleanliness: Yes No N/A

Dish washer water temperature meets DYS policy: Yes No N/A

Handwashing stations in working order: Yes No N/A

Handwashing stations operate at an appropriate temperature: Yes No N/A

Eye washing stations operate appropriately: Yes No N/A

## B. FOOD SERVING & STORAGE COMPLIANCE

- Appropriate food menus posted:  Yes  No  N/A
- Food & storage area(s) temperatures comply with DYS policy:  Yes  No  N/A
- Food service workers wearing hairnets, gloves, etc.:  Yes  No  N/A
- Serving utensils appear to be in good working order:  Yes  No  N/A
- Freezer temperatures in compliance with DYS policy:  Yes  No  N/A

## C. CHEMICAL & TOOL CONTROL

- Tools properly stored/ signed out/ accounted for:  Yes  No  N/A
- Tools properly etched with an identifier:  Yes  No  N/A
- Chemicals properly stored and inventoried:  Yes  No  N/A

**Additional Notes:** During the inspection, CFIS staff sampled a lunch meal that included chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, carrots, whipped margarine, fruit cocktail and milk. The meal was appropriate in portion size and met policy standards for temperatures.

The meal preparation and food service area were clean and organized. The IRJCF food service staff and incarcerated food-service workers were appropriately in uniform and utilized protective clothing (hair and beard nets, rubber gloves). Uniforms were neat and appeared to be clean.

IRJCF's food services department offers an apprenticeship program designed to teach culinary art skills. Those who complete the program receive a certificate from the governor. Four youths were involved with the program and were actively engaged in assisting with preparing meals and working in the dish room.

The kitchen tool room was inspected. It was noted that four tools were missing and there was no chit on the assigned peg to indicate who had the tool. A food service worker admitted that he forgot to place chits when removing the tools, the issue was corrected by the food service worker. A tool control log was being used to indicate the individual to whom the tool was assigned, serving as a safety check and balance.

The back-dock area was clean and free of offensive odors. The area surrounding the trash compactor was free of debris. No rodents or pests were observed in the food service area or on the back dock. The cooler floors needed scrubbing, and what appeared to be food from several days prior was seen on the floor near the wall. CFIS staff also noticed boxes and storage risers were placed directly against the wall instead of several inches away as required by Serv Safe. The food service director stated she would correct all deficiencies immediately. In the cooler, a bucket was observed on top of a skid of milk to catch occasional drips from a pipe covered with electrical tape. Mr. Black, the superintendent, said the maintenance department would address it right away. These areas will be re-inspected to verify that they were corrected.

## EDUCATION & REHABILITATIVE PROGRAMS (157-EDU-01)

DYS partners with the Buckeye United School District to offer academic and career-technical programming designed to meet the youths' needs and enhance employability upon release. There were no noted DYS Policy violations (157-EDU-01) Comprehensive Education Program). Programs include high school educational courses and career technical courses.

### A. EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Does the facility have an education department for in-person learning:  Yes  No  N/A

Executive staff/supervisors conduct unannounced rounds:  Yes  No  N/A

Programs offered:  GED  ACADEMIC  CAREER-TECH  
 APPRENTICESHIP  VOCATIONAL  DEGREE PROGRAMS/CERT.  
 OTHER  N/A

Are there currently any vacant teaching/staff positions within the education department:

Yes  No  N/A

Appropriate signage/information displayed:  Yes  No  N/A

Does the education department comply with DYS standards for cleanliness:  Yes  No  N/A

**Additional Notes:** IRJCF provides year-round middle and high school programming for youth, as well as career technical and post-secondary options. Students can complete high school and earn a GED. School credits are transferable to other school districts upon a student's release from the facility.

Special education teachers help develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student in need. The IEP sets personalized goals tailored to the student's individual needs and abilities. Teachers review these plans with parents or guardians, school administrators, and general education staff. Other support services include remedial math and reading, guidance counseling, speech therapy, and occupational therapy.

