



MYRTLE BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

Subject: Family Services Unit

Number: 265-B

Effective Date: July 20, 1011

Revised Date: December 13, 2023

Rescinds: 265 Juvenile Unit
265-A – Family Services Unit

Dated: 07-20-11
07-14-15

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Approved By:

I. PURPOSE

- A. To establish a Family Services Unit within the Myrtle Beach Police Department. The Family Services Unit will consist of officers who are trained and experienced in the investigation of criminal matters which are committed by and against juveniles and conduct follow up investigations on all Domestic Violence incidents. The Family Services Unit will support Patrol and Investigations and work closely with the School Resource Officers and the Gang Unit.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Family Services Unit - Full-time, sworn, law enforcement officers of the Myrtle Beach Police Department, as appointed by the Chief of Police, who are trained and experienced in the investigation of criminal matters which are committed by and against juveniles. The Family Services Unit will also conduct follow up investigations on all Domestic Violence incidents reported.
- B. Juvenile Officer – Juvenile Officers will perform a variety of tasks including, but not limited to, investigating crimes involving juvenile offenders and juvenile victims to further assist patrol officers and investigators with follow-up investigations.
- C. Domestic Violence Officer – The Domestic Violence Officer will be responsible for tasks including but not limited to conducting follow up investigations on all domestic violence incidents. The Domestic Violence Officer will assist the other Juvenile Officers as well as patrol officers and the Investigations Division.

- D. School Resource Officer (SRO) – Full-time, sworn, law enforcement officers who are assigned to particular schools throughout the city of Myrtle Beach. SROs are the primary officer(s) who investigate criminal activity occurring at their assigned school. They work closely with the school administrators to ensure a safe, secure learning atmosphere.
- E. Missing Persons Officer – Missing Persons Officers will perform a variety of tasks including, but not limited to, investigating cases involving missing persons and runaways to further assist patrol officers and investigators with follow-up investigations.
- F. Juvenile – A person under age the age of 18 (exception: a 16 or 17 year old charged with A - D felony/crime carrying a sentence of 15 years or more).

III. GENERAL

- A. Cases involving juveniles will be forwarded to the Family Services Unit Supervisor for review and/or follow-up investigations.
- B. Juvenile cases will be screened and assigned to a juvenile officer by the Family Services Unit Supervisor as necessary.
- C. The Family Services Unit Supervisor will forward juvenile offender/victim information to the appropriate SRO as determined based on the corresponding Myrtle Beach High School said offender/victim attends.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. Family Services Unit Supervisors will:
 - 1. Review and assign juvenile and domestic violence referral cases needing additional follow-up investigation to a juvenile and/or domestic violence officer, as applicable.
 - a. Personnel utilized to conduct interviews of juvenile victims or witnesses of abuse, neglect, or molestation shall have specialized training in interviewing children.
 - b. The Department may seek the assistance with interviews from the Child Recovery Center or a similar organization with personnel trained in interviewing children.

2. Assist with ongoing juvenile and domestic violence investigations as needed.
3. Notify one of the three authorized department personnel (Chief of Police, Uniform Patrol Division Captain and the Street Crimes Lieutenant) to activate the Missing Child Alert System during duty hours. During non-duty hours, notifications will follow protocols of Procedure #704.
4. Follow up with Amber Alerts as related to Procedure #704 (South Carolina Missing Child Alert System- Amber Alert) during duty hours. During non-duty hours, notifications will follow protocols of Procedure #704.

B. The Juvenile Officer will:

1. Investigate juvenile offender/victim cases as directed by the Family Services Unit Supervisor.
 - a. Assist in all types of investigations where the offender is identified as being under the age of 18 (17 years and below).
 - b. Assist with intervention where applicable.
 - c. Conduct interviews and interrogations of youthful offenders under the age of 18 who are accused of a crime.
 - d. Offer support to patrol and investigations division to assist in interviews with juvenile victims where additional rapport or expertise is needed.
 - e. Identify and investigate child neglect cases as they are referred.
 - f. Identify and Investigate child abuse cases as they are reported. (Exception: CSC w/minor due to the complexity and enormity of those types of investigations).
 - g. CSC w/Minor cases will be forwarded and investigated by the Criminal Investigations Division.

- h. Focus on enforcement of juvenile curfew laws.
- i. Assist the Investigations Division as additional support on juvenile related investigations.
- j. Juvenile Officers will work closely with the School Resource Officers.
 - 1) Will assist SRO with more complex investigations.
 - 2) SRO's will assist juvenile officers with information that will be beneficial to their open cases.
- k. Develop and maintain collaboration between School Resource Officers, Gang Officers, Juvenile Officers and Domestic Violence Officers to better facilitate communication of juvenile offender/victim activities to include gang affiliation and criminal activity as well as juvenile offender/victim status updates.
- l. The Family Services Unit will also be responsible for delinquency reduction and related education.

C. The Domestic Violence Officer will:

- 1. Gather all domestic violence reports, criminal histories and other related paperwork from the designated Domestic Violence box at the Main Police Department outside of dispatch.
- 2. Review all paperwork and make a decision if charges need to be upgraded.
- 3. Attend morning and afternoon bond hearings.
- 4. Further investigate all domestic violence incidents that are assigned by the Family Services Unit Supervisor.
- 5. Follow up with the victim within 48-72 hours of incident.
- 6. Keep a Domestic Violence offender spreadsheet up to date.

7. Maintain the domestic violence victim and offender's name record within RMS.
8. Offer additional support to the Investigations Division when needed.
9. Assist the Juvenile Officer(s).
10. The Domestic Violence Officer will work closely with the School Resource Officers to ensure the children of domestic violence victims and offenders are being provided any services they are entitled to. The officers will make the children are mentally, physically and emotionally handling the situation.
11. Provide Domestic Violence Training on state law, department policy and regulation, protocols and best practices.

D. The School Resource Officers will:

1. Conduct initial investigation, prosecution and follow up of incident reports generated on or near school property.
2. Counseling/referral to appropriate services (Victim's Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, etc.).
3. Coordination of their assigned school's special events which require a law enforcement presence (i.e. sporting events, school board disciplinary hearings, pageants, etc).
4. Coordinate/conduct traffic control on and around school property.
5. When school is not in session, the Chief of Police, or designee, will allocate the SRO resources in a manner that is in the best interest of the Police Department and the community as a whole.
6. Act as an available resource to prevent drug and alcohol abuse as well as other delinquency.

7. Create and present grade-appropriate classroom lectures explaining the roles of law enforcement in society.
8. All School Resource Officers are responsible for researching and understanding current South Carolina law(s) related to all aspects of the juvenile justice system. SROs are to stay abreast of changes in existing law and work with the training officer in order to ensure that the changes are communicated to the department as a whole.

E. The Missing Persons Officer will:

1. Investigate all missing persons to include juvenile runaways to the point of recovery or the discovery of foul play. (When foul play is determined, the investigation will be referred to the Investigations Division).
2. Conduct interviews/debriefings with child runaways to ascertain their reason for running away to assist with intervention to determine locations that the runaway went and stayed.
3. Track repeat offenders and work with various other units, agencies, and departments to bring the many cases to a close.
4. Offer additional support to the Investigations Division when needed.
5. Work closely with the Juvenile Officers and School Resource Officers when the case involves a juvenile/student.