

	<p style="text-align: center;">BRIDGEPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">POLICY AND PROCEDURE GENERAL ORDER</p>	Distribution	General Order Number
		ALL PERSONNEL	6.10
		Original Issue Date	Reissue/Effective Date
		11/19/19	1/31/20
Order Title: CHILD ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS		Accreditation Standard: POSTC: 1.4.1 (d)	Section
		6	
		Section Title INVESTIGATIVE FUNCTIONS	
Rescinds:		Armando J. Perez, Chief of Police	

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

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish uniform and appropriate response protocols for officers of the Bridgeport Police when responding to, investigating, or otherwise dealing with incidents involving child abuse and neglect.

II. POLICY

When a Bridgeport Police Department officer responds to a call alleging that a child or adult-dependent has been subjected to sexual or physical abuse and has probable cause to believe that a crime has been committed, or responds to a call alleging that a temporary restraining order or preliminary injunction has been violated, the officer has the authority to arrest the person without a warrant.

III. DEFINITIONS

Child Abuse: Connecticut General Statutes §46b-120, defines an abused child as a child or youth less than eighteen (18) years of age who: (a) has been inflicted with physical injury or injuries other than by accidental means, (b) has injuries that are at variance with the history given of them, or (c) is in a condition that is the result of maltreatment, including, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual molestation or exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

IV. PROCEDURE

A. Child and Adult-Dependent Suspect Physical Abuse Requirements

1. If an officer suspects the possibility that a child or adult-dependent is the object of physical abuse, the officer is responsible for obtaining and forwarding the following information:
 - a. Verify the address of the parents/legal guardians and the victim.
 - b. Notify the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the shift supervisor of: (1) address of parent/legal guardians and victim; (2) nature, location, and extent of injuries; (3) nature and extent of neglect and/or sexual abuse; and (d) any evidence the officer may have observed. Under C.G.S. § 17a-101(b), Officers are mandated reporters.
 - c. Ensure the parents or legal guardians are advised of the investigation.

B. Investigation of Child Abuse

1. If DCF or a law enforcement agency responds to a complaint of child abuse or neglect and discovers that another agency has also responded to the complaint, the agencies shall coordinate the investigation and keep each other apprised of the progress.
2. DCF, and any other agency involved in a child abuse case, shall make, as soon as practicable, a written record, and shall maintain records of all incidents of suspected child abuse reported to that person or agency.
3. Records kept under this section shall be identifiable by means of an agency code for child abuse. Therefore, records of all abuse cases involving children and adult-dependent persons shall be maintained by the department. Upon the receipt of a report concerning the possible occurrence of abuse or neglect, it shall be the duty of the law enforcement agency to investigate and provide DCF with a report.
4. When an officer responds to a call alleging that a child or adult-dependent has been subjected to sexual or physical abuse and has probable cause to believe that a crime has been committed, or responds to a call alleging that a temporary restraining order or preliminary injunction has been violated, the officer has the authority to arrest the person without a warrant.
5. An officer may take, or cause to be taken, a child or adult-dependent into protective custody without a court order if there is probable cause to believe

that the child or adult-dependent is abused or neglected and that the victim will be further subjected to injury if the officer does not immediately remove the victim.

6. When the investigation involves a suspected offender who was acting in his official capacity as an employee of a school district, the investigating officer shall notify the Board of Education or the school district. Also, the investigating officer must coordinate the investigation of the abuse or neglect with any investigation being conducted by the Department of Education or the school district.

C. Interviewing Victims of Abuse

1. It is imperative that victims of abuse be interviewed in an open, honest setting. The child must feel safe and comfortable enough to speak freely, or he/she will not respond. Therefore, identifying a suitable interview site is the most critical aspect of the interviewing process. Depending on the nature of the investigation, the interviewing officer can contact the child at his/her school, home, or other appropriate location.
2. The interviewing officer should allow the child to describe the incident in his/her own words and then follow up with non-leading questions. The officer should utilize the drawings to have the child illustrate the places where the child was touched or injured.
3. Child abuse injuries require medical attention and formal documentation of evidence. This process enables the uniform collection of evidence and the subsequent testimony of the attending physician.
4. In an effort to collect evidence, protect the welfare of the victim, and to expedite the investigation, the investigating officer shall notify the appropriate medical facility when they are transporting a child abuse victim to the medical facility.
5. Photographs shall be taken to illustrate the injuries received and to be used as evidence in court.
6. Other siblings in the family should be interviewed to determine the extent of the problem.

D. Documentation of the Investigation

1. In all instances when an officer is dispatched to a child abuse, child neglect, sexual assault on a child, assist to Social Services, or other offenses against children, the officer shall complete a written report of the incident which includes observations, officer involvement, and disposition of the case.

2. When investigating a reported child abuse/neglect case, a police report shall be completed whether the abuse/neglect is founded, unfounded, or reclassified.
3. Officers may reclassify reported child abuse or child neglect only with permission of a supervisor, and only then when there is no articulable justification for the original report to have been classified as a child abuse.
4. Officers responding to a report of alleged offenses involving domestic violence or domestic disturbance shall document the identities of all the children and any information they have concerning the allegation, i.e. what they observed or may have been subjected to.
5. Upon completion of the police investigation, the Records Division or the investigating officer shall forward a copy of the offense report to DCF.