The school offers several career training options, including career-based intervention, roofing and framing, forklift operation, auto technology, and horticulture. Students can earn certificates or licenses in these courses to improve job opportunities upon release. Additionally, graduates may elect to take college courses through Stark State or Sinclair College. In the wood shop, youth build beds for "Good Knights," a non-profit organization that provides beds for low-income families in Northern Ohio.

During the inspection, the education and career technical areas appeared to be clean and organized. No violations of DYS policy/policies noted or observed in the education department.

### B. REHABILITATIVE / REENTRY PROGRAMS

Executive staff/supervisors conduct unannounced rounds:  Yes  No  N/A

Please list the kind of rehabilitative/reentry programs that the facility offers:

The facility offers programming that focuses on mental health, substance abuse, behavioral health, victim awareness, sex offender programming, and gang interventions.

The reentry area provides youths access to Ohio Means Jobs, which allows them to create an employment plan and a resume. Community resources and community linkage are also provided.

**Appropriate signage/information displayed:**  Yes  No  N/A

**Does the reentry department comply with DYS standards for cleanliness:**  Yes  No  N/A

## MEDICAL (168-MED-01)

### A. MEDICAL SERVICES

**Executive staff/supervisors conduct unannounced rounds:**  Yes  No  N/A

**Services offered:** Dental, medication distribution, physical examination(s), 24/7 on-call mental health services.

**Staffing vacancies within the medical department:**  Yes  No  N/A

**Appropriate signage/information displayed:**  Yes  No  N/A

**Does the medical department meet DYS policy standards for cleanliness:**  
 Yes  No  N/A

**Are there any maintenance issues that may hinder sufficient medical care:**  
 Yes  No  N/A

**Are there any ongoing hunger strikes, constant watches, dry-cells, or special supervision youth in this area:**  
 Yes  No  N/A

**Additional Notes:** CFIS inspected the medical department and spoke to staff. The area was extremely clean. The mental health department, located within the medical department, was staffed by psychiatrist, two psychiatric nurses, and several behavioral health therapists. At the time of the inspection, there were 130 incarcerated youths on the mental health caseload. No violations of DYS policy (168-MED-01)-Health Care Services Program were observed or reported.

## RECREATION (177-REC-01)

### A. RECREATION DEPARTMENT

**Executive staff/supervisors conduct unannounced rounds:**  Yes  No  N/A

**Appropriate signage/information displayed:**  Yes  No  N/A

**Types of recreation programs are offered:**

Sports leagues, music room, community service, team building activities.

**Types of recreation:**  Indoor  Outdoor  N/A

**Are equipment and facilities in working order:**  Yes  No  N/A

Does the recreation department comply with DYS policy standards for cleanliness:

Yes No N/A

**Additional Notes:** The recreation department was clean and organized. Numerous youths were engaged in a basketball game in the gym, and a youth specialist was actively engaged in recreational activities with the youth. The recreation supervisor stated that the gym is used for multiple events such as family days, baptisms, and graduation. No violations of (177-REC-01), Recreational Programming, Recreation and Leisure Time Activities, were observed or reported.

## LIBRARY (157-EDU-08)

### A. LIBRARY

Executive staff/supervisors conduct unannounced rounds: Yes No N/A

Does the library provide access to LexisNexis: Yes No N/A

Does the library have policies, procedures, administrative rules available: Yes No N/A

Does the library have operation hours and information posted: Yes No N/A

Does the library have a community partner to assist with services: Yes No N/A

Does the library meet DYS policy standards for cleanliness: Yes No N/A

**Additional Notes:** IRJCF has a large library/law library which provides access to the updated Ohio Revised Code books. The librarian partners with a local library to assist with any literature requests. No violations of DYS Policy (157-EDU-08)- Library/Media Center Services, were observed or reported.

