|  |
| --- |
| **SUBJECT:** Handle With Care  |
| **Issue Date:**  | **Effective Date:**  | **Review Date:** |
| **Amends/Rescinds GO:**  | **Distribution:** All Personnel **TCA:****CALEA:****TLEA**: N/A |
| **Per Order of:****Name of Police Chief/Sheriff/CEO** |
| *This General Order is for departmental use only and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceeding. This General Order should not be construed as creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims. Violations of this General Order will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting.* |

# Purpose

To establish guidelines for reporting a traumatic encounter, where a child is present to the appropriate school district in a timely manner. This will allow a child's school to implement appropriate procedures to handle the child with care (HWC), and to ensure a consistent notification procedure between the XYZ Law Enforcement Agency and the XYZ School System.

# Overview

Prolonged exposure to violence and trauma can seriously undermine the ability of children to focus, behave appropriately, and learn. It often leads to failure in the classroom, truancy, suspension or expulsion, dropping out, or involvement in the juvenile justice system.

# Description

1. HWC programs promote safe and supportive homes, schools, and communities that *protect* children and help traumatized children *heal* and *thrive*. HWC promotes school-community partnerships aimed at ensuring that children who are exposed to trauma in their home, school, or community receive appropriate interventions to help them achieve academically at their highest levels despite whatever traumatic circumstances they may have endured. The ultimate goal of HWC is to help students to succeed in school. Regardless of the source of trauma, the common thread for effective intervention is the school or childcare agency. Research now shows that trauma can undermine the ability of children to learn, form relationships, and function appropriately in the classroom. HWC programs support children exposed to trauma and violence through improved communication and collaboration between law enforcement, schools/childcare agencies, and mental health providers while connecting families, schools, and communities to mental health services. A child is defined as the following: a minor seventeen years of age or younger who resides with a parent or legal guardian and attends XYZ School System.
2. Exposed to Trauma:
	* 1. For the purpose of this program, the phrase "exposed to trauma" shall be construed broadly and by way of example and not by way of limitation, shall mean and include any event where a child is a victim or witness, experiences or is involved in, or is questioned relative to, but not limited to, any of the following: the abuse of a family member, loved one, or pet; abuse or neglect; child custody, visitation or support or other domestic relations controversy where there is law enforcement intervention; community violence; the commission of a crime; loss of a family member or friend; an overdose; the arrest of a family member; racism or any other form of discrimination; homelessness; mental illness and /or substance abuse by a parent or caregiver; hospitalization or family illness; incarceration of a parent or family member; sudden, unexpected or frequent changes in caregiver, school, program or home life; natural disasters; or similar acts or experiences.
		2. Should a law enforcement officer be uncertain as to whether or not to give notice to the school/school system, judgement should be exercised in favor of the notification .

**III. Procedure**

When an officer encounters a child who has experienced trauma (e.g., domestic violence, drug raid, witnessed a violent crime, etc.), the officer will obtain the child’s name, date of birth, and school they attend. This information will be documented in any related reports. The officer will inform his/her supervisor of the possibility of a HWC situation (delineate your agency’s process). Notification is to be issued immediately so the school can implement procedures to provide assistance the following school day. Notifications will contain no specific information about the incident in order to maintain privacy of the student and their family.

The notification is labeled “**Handle With Care**” **and it should include but not exceed the following information: School/School System, Reporting Law Enforcement Agency, Notification date & time, Incident Date, Student/Child’s name, date of birth (optional), grade, age, and school the child attends. *There should be no other information or details shared or disseminated.***

Yellow Highlight indicates AGENCY SPECIFIC