



VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT PLANNING, RESEARCH & AUDIT SECTION

August 1, 2008

To: Earl Andersen, A/Inspector #1507
i/c Planning, Research & Audit Section

From: Corporal #310 S. Fleming
Planning, Research and Audit Section

Subject: *Addition to RPM – Section 1.7.22 YSS Notification of Serious Youth/School Based Incidents* *P&R File # 2008-044*

Assignment

To add a section to the Regulations and Procedure Manual (RPM) to clarify the circumstances in which the Youth Services Section (YSS) should be notified of a major youth or school-based incident.

Background

There were two major incidents in 2007 which either involved school based youth, or occurred on school board property. The first instance was the murder of a 13 year old boy on the May long weekend, and the second was an after hours stabbing on the grounds of an elementary school in September.

A review of these incidents revealed that it would have been beneficial for the YSS to have been notified of these incidents earlier in the investigation.

Resources

Inspector #1386 S. Thompson, i/c Youth Services Section
Sergeant #1590 I. Upton, i/c Youth Services Unit

Research and Analysis

Inspector Thompson and Sergeant Upton reviewed these incidents and conducted a de-brief with the Vancouver School Board (VSB). As a result, Inspector Thompson submitted reports to the Executive on 2007.11.05 & 2008.01.20 recommending a procedure to facilitate the notification of YSS in the event of serious youth or school

based incidents. The reports were discussed and approved by the Executive on 2008.02.26

A copy of the reports is attached.

Risk Management

This procedure will allow the Department to respond more effectively to these incidents. As well, the procedure will enhance our partnership with the VSB by ensuring timely notification and proper handling of these incidents. This will lessen the likelihood of further problems occurring at the schools as a following the initial incident.

Budget Implications

There is the likelihood that members of the YSS will incur overtime as a result of this procedure: however, this should not be a regular occurrence. Also, the cost of the overtime has to be balanced against the possibility that the use of YSS personnel will result in a shorter investigation due to their knowledge and expertise. Proper notification and planning with the VSB may prevent retaliatory incidents, allowing the resources to concentrate on the original investigation.

Conclusion

The VPD has had a working relationship with the Vancouver School Board (VSB) since the mid 1970s. This procedure will enhance this relationship, while also ensuring that the skills, knowledge, and contacts of the YSS are available to the investigators.

Recommendations

I recommend that:

1. Section 1.7.22 of the RPM – Notification of the Youth Services Section in the event of a major youth or school based incident be approved.
2. That this file be closed.

Respectfully submitted,

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Planning, Research and Audit Section
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Existing Procedure

None

Proposed Procedure

Section 1.7.22 - Serious School and Youth Related Incidents – Youth Services Section Notification

- 1) The Duty Officer shall contact the Youth Services Section (YSS) Inspector or designate in an incident involving young persons where there is an identified threat to a school (e.g. weapons seizure with threats to school community).
 - 2) The Duty Officer should consider contacting the Youth Services Section (YSS) Inspector or designate in major crime incidents where young people are either the suspects or victims, and the units from the Investigation Division (Homicide, SOS, Robbery/Assault) have been called out. The Duty Officer will consult with the YSS Inspector, or designate, and determine whether the YSS can be of assistance. Consultation should then take place between the NCO of the assigned investigative unit and the YSS Inspector.
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VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

Youth Services Section

Date: 08.03.02
To: Duty Officers
From: Inspector Scott Thompson- Youth Services Section
Subject: **Serious School and Youth Related Incidents- Youth Services Section Advisement**

The following procedure has been approved by the VPD executive.

- 1) The Duty Officer should consider contacting the Youth Services Section (YSS) Inspector or designate in major crime incidents where young people are either the suspects or victims, and the units from the Investigation Division (Homicide, SOS, Robbery/Assault) have been called out. The Duty Officer will consult with the YSS Inspector or designate and determine whether the YSS can be of assistance. Consultation should then take place between the NCO of the assigned investigative unit and the YSS Inspector.
- 2) The Duty Officer shall contact the Youth Services Section (YSS) Inspector or designate in an incident involving young persons where there is an identified threat to a school (e.g. weapons seizure with threats to school community).

Attached is a contact list for the YSS. Please ensure this is placed in the Duty Officer book.

Inspector Scott Thompson
Youth Services Section

Youth Services Section	Pager	Cell	Home
Inspector Scott Thompson	15(1), 22(1)		
Sergeant Ian Upton-YSU		15(1), 22(1)	
Sergeant Kirk Star-SLU			
Sergeant Bill Pake-PCRT			



Attachments/Appendix

VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

Youth Services Section

November 5, 2007

To: **Deputy Chief Constable Steve Sweeney**
Operations Support Division

From: **Inspector Scott Thompson**
Youth Services Section

Subject: ***Serious School and Youth Related Incidents- Youth Services Section
Advisement***

The following will recommend a change in procedure and protocol with respect to the advisement of the Youth Services Section (YSS) in the event of a serious school and/or youth based incident with youth/student involvement in a criminal incident or investigation.