## VISITATION (175-MAL-04)

### A. VISITATION

Visitation hours: Saturday & Sunday 8:30am-11:00am / 5:30pm-8:30pm

Executive staff/supervisors conduct unannounced rounds: Yes No N/A

Visits allowed:  Contact  Non-contact  Semi-Contact

Does the visitation area provide adequate seating: Yes No N/A

Does visitation area provide food and drink options: Yes No N/A

Appropriate signage/information displayed: Yes No N/A

Does the visitation area meet DYS policy standards for cleanliness: Yes No N/A

**Additional Notes:** IRJCF's visitation area was small but offered adequate space to allow youth and their visitors an opportunity to engage in a setting designed to encourage positive interactions. A vending area was available for visiting family members to purchase snacks and drinks. No violations of DYS Policy (175-MAL-04)- Youth Visitation, were observed or reported.

# GENERALIZED HOUSING

## A. GENERAL POPULATION HOUSING

Name/Identifier: Unit A, B, C, N, S, I and E

Executive staff/supervisors conduct unannounced rounds: Yes No N/A

Appropriate signage/information displayed: Yes No N/A

Does this housing unit offer programming: Yes No N/A

Programs offered: Parenting programs, staff-youth mentoring programs, Thinking for a Change [T4C], Aggression Replacement Training [ART], Victim awareness, Roots for Success, Positive Response Incentive Driven Environment [PRIDE]

Type of unit: Open Dorm Cells

Are equipment and facilities in working order: Yes No N/A

Does the unit meet DYS policy standards for cleanliness: Yes No N/A

**Additional Notes:** CFIS staff toured and inspected seven (7) of the eight (8) living units. All units consisted of a dayroom with two (2) youth phones, a group room with two (2) youth phones, and individual rooms for the youth. There were 3 restrooms and 2 showers on the unit. Upon arriving at the upper-level hallway it was noted that the area appeared messy, with several trash bags and other trash on the floor. The area was cleaned prior to the inspection being completed. Units I, N and S did not have the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) signs on the walls. CFIS was informed that the units had been recently painted, and the signs had not been re-hung. Signs were replaced by the time CFIS exited the facility.

Unit N: Ten youths in unit N were on Acts of Violence (AOV) separation status. Separation status DYS Policy (156-DSC-05). Separation is when a youth is secured in his room for the purpose of population management after an incident, for an investigation or due to shift change. The 10 youths were in separation status due to a physical altercation that occurred in the gym the previous day. CFIS staff reviewed video footage of the incident, which showed that while multiple youths were involved, the situation did not escalate into a large-scale incident. Once assistance arrived, the scene was contained; all youth involved were escorted back to the unit and placed in AOV separation. CFIS inquired about injuries, no injuries to staff or youths were reported and no outside medical treatment was required.

CFIS staff reviewed the (DYS2113) Youth Intervention Monitoring log forms and noted that the 'separation type' was missing. Upon CFIS identifying this deficiency, staff immediately updated the logs to include the required information. Further, when a youth commits an act of violence, they are required to undergo the 'Safe to Release' (STR - DYS2015) process to evaluate their readiness for return to regular programming. The STR consists of a structured interview conducted by behavioral health staff, a unit manager, or an operations manager. Per policy (156-DSC-05), the initial assessment must be completed within 2-3 hours of the incident, excluding sleeping time, with subsequent checks occurring every 2 hours until the youth is released. CFIS inspection occurred

before the STR interviews would have been required per the policy and none of the involved youth had completed the STR process.

Unit S: The individual youth rooms at IRJCF do not have restrooms. When a youth needs to use the restroom, he places a restroom card on his room door to notify staff. Staff are required to complete staggered rounds no less than every 15 minutes when youth are in their rooms. For security reasons, two staff members must be present to escort a youth to the restroom when requested. When units are in transitional separation, restroom breaks can be dependent on when a second staff member can get to the unit to provide the proper security. Ultimately, the length of time that it takes to complete a restroom call for a youth can vary depending on the status of the unit and its staffing levels.

