

3-01/050.87 - Guidelines Governing Youth Group Programs

The Department's ability to effectively manage youth group programs (i.e. Explorer Posts, Youth Athletic Leagues, Vital Intervention and Directional Alternatives, etc.) is dependent upon the strong level of trust developed between participating members, Department members, parents, and the community. Department members and Department volunteers shall be aware of their responsibility to effectively manage youth group programs while maintaining the highest level of professionalism and integrity.

Personal relationships can develop between Department members and program participants during the teaching/mentoring component of any youth program. Department members shall ensure any relationship developed with a juvenile program participant is professional and in furtherance of the program's stated goals and objectives.

Inappropriate relationships between youth group members and Department employees and/or Department volunteers are disruptive to the program, reflect poorly on the Department, and expose the Department and its members to civil and/or criminal liability. In order to protect the integrity of the programs, Department members and adult volunteers shall be aware of their role as mentors and teachers and avoid conduct that may be construed as inappropriate. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Relationships of a dating, intimate, or sexual nature between Department members or program volunteers and program participants;
- Inappropriate touching;
- Inappropriate comments or conversations;
- The presence of inappropriate materials;
- Inappropriate or unprofessional conduct;
- Sexual harassment;
- Hazing or retaliation;
- Gender or ethnic bias; or
- Any other inappropriate or discriminatory behavior.

Any Department program with a female participant shall include a female member of the Department or female Department volunteer to serve as either an advisor or assistant advisor.

RIDE-ALONGS

Patrol ride-alongs by program participants are encouraged and permitted only with the express permission of the program advisor and the concurrence of the unit commander. Deputy explorers may ride in a one-person patrol car with the prior approval of their post advisor and the concurrence of the unit commander. In any event, ride-alongs shall be restricted to the hours between 0600 and 2400. Program participants may enroll in no more than four (4) ride-alongs per calendar month and may not ride with the same deputy more than two (2) times in any one calendar month.

OFF-DUTY CONTACTS

Residential visits, or any other planned, non-program, on or off duty, personal contact between a Department member/Department volunteer and a program participant, shall be prohibited.

In the event a deputy explorer or other program participant appears unannounced at the home of a Department member requiring immediate assistance, the Department member will take reasonable steps to stabilize the situation and assist the program participant. Upon contact with a program participant as defined above, the Department member will make immediate telephonic notification to their watch commander followed by a detailed memorandum to the unit commander submitted the next business day. The memorandum shall include the nature of the visit, duration, and parties involved.

If a program participant desires to contact a Department member after normal business hours, the participant shall contact the member via established protocols (cellular telephone, home telephone number, pager, etc.). Any subsequent personal contact shall be held at the member's permanent unit of assignment.

Prior to the contact, the Department member shall advise the watch commander of the location of the meeting, nature of the meeting, and expected duration. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Department member shall inform the watch commander the meeting has concluded and both parties have left the facility. The watch commander shall record any such meeting in the watch commander's log.

FIELD TRIPS/SOCIAL EVENTS

Any Department member planning or participating in any off-site social youth group event (including but not limited to athletic events, barbeques, campouts, overnight events, etc.) shall advise their unit commander of their participation prior to the event. Such events shall only take place with the concurrence of the unit commander.

Department members/Department volunteers shall not share accommodations with program participants of the opposite sex during any overnight event. Separate accommodations shall be provided for male and female participants.

In the event a female program participant is present on any overnight event, a female advisor shall be present for the duration of the event.

Immediately following the conclusion of the event, the advisor shall prepare a detailed memorandum addressed to their unit commander describing the event, the program participants in attendance, and any circumstances which should be brought to the attention of the Department.

POLICY OF EQUALITY

All program participants and Department members/Department volunteers whose primary responsibility is the administration of youth group programs shall be briefed on the Department's Policy of Equality (3-01/121.00) no less than once per year. Documentation of such briefing shall be placed in the member's unit personnel file.

INDIVIDUAL UNIT ORDERS

Nothing in this policy shall preclude an individual unit commander from establishing more restrictive regulations to better serve the needs of their facility.
