



Sheridan Police Department
Policies and Procedures
20.10 Replaces 403.1
Chapter 20 – Investigations
Section 10 – Juveniles

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Signature:

When addressing issues with juveniles, the police officer must know proper procedures and alternatives for handling juveniles who are in need of protection, in violation of status offenses and those charged with criminal offenses. The Sheridan Police Department is committed to reducing juvenile crime and providing a positive influence through police interactions with juveniles.

20.10.1 Child Protection

- A. The Sheridan Police Department will work with the Wyoming Department of Family Services (DFS) in cases requiring child protection including:
 - 1. Physical abuse;
 - 2. Sexual abuse;
 - 3. Neglect, including caregivers under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, abandonment, mental illness, or other circumstances that result in the caregivers inability to care for the child;
 - 4. Drug endangered children; and
 - 5. Significant instances of domestic violence where a child witnesses physical violence or instances of repeated domestic violence.
- B. Officers shall contact DFS as follows:
 - 1. During business hours officers shall contact DFS by phone and speak to the person assigned to field intake reports.
 - 2. After hours the officer shall contact the on-call social worker for immediate notification cases (physical and sexual abuse cases where the perpetrator has access to children, a child was or is likely to be taken into protective custody, or there are other immediate safety concerns).
- C. Investigation should be conducted as soon as possible to determine if an emergency exists. Emergencies include any case where the child is in imminent danger, where a perpetrator has access to a child or where there is concern about loss of evidence.
- D. If no emergency exists, forensic interviews of the victim should be scheduled to allow for the availability of a room created for the purpose of child forensic interviews and a trained forensic interviewer.
- E. Wyoming Statute 14-3-405 provides authority for law enforcement officers to take a child into custody without a warrant if there are reasonable grounds to believe the child is endangered by his or her surroundings and immediate custody appears to be necessary for his or her protection. Officers contacted by DFS or other complainants must make independent decisions on whether the facts of the case rise to the reasonable grounds standard required by the statute.

20.10.2 Runaways

- A. Any juvenile less than eighteen (18) years of age whom purposefully leaves home to escape parental custody and/or guidance is considered a runaway.
- B. Upon determining that a juvenile has run away from his or her home and there is concern among family members for the welfare of the child, the officer will:
 - 1. Complete a report;
 - 2. Transmit a description and issue a pickup order on the juvenile;
 - 3. Obtain the signature of the reporting parent or guardian agreeing to arrange the return of the child if located outside Sheridan; and
 - 4. Arrange entry into NCIC.
- C. If the family has reason to believe that they know the location of the child, the officer will lend assistance to make certain that the child is returned to his or her home.
- D. The runaway's parents should be advised of the various social agencies available to assist them. (e.g. - National Runaway Crisis Hotline <http://www.1800runaway.org>)
- E. When an officer locates a juvenile and probable cause exists that the juvenile has run away from home, the officer shall take the child into custody and arrange for his or her return to a parent or contact the county attorney for placement.

20.10.3 Youth Group Home

- A. If an officer receives a call from a parent for a situation where no crime has been committed but the child habitually disobeys reasonable and lawful demands of the parents and is ungovernable and beyond control, the parent should be informed of the Volunteers Of America Group Home which offers intervention services for youth ages ten (10) to seventeen (17).
- B. Officers may transport juveniles to the group home in Sheridan upon the parent's request after the parent has made arrangements with the crisis shelter for the care and custody of the juvenile.
- C. The VOA Group Home is a residential care facility for juveniles who are in crisis or require court ordered treatment. The group home can provide an alternate place of detention for status and non-offenders.
- D. Officers will respond to any requests for assistance by the group home staff and investigate any crimes which may have occurred.
- E. Wyoming Statute 14-6-205 provides that a child may be taken into custody by a law enforcement officer without a warrant or court order when the child's conduct or behavior seriously endangers himself or the person or property of others and immediate custody appears necessary.

20.10.4 Enforcement

- A. The police officer may handle a juvenile either informally or formally. Informal handling is when the police officer manages a particular situation by releasing the juvenile under warning to a parent or guardian. This requires either the parent picking up the child or the officer transporting the child home and informing a parent of the alleged offense. Formal handling occurs when the juvenile is cited or arrested. Informal solutions do not negate the need for the incident to be documented in an incident report.

- B. Officers should use the least intrusive among reasonable alternatives when dealing with juvenile offenders. Appropriate dispositions for juvenile matters include:
 - 1. Counseled and released;
 - 2. Released on citation; or
 - 3. Arrested.
- C. Factors to consider when determining disposition of a juvenile include:
 - 1. Safety of the public;
 - 2. Safety of the juvenile;
 - 3. Best interest of the juvenile and the community;
 - 4. Seriousness of the offense; and
 - 5. Juvenile's prior criminal history.
- D. Juveniles shall be issued citations for traffic violations in the same manner as those issued to adults. Citing officers shall notify the juvenile's parent(s) or legal custodian(s).
- E. Juveniles shall be searched under the same legal guidelines set forth for adults.
- F. Authority to arrest and arrest procedures are in section 10.1.
- G. Juvenile arrestees shall not be transported in the same vehicle as adult prisoners.
- H. Wyoming Statute 14-6-240 prohibits fingerprinting or photographing of a child except when:
 - 1. The child has been arrested for a felony;
 - 2. A petition has been filed in juvenile court alleging the child committed a delinquent act which would constitute a felony. If the matter does not result in adjudication that the child was a delinquent for having committed an act constituting a felony, the department shall destroy those records and shall report the destruction of the records to the court; or
 - 3. Latent fingerprints are found during the investigation of a criminal offense and a peace officer obtains consent of the parent, guardian or custodian of the juvenile, or obtains a court order based upon probable cause to believe the fingerprints are those of the child.

20.10.5 Affidavits Containing Minor's Identity Information

Court rules require redaction of certain information submitted to the court. Therefore the following procedures shall be followed when preparing an affidavit of probable cause:

- A. In cases where a minor is the suspect:
 - 1. An affidavit with all pertinent information shall be completed.
 - 2. A redacted copy shall be prepared with the date of birth and social security number removed.
 - a. If the social security number must be used, only the last four digits may be used.
 - b. If the individual's date of birth must be included, only the year of birth may be used.
- B. In cases where the minor is involved in a case in any capacity except as a suspect and is included in an affidavit, the original affidavit may contain only the person's initials. No birth date, social security number or other identifiers may be used.