One youth in unit S was in a level 4 room, which had its own restroom. The term “level 4” relates to IRJCF’s Positive Response Incentive Drive Environment (PRIDE) policy (PRIDE-180-YBM-01), a multi-level behavior management system that incentivizes positive youth choices, short and long term. Youth begin at level 1 and can move up or down in levels, based on behavior. Youths can petition to move to a new level every 30 days. An interdisciplinary team reviews each petition to see if the youth qualify to move to the next level.

The social worker spoke of the group therapy and a program called Thinking for a Change.

Unit I: During the inspection, all youth were observed participating in unit activities, except for two individuals seated in the hallway. The unit manager reported that these youth had been placed in AOV separation the previous day following an altercation. Upon release from AOV, the unit manager utilizes a practice of placing youth in the hallway to maintain separation from the general population and facilitate mediation prior to their return to normal programming. While this is not an official DYS policy, the unit manager stated she implemented this standard to manage unit incidents and noted that the practice has had a positive effect on unit stability.

Unit E: Maintenance staff were present in the unit fixing the grievance and health call boxes that had been damaged by a youth. CFIS observed an AOV stop sign on a youth’s door. A youth who has a stop sign on the door displays a pattern of violent and/or disruptive behavior and a supervisor must be present to provide a restroom call. The amount of time it takes to provide a restroom call can vary depending on the IRJCF staffing levels and the activities that are occurring within the facility and can vary between 15 minutes to one hour.

Unit C: This unit was empty as it was being remodeled to offer youth more programming. When open the unit is for youth who are having behavioral issues and is designed to assist them in returning to the general population.

The facility is currently in the works with a beautification project for all living areas. CFIS staff found no violations of DYS Policy 156-DSC-05 -Separation.

## **ADDITIONAL NOTES FROM INSPECTION**

### **Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)**

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) provides for the analysis of the incidence and effects of prison rape in federal, state, and local institutions and to provide information, resources, recommendations and funding to protect youth from prison sexual assaults and rapes. PREA applies to all ODYS Facilities.

As the law enforcement agency responsible for investigating criminal offenses inside correctional institutions, the Ohio State Highway Patrol tracks sexual assaults using the PREA incident system.

CFIS Inspectors reviewed IRJCF's PREA reports from that system (PREA incident system) and found no substantiated cases had been reported. PREA signs and local rape crisis center information were posted throughout the facility. PREA signs were re-hung in units from which they were missing. No issues were observed regarding policy DYS (179-YSA-01), Sexual Abuse, Sexual Harassment; Reporting and Responding.

### **Staff Recruiting and Retention**

IRJCF's vacancy breakdown is as follows:

- Youth Specialist = 50 / 141 (35% vacancy)
- Behavioral Health Staff = 6 / 14 (43% vacancy)
- Teacher = 6 / 25 (24% vacancy)
- Other supportive roles = 15 / 115 (13% vacancy)
- Total Vacancies = 71 / 295 (24%)

Due to vacancies at IRCJF, multiple DRC employees routinely work at the facility their days off from DRC. CFIS spoke to the DRC staff working during the inspection and none reported any issues. Information regarding hiring events and job openings was posted.

### **Administrative Duty Officer Reports (ADO)**

Upon arrival at IRJCF, CFIS asked to review the facility's use of force and administrative duty officer reports. DYS staff stated that all documentation requests require central office approval before being shared, as those records were not managed locally. Indian River staff indicated that they were not refusing CFIS requests but were following DYS central office procedures. It should be noted that although these reports may be managed by the central office, they are facility-level reports that should have been available. CFIS staff indicated that they would be reaching out to central office to discuss the availability of documents.

Before CFIS could reach out, DYS leadership asked for a meeting. The meeting occurred on February 24, 2026, during which CFIS laid out what documents it would be requesting during inspections. CFIS and DYS leadership discussed which documents would be immediately available on-site during inspections (e.g. ADO reports, use of force reports) and which have juvenile information protected by statute, which would have to be obtained through central office. As of that meeting, CFIS and DYS have an understanding as to which documents will be provided when, and by whom.

