

	<b>Houston Independent School District Police Department Directives</b>		<b>DIRECTIVE: 420-017</b>
			<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: July 16, 2013</b>
	<b>SUBJECT: Oath of Office</b>		<b>REVISED DATE: January 17, 2022</b>

## **POLICY**

This directive aims to describe the Oath of Office of the Houston Independent School District Police Department. Before assuming sworn status, each officer shall take and subsequently abide by an Oath of Office to enforce the laws of the United States and the State of Texas and uphold the Constitution of the United States. The Oath of Office shall be in accordance with the most current version of the State of Texas Attorney General's office.

## **CODE OF ETHICS (SWORN)**

To perform their duties and maintain the integrity of this department with the public, officers must strive to maintain a high degree of both moral and ethical standards. This department adopts the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics and department policy. Strict adherence to this code is mandatory. Violations will be considered as a breach of discipline and grounds for investigation.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT CODE OF ETHICS**

All law enforcement officers must be fully aware of the ethical responsibilities of their position and must strive to constantly live up to the highest possible standards of professional policing. The International Association of Chiefs of Police believes it important that police officers have clear advice and counsel available to assist them in performing their duties consistent with these standards and, therefore, have adopted the following ethical mandates as guidelines to meet these ends;

*"As a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve the community; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality, and justice.*

*I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or to my agency. I will maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed both in my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the regulations of my department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.*

*I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, political beliefs, aspirations, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.*

*I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of police service. I will never engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will*

*I condone such acts by other police officers. I will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.*

*I know that I alone am responsible for my own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve my level of knowledge and competence.*

*I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before God to my chosen profession... law enforcement."*

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF A POLICE OFFICER**

The police officer acts as an official representative of the Houston ISD Police Department. The fundamental duties of a police officer include:

- a) Serving the community.
- b) Safeguarding lives and property.
- c) Protecting the innocent.
- d) Maintaining the peace; and
- e) Ensuring all rights to liberty, equality, and justice.

## **PERFORMANCE OF THE DUTIES OF A POLICE OFFICER**

A police officer shall perform all duties impartially, without favor, affection, or ill will, without regard to status, sex, race, religion, political belief, or aspiration. All citizens shall be treated equally with courtesy, consideration, and dignity. Officers will never allow personal feelings, animosities, or friendships to influence official conduct. Laws will be enforced appropriately and courteously, and in carrying out their responsibilities, officers will strive to obtain maximum cooperation from the public. Officers will conduct themselves in appearance and deportment in such a manner as to inspire confidence and respect for the position of public trust which they hold.

## **DISCRETION**

A police officer will responsibly use the discretion vested in the position and exercise it within the law. The principle of reasonableness will guide the officer's determinations, and the officer will consider all surrounding circumstances in determining whether any legal action shall be taken. Consistent and wise use of discretion, based on professional policing competence, will do much to preserve good relationships and regain the public's confidence. There can be difficulty in choosing between conflicting courses of action. It is important to remember that a timely word of advice rather than arrest, correct in appropriate circumstances, can be a more effective means of achieving the desired end.

## **USE OF FORCE**

A police officer will never employ unnecessary force or violence and will use only such force to discharge duty as is reasonable in all circumstances. The use of force should be used with the greatest restraint and only after discussion, negotiation, and persuasion be inappropriate or ineffective. While the use of force is occasionally

unavoidable, every police officer will refrain from applying the unnecessary infliction of pain or suffering and will never engage in cruel, degrading, or inhuman treatment of any person.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Whatever a police officer sees, hears, or learns of, confidential, will be kept secret unless the performance of duty or legal provision requires otherwise. The public has a right to security and privacy, and information obtained about them must not be improperly divulged.

### **INTEGRITY**

A police officer will not engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will a police officer condone such acts by other police officers. The public demands that the integrity of police officers be above reproach. Police officers must, therefore, avoid any conduct which might compromise the integrity and, thus, undercut the public confidence in a law enforcement agency. Officers will refuse to accept any gifts, presents, subscriptions, favors, gratuities, or promises that could be interpreted as seeking to cause the officer to refrain from performing official responsibilities honestly and within the law.

Approved By



Pedro Lopez Jr., Chief of Police