5-02/000.00 - Juvenile Policy

Deputy personnel shall report any matter coming to their attention in which a juvenile is delinquent or the victim of neglect or an offense.

When handling juvenile cases, deputy personnel shall remember that the protection of society, the prevention of delinquent conduct, and the welfare of the juvenile are the goals to be achieved. Therefore, all feasible steps shall be taken to properly adjust or refer juvenile cases to the proper social agency by utilizing the Department's Youth Diversion Program (see section 5-02/180.00, Youth Diversion Program) before court action is taken.

The purpose of the Youth Diversion Program is to prevent those juveniles from engaging in further delinquent behavior by providing them with community-based preventative and rehabilitation services. The Youth Diversion Program should be considered before the youth is formally detained or arrested. Diversion should be given foremost consideration in dealing with all offenders except where the offender is not eligible for diversion at the time pursuant to 625.3 Welfare and Institution Code (WIC) (707(b) WIC offenses).

Juveniles alleged to be delinquent shall be referred to as subjects and, in dependency matters, as victims. It is of utmost importance that attitude, demeanor, and speech toward juveniles be civil and respectful but at the same time firm.

Deputy personnel shall advise and assist other agencies engaged in programs involving juveniles. However, such participation shall not extend beyond the point at which it might hamper the Department's effectiveness as a law enforcement agency.