On March 2, 2026 Chief Inspector Deborah Drummond and Inspectors Bryan Forrest and Derek Thompson returned to IRJCF to review the reports that had previously been requested. This report inspection was pre-planned during the February 24, 2026 meeting. On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, the CFIS team reviewed the Administrative Duty Officer reports for the month of February. The ADO report is completed daily by the designated executive staff tasked with completing inspection rounds. Policy DYS2480; 150-FAM-01, Facility Administrative Rounds and Communication. The designated rounds cover food service, visitation, housing units, the recreation area, and any other area designated by the superintendent. Upon completion of the ADO rounds a report documenting the rounds is provided to the superintendent's office for review and signature. The report includes the date and time of the rounds, areas visited, observations, concerns and recommendations. Staff completing the rounds must sign the record of staff visit and note the time and in and time out of the area. CFIS reviewed the ADO reports for February and noted multiple concerns.

Several ADO reports showed that rounds were marked as complete through video review, indicating that the ADO did not conduct required physical rounds that day. Without making a physical round the phones on the units were not checked to ensure that they were properly working, the cleanliness of the unit could not be observed, and the ADO would not be able to verbally/physically communicate with youth and/or staff. There were several other days where the ADO did not complete all reports for the assigned area. Further, most reports did not show that a meal was sampled. IRJCF leadership stated that all executive staff will be re-trained by the end of March on the expectations of ADO rounds. CFIS will seek documentation verifying that Indian River staff did in fact receive training and will re-review the ADO reports to ensure completion of the rounds and the corresponding reports.

## **Security and Safety**

Units were staffed with two youth specialists, a case manager, and a unit manager. However, other key positions such as behavioral health/social workers professionals' positions were vacant. IRJCF employs transitional separation as a time-limited measure to address population management, institutional needs, incidents, investigations, or shift changes. If unit staffing falls below minimum levels, transitional separation may also be used – pending superintendent approval – out of concern for the safety of both staff and youth. In such cases, separation is maintained only as long as necessary to restore normal staffing levels. Restroom breaks for youth during transitional separation may vary based on available staff. The high vacancies at IRJCF have contributed significantly to the overall transitional separation hours recorded for the month. Indian River reported that its youth population accumulated a total of 9,977 transitional separation hours in January 2026. Finally, IRJCF reported the following statistics in January 2026:

- Youth on Youth Assault: 24
- Youth on Staff Assault: 26
- Uses of force where mechanical restraints applied: 41

## **Use of Force (UOF)**

The CFIS staff reviewed over 10 uses of force incidents in accordance with DYS Policy (163-UOF-02), Managing Youth Resistance. These incidents included fights, youth-on-youth and youth-on-staff assaults, Planned Use of Force [PUOF], and events involving the use of OC spray. The Facility Intervention Administrator (FIA), acting as the subject matter expert, provided all relevant incident

report packets and video footage for review. No issues were noted throughout the process, and all internal reviews of the uses of force were conducted in accordance with the timelines specified by the use of force policy.

## Drug Testing

Upon admission to DYS, each youth undergoes a drug test administered by intake nursing staff. DYS policy (168-MED-12). Every facility conducts an annual comprehensive saturation test, screening 100% of its youth population. Additionally, facilities must randomly test at least 10% of each housing unit’s population monthly and at least 50% of youth participating in off-grounds work. Youths are also drug tested within two business days before their scheduled release and within 48 hours of intra-system transfers between DYS facilities; receiving facilities may also conduct arrival tests. For cause testing and testing after any off-ground activity can also be ordered at any time.

