

MESA POLICE Department Policy Manual	Sex Crimes - Juveniles	DPM 3.5.25 Effective 02/04/2013 Revised 06/07/2019
Approved by: Chief of Police	Chapter: Juvenile Operations	Page: 1 of 3

1. PURPOSE [ALEAP 18.1]

This policy provides Mesa Police Department (MPD) members guidelines for investigating sexual offenses involving juveniles.

2. SEX CRIMES UNIT NOTIFICATION BY PATROL

Patrol officers responding to crimes of sexual abuse involving a juvenile shall follow the protocol as outlined by the Maricopa County Attorney's Office (MCAO) Interagency Council.

A. Child Sexual Abuse

1. Contact a Special Victims Unit (SVU) sergeant, day or night, if the incident occurred within the past 120 hours or if the suspect and victim live together.
2. These factors will determine if a SVU detective(s) will respond and/or if a forensic medical exam is needed.
3. Communications will have the name and cell telephone number for the SVU sergeant.
4. If a medical exam is not required and a detective does not respond, complete the initial report in the Records Management System (RMS) and forward a link to the SVU sergeant. Follow-up by a SVU detective will occur at a later time.
5. **Do not place sex crime reports on hold.**

3. INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES

The intent is to obtain the minimum information needed for probable cause while minimizing the trauma to the victim.

3.1 Victims Under 18 Years of Age

- A. Establish the elements of the crime and jurisdiction.
- B. Interview the reporting party (RP) away from the victim to:
 1. Establish facts of reported crime.
 2. Determine if the child is in imminent danger (i.e., "in home" case).
 3. Determine if medical attention is necessary.
- C. Patrol Officers **shall not**:
 1. Interview a victim under 18 years of age without approval from a SVU supervisor.

MESA POLICE Department Policy Manual	Sex Crimes - Juveniles	DPM 3.5.25 Effective 02/04/2013 Revised 06/07/2019
Approved by: Chief of Police	Chapter: Juvenile Operations	Page: 2 of 3

2. Make the suspect aware of the investigation without consulting with a SVU supervisor or the assigned SVU detective.
3. Interview the suspect unless the suspect is present and aware of investigation (i.e., spontaneous statements).
- D. Contact a SVU sergeant during business hours or the on-call SVU sergeant after hours.
- E. Contact Department of Child Safety (DCS) and make a referral.
- F. Forward an RMS link of the initial report to the SVU sergeant.

3.2 Medical Examinations of Molestation Victims

- A. If the molestation has resulted in acute injury (e.g., tears, bleeding, lacerations, bruises, etc.), have a medical exam completed as soon as possible at the Mesa Family Advocacy Center (MFAC).
- B. If the molestation did not result in acute trauma or the molestation has occurred over 120 hours prior to the report, then the assigned SVU sergeant or SVU detective will determine the need for and scheduling of a medical examination.
- C. All sexual assault kits collected during a forensic medical exam shall be processed for DNA evidence unless otherwise specified by a SVU supervisor and/or Forensic Services Biology Unit supervisor.

3.3 Sexual Conduct With A Minor

- A. If the sexual conduct is consensual and both consenting parties are age 14 - 17, then sex between these individuals is not required to be reported under [ARS 13-3620](#).
- B. The conduct of these parties still meets the requirements of [ARS 13-1405](#).
- C. Each case requires evaluation and investigation.
- D. Take initial reports if the RP requests a report be made.
- E. These cases are assigned and evaluated on a priority basis.
- F. Advise the RP to wait for ten days before calling the MFAC for information about their case

3.4 Interviewing of Child Victims

- A. During the forensic interview, the SVU detective should conduct the interview with the following in mind:
 1. Converse on the child's level.
 2. Conduct the interview in a non-threatening environment.
 3. Ask qualifying questions of very young children, such as their name, their address/ favorite color(s).
 4. Never ask a child why he allowed the incident to occur.
 5. Keep in mind that children often blame themselves regardless of their age. Reassure them that they did nothing wrong.

MESA POLICE Department Policy Manual	Sex Crimes - Juveniles	DPM 3.5.25 Effective 02/04/2013 Revised 06/07/2019
Approved by: Chief of Police	Chapter: Juvenile Operations	Page: 3 of 3

6. Do not ask leading questions.
7. Establish the approximate date(s) of occurrence by having the victim relate the incident date(s) to birthdays, grade in school, teacher at the time, etc.

REFERENCES

- [ARS 13-1405](#)
- [ARS 13-3620](#)