



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

January 19, 2016

Ms. Michelle Buendia
Assistant City Attorney
City of Dallas
Criminal Law and Police Section
1400 South Lamar Street
Dallas, Texas 75215

OR2016-01329

Dear Ms. Buendia:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 600521 (ORR# 2015-19877).

The Dallas Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified address. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code.¹ We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses information protected by other statutes. Juvenile law enforcement records relating to delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision that occurred on or after September 1, 1997, are confidential under section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. *See* Fam. Code § 51.03(a), (b) (defining "delinquent conduct" and "conduct indicating a need for supervision"). Section 58.007 provides in relevant part:

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), law enforcement records and files concerning a child and information stored, by electronic

¹We note, and you acknowledge, the department did not comply with section 552.301 of the Government Code in requesting this decision. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b), (e). Nonetheless, because section 552.101 of the Government Code can provide a compelling reason to overcome the presumption of openness, we will consider the applicability of this section to the submitted information. *See id.* §§ 552.007, .302, .352.

means or otherwise, concerning the child from which a record or file could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

- (1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult files and records;
- (2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as records or files relating to adults, be accessible under controls that are separate and distinct from controls to access electronic data concerning adults; and
- (3) maintained on a local basis only and not sent to a central state or federal depository, except as provided by Subchapters B, D, and E.

Id. § 58.007(c). For purposes of section 58.007(c), a “child” is a person ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the reported conduct. *See id.* § 51.02(2). Upon review, we agree case numbers 288115-2014 and 250278-2015 involve children engaged in delinquent conduct that occurred after September 1, 1997. It does not appear any of the exceptions to confidentiality under section 58.007 apply in this instance. Therefore, we find case numbers 288115-2014 and 250278-2015 are confidential under section 58.007(c) of the Family Code and must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision.” Gov’t Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses section 261.201(a) of the Family Code, which provides, in relevant part:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under [the Act], and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with this code and applicable federal or state law or under rules adopted by an investigating agency:

- (1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under this chapter and the identity of the person making the report; and
- (2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, audiotapes, videotapes, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

Fam. Code § 261.201(a). Upon review, we find case numbers 007998-2015 and 248049 2015 were used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect. *See id.* § 261.001(1), (4) (defining “abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of Family

Code chapter 261); *see also id.* § 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of this section as person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had disabilities of minority removed for general purposes). Accordingly, we find this information falls within the scope of section 261.201(a) of the Family Code. You have not indicated the department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information; therefore, we assume no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, we conclude the department must withhold case numbers 007998-2015 and 248049-2015 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (addressing predecessor statute).

In summary, the department must withhold case numbers case numbers 288115-2014 and 250278-2015 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code and case numbers 007998-2015 and 248049-2015 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201(a) of the Family Code.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml, or call the Office of the Attorney General’s Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Jesse Harvey
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JH/eb

Ref: ID# 600521

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)