IRCJF’s January 2026 drug testing results		
Test Category	Number of Tests	Results
Medical intake review	18	3 prescription positives, 2 other positives, 11 negatives, 2 cannabis
Random testing (10% level)	20	All negative
Transfer screening	6	All negative
Release screening	3	All negative
Off-grounds test	1	Positive for cannabis

There were no observed violations of DYS policy (182-SAS-02) Youth Drug Testing.

## Security Threat Groups (STG)

Security Threat Groups (STG) are organized groups within correctional facilities that are often linked to gangs, activity/organized crime and pose significant risks to the safety and security of the facility. Classifying an individual as an STG member assists the facility, and DYS in proper tracking, housing and monitoring trends.

As of January 2026, IRCJF reported a total of 106 STG members, 42 individuals (27%) with active STG status, 64 individuals (41%) with passive STG status, and 50 individuals (32%) who are not affiliated with a gang. DYS classifies youth by status, not gang name.

## Institutional Overtime

Youth Specialists worked a total of 1,780.0 overtime hours in January 2026. No violations of DYS policy (135-PAY-01), Employee Pay, Timekeeping and Overtime Issues.

## Annual Evacuation Drills

CFIS verified that IRJCF are conducting quarterly fire drills on all shifts, in compliance with DYS’s policy and procedure (110-SAF-06), Facility Fire Safety.

## Staff Roll Call / Briefing Area

The Roll Call area was clean and orderly. There was pertinent information posted to inform the staff of the daily events, identifiers for various situations, and how to properly conduct searches.

## Special Events/Family Engagement Events

In January 2026 IRJCF held at least four special events and four volunteer events. Events were conducted in compliance with DYS policy 101-COM-05, Tour and Special Events Guidelines.

## CONCLUSION

During the unannounced inspection of IRJCF, facility staff interacted professionally with CFIS inspectors. Programmatically, the facility appeared to emphasize promoting prosocial behavior among the youths and offered services designed to prepare them for reentry into society. During the inspection, staff and leadership appeared to have positive interactions with the youths.

As set forth in this report, deficiencies were noted. CFIS noted the following, which will be checked during re-inspection:

- Compliance with kitchen tool storage requirements;
- Cooler cleanliness and food storage;
- Cooler maintenance (dripping pipe);
- Maintenance of PREA signage;
- General cleanliness/presence of trash in halls.

Operationally, IRJCF's failure to physically conduct ADO rounds will be monitored. Leaving aside the fact that DYS's own policy requires such rounds, physically walking a correctional facility allows staff make observations and prevent or correct problems that might not be apparent in a video review. Further, conducting rounds allows staff to engage with one another and with the youths in a way that video monitoring cannot. These interactions can be vital to the efficient and safe operation of a correctional facility.

Upon review of IRJCF's ADO reports it was immediately apparent that rounds were not being physically conducted and the ADO reports were not complete. Given that the ADO reports are reviewed and signed off on by the facility superintendent's office those facts should also be immediately apparent to IRJCF leadership. It is not clear why incomplete reports would have been signed off by a supervisor. It is also not clear to CFIS that IRJCF or DYS leadership was aware of the issue before CFIS identified it. If the ADO reports were being reviewed for their intended purpose (to verify that rounds were being done and no issues exist), the deficiencies should have been noted. When CFIS raised the issue during its March 2, 2026 re-inspection DYS central office staff stated that it will re-train staff on the ADO process and reports. CFIS will follow up to confirm that the training has occurred and will continue to monitor the ADO reports.

Finally, DYS leadership acknowledged the challenges posed by current staffing vacancies and is actively recruiting qualified candidates to fill open positions. At the same time, they are updating protocols and processes to enhance safety for both staff and youth. Based on CFIS's observations and experience, the restroom call procedure is an area where additional staffing and protocols could be implemented to relieve the burden on youth and staff.

CFIS will continue to monitor these areas of concern.



**DAVE YOST**

OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

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**REPORT ON THE  
INSPECTION OF  
INDIAN RIVER  
JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL  
INSTITUTION**

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