Background

The VPD has had a working relationship with the Vancouver School Board (VSB) since the mid 1970's. This has been fostered over the years and requires good communication, negotiation and maintenance to ensure mutual operational effectiveness is maintained. The School Liaison Unit (SLU) in particular, has developed close working relationships with school administrators. On their part, school administrators and the VSB have an expectation that the VPD will assist and jointly work with them on issues and incidents that may impact on school and student safety. The School Liaison Officers (SLO) and Youth Services Unit (YSU) investigators have a wealth of intelligence and schools and student access as well as links to police in other school districts that can assist criminal investigations.

The 22(3)(b) Incident

An incident of note was the homicide of a 13 year old boy during the May long weekend, 2007. Some three dozen witnesses were initially identified, from some six school districts, and nearly 20 schools across the Lower Mainland. When Vancouver students returned to class on the Tuesday following the incident many approached counselors, teachers and administrators and disclosed relevant information. School administrators

also requested information from the VPD as the victim, suspect, and many of the associates and witnesses attended Vancouver schools. Concerns were raised about school and student safety and the potential for more violent incidents taking place. School administrators also requested information to determine whether the VSB grief and trauma counseling protocols should be activated. Afterwards, the VSB expressed some concerns about the VPD response, lack of timely information, consultation and attempts by MCS investigators to attend schools directly to conduct interviews without the SLU being involved.

On the other hand, the MCS investigation faced a number of challenges given the number of witnesses, associates, schools, the high profile nature of the case, and the need to protect the integrity of the investigation and evidence. At the prompting of the SLU, investigators provided a basic summary of information and a liaison process for student access in the schools was set up between the SLU and MCS. The SLU also assisted MCS in contacting the other school districts to determine protocols for police investigator attendance at their schools. The 22(3)(b) incident illustrated the difficulties faced by investigators in a high profile youth involved criminal investigation. A significant challenge was trying to control and contain information as well as witnesses, particularly information technology savvy youth, in this age of the Internet, photo cell phones and text messaging. The incident also underscored the value of the VPD school liaison program and the advantage of utilizing SLO's to assist MCS investigations.

Aftermath

Subsequently, the YSS de-briefed the incident with the VSB and outlined the logistical, operational and evidentiary challenges faced by MCS and other police sections when conducting serious criminal investigations that take place in, around, or carry over into schools. This process identified some VPD and VSB communication issues that are being addressed. For example, a legal package is being developed to educate VSB staff about the issues and potential for evidence dismissal if they overstep their bounds by seeking out information from students in the aftermath of a criminal incident. Conversely, this has to be balanced with school administrator's mandate to seek out information relating to immediate school and student safety concerns. [REDACTED]

15(1)(a)

15(1)(a)

Other Incidents

Other serious incidents include the recent homicide near Vancouver Technical High School, and the after school hours stabbing on 07.SEP.28, at the Grandview Elementary School basket ball courts. In this most recent incident, Forensic Identification cleared the scene at 0520 hours and the YSS Inspector learned of the incident on CKNW radio news while commuting to work. It was determined the incident was not school related, but that blood from stabbing had not been cleaned up. VFRD were able to wash down the scene some 20 minutes before primary school aged

children arrived at school. YSS was also able to contact the school administration before school started to provide some information and assure them there were no school and/or student safety issues. This was the first use of the 24/7 VSB contact.

These incidents point to some reporting and advisement gaps in the VPD system that need to be addressed in the context of operations as well as investigations.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 1) When the Duty Officer becomes aware of a school based or youth related serious or critical incident and/or student involvement in a criminal incident, the Duty officer will contact the YSS Inspector or their designate and advise them of the incident.
 - 2) The YSS Inspector will confer with the Duty Officer to develop an action plan or other response as necessary.
 - 3) In situations where MCS or other investigative VPD Sections or Units are engaged in an investigation, the YSS Inspector will contact and confer with the MCS Inspector or designate and develop an action plan or other response as necessary. This will be done before any steps are taken to contact or otherwise involve the Vancouver School Board and/or school administration.
 - 4) The YSS Inspector will then deploy the relevant YSS resources to assist the other VPD Sections and/or units and/or the VSB as needed.
 - 5) This procedure and protocol be approved and posted in the Duty Officers binder and all Duty Officers are to be advised.
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Attached is a contact list for the YSS. The above is submitted for review and approval. It is also requested that this recommended procedure be reviewed by the Deputy Chief Constables of the Operations and Investigation Divisions.

Inspector Scott Thompson
Youth Services Section