



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

May 5, 2020

Ms. Janese Dudash  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Fort Worth  
200 Texas Street, 3rd Floor  
Fort Worth, Texas 76102-6311

OR2020-12678

Dear Ms. Dudash:

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# 826034 (ORR# W098079).

The Fort Worth Police Department (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to seven named individuals and specified addresses. The department states it has released some of the requested information, but claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exception 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 section 58.008(b) of the Family Code, which provides as follows:

Except as provided by Subsection (c), law enforcement records concerning a child and information concerning a child that are stored by electronic means or otherwise and from which a record could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

- (1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult records;

(2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as adult records, accessible only under controls that are separate and distinct from the 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 Subsection (c) or Subchapter B, D, or E.

Fam. Code § 58.008(b); *see also* Fam. Code § 51.03(a)-(b) (defining “delinquent conduct” and “conduct indicating a need for supervision” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). Section 58.008(b) is applicable to records of juvenile conduct that occurred before, on, or after September 1, 2017. *See* Act of May 28, 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., ch. 746, § 22. The juvenile must have been at least ten years old and less than seventeen years of age when the conduct occurred. *See* Fam. Code § 51.02(2) (defining “child” for purposes of title 3 of Family Code). We find incident report number 190073436 involves a juvenile offender, so as to fall within the scope of section 58.008(b). The exceptions in section 58.008 do not appear to apply. Therefore, the department must generally withhold this report under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code.

However, the requestor is with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (“DFPS”). Section 411.114(a) of the Government Code states, in pertinent part, the following:

(2) [DFPS] shall obtain from the [Department of Public Safety (“DPS”)] criminal history record information [“CHRI”] maintained by [DPS] that relates to a person who is:

...

(I) an alleged perpetrator in a report [DFPS] receives alleging that the person has abused, neglected, or exploited a child, an elderly person, or a person with a disability, provided that:

(i) the report alleges the person has engaged in conduct that meets the applicable definition of abuse, neglect, or exploitation under Chapter 261, Family Code, or Chapter 48, Human Resources Code; and

(ii) the person is not also the victim of the alleged conduct[.]

...

(4) Subject to Section 411.087, [DFPS] is entitled to:

...

(B) obtain from any other criminal justice agency in this state [CHRI] maintained by that criminal justice agency that relates to a person described by Subdivision (2) or (3).

Gov't Code § 411.114(a)(2)(I), (4)(B). For purposes of section 411.114, CHRI consists of "information collected about a person by a criminal justice agency that consists of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, detentions, indictments, informations, and other formal criminal charges and their dispositions." *See id.* § 411.082(2). Accordingly, these provisions may grant the DFPS investigator a right of access to CHRI in the information at issue. The requestor does not specifically state whether the juvenile offender at issue in incident report number 190073436 is an alleged perpetrator in a report received by DFPS of abuse or neglect of a child. Thus, we must rule conditionally. If the juvenile at issue in incident report number 190073436 is not an alleged perpetrator in a report received by DFPS of abuse or neglect of a child, then the department is not required to release the CHRI pursuant to section 411.114. However, if the juvenile offender at issue is an alleged perpetrator in a report received by DFPS of abuse or neglect of a child, then the requestor is authorized by section 411.114 of the Government Code to obtain CHRI from the department regarding that individual. *See id.* § 411.114. In that situation, we must address the conflict between confidentiality under section 58.008(b) of the Family Code and access under section 411.114 of the Government Code.

Where information falls within both a general and a specific statutory provision, the specific provision prevails over the general statute. *See id.* § 311.026 (where general statutory provision conflicts with specific provision, specific provision prevails as exception to general provision unless the general provision is the later enactment and the manifest intent is that the general provision prevail); *Cuellar v. State*, 521 S.W.2d 277 (Tex. Crim. App. 1975) (under well-established rule of statutory construction, specific statutory provisions prevail over general ones). While section 58.008(b) generally makes juvenile law enforcement records confidential, section 411.114 of the Government Code gives one specific requestor, DFPS, access to particular information, CHRI, found in records involving particular individuals, alleged perpetrators in a DFPS report of abuse or neglect of a child. *See Gov't Code* § 411.114; *Fam. Code* § 58.008(b). Thus, the statutory right of access granted to DFPS by section 411.114 of the Government Code prevails over the more general confidentiality provision of section 58.008(b) of the Family Code. Therefore, if the juvenile offender at issue in incident report number 190073436 is an alleged perpetrator in a report received by DFPS of abuse or neglect of a child, then the department must release the CHRI pertaining to that individual pursuant to section 411.114 of the Government Code, but must withhold the remaining information in this report under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code. If the juvenile offender is not an alleged perpetrator in a report received by DFPS of abuse or neglect of a child, then the department must withhold incident report number 190073436 in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 261.201(a) of the Family Code, which provides as follows:

[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 the remaining information was used or developed in an investigation under chapter 261. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of section 261.201), 261.001(1), (4) (defining “abuse” and “neglect” for purposes of section 261.201). Thus, the information is within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. The department does not indicate it has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information. Therefore, we assume no such rule exists. Accordingly, the department must withhold the remaining information 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) (predecessor statute).

In summary, if the juvenile offender at issue in incident report number 190073436 is an alleged perpetrator in a report received by DFPS of abuse or neglect of a child, then the department must release the CHRI pertaining to that individual pursuant to section 411.114 of the Government Code, but must withhold the remaining information in this report under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code. If the juvenile offender is not an alleged perpetrator in a report received by DFPS of abuse or neglect of a child, then the department must withhold incident report number 190073436 in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.008(b) of the Family Code. The department must withhold the remaining information 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 <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open-government/members-public/what-expect-after-ruling-issued> or call the OAG’s Open

Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Public Information Act may be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the OAG, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,

James L. Coggeshall  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JLC/jlbm

Ref: ID# 826034

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)