



New South Wales Police Force

South West Metropolitan Region Child Approach Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Summary:

The purpose of these SOP's is to standardise practices throughout all commands within the South West Metro Region in relation to the policing response, reporting, and recording of incidents where children (16 years and under) are approached and/or there is an attempt to physically or verbally lure the child away or to assault them.

These SOP are to be used in all instances when the Public Affairs Branch **Amber Alert SOPS 2021** and SCC Robbery Squad **Kidnapping For Ransom SOPS** are not applicable **ie the child has not actually been abducted**. In any incidents involving actual child abductions reference is to be made to the applicable SCC and Public Affairs SOPS

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1. Message

Child approaches cause great fear throughout our Community and are often a precursor to serious child sexual offences. Through the appropriate and thorough investigation, recording and linking of these incidents the South West Metro Region intends to reduce the opportunities for this type of predatory behaviour and ensure the safety of the Communities we police.

2. Scope

The SWMR Child Approach SOPS outline the standard practices to be utilised in all incidents of reported child approaches. These SOP's are not to be used in instances of child abductions, however, the power bi report and/or engagement with local CPR teams may aid those investigations.

3. Procedures

3.1 Context

These SOP's standardise practices to be utilised in relation to the policing response, reporting, and recording of incidents where children (16 years and under) are approached and/or there is an attempt to physically or verbally lure the child away or to assault them.

3.2 Initial notification

Officers receiving the initial notification are to obtain as much details as possible including, but not limited to:

Current condition and location of the child, assess any need for medical treatment

Obtain contact details of parent or guardian/ informant and advise the caller that Police will attend as a matter of urgency. Request that they and the child remain at a nominated safe location to await Police attendance. If medical treatment required notify ambulance.

Description of offender and vehicles

In relation to a VOI obtain details of make, model, any distinguishing features, last known direction and time elapsed since last seen – these details should be circulated for information of all police on channel

In relation to POI obtain details including gender, age, racial appearance, clothing worn, distinctive features such as tattoos or scars, and distinctive smells and words used by offender - these should be circulated for information of all Police on channel.

Broadcast job for crews to attend

This should be done via CAD job, if situation requires more urgency utilise police radio to request job be broadcast for nearest response vehicle.

3.3 First Response Police

Police attending the scene are to attend as soon as possible to make a full assessment of the incident.

Ensure safety of child

Confirm the child's need for medical treatment, reassure the child and parents that they are safe and Police in the general area are looking for the offender.

Reaffirm all details

Speak with the child using open questions and confirm all details given of incident including descriptions, time frames, words used, any physical contact with the child – broadcast any updated details for information of other Police on channel

Identify Crime Scene

Through speaking with the child and parent/guardian police should be able to identify the location and size of any crime scene. Arrange for attendance of other Police at the identified scene for a proper assessment to be completed of potential for evidence including physical evidence, DNA and canvass for witnesses.

Advise Supervisor whilst at location

As soon as practicable once you have sufficient information in relation to the incident and before leaving the scene contact the **Supervisor** on shift and advise them of all relevant information so that they can make an informed decision as to what further resources are required.

Advise parents / guardians

In line with the Charter of Victims Rights, ensure that the parents / guardians are informed of the progress of the investigation including details of OIC, COPS event number and any arrests made.

3.4 Supervisor

The supervisor on shift is to ensure an appropriate and timely response is given to all child approach incidents.

Monitor Radio

Ensure child approach jobs are acknowledged and attended in a timely manner, continually monitor information passed via radio to ensure appropriate responses are being made to the information received.

Attend Scene

Where possible Supervisors should attend the scene of all child approach incidents that are not late reports in order to provide support and resources to responding police. Consideration should be given as to the service and experience of initial responding police, the individual circumstances of the incident and any similarities with other reported incidents in the surrounding area.

Notify Duty Officer / Crime Manager

The Supervisor will notify the Duty Officer / Crime Manager of all information known in relation to the incident so that they can determine the appropriate response to the individual incident.

3.5 Duty Officer / Crime Manager

Ensure that all child approach incidents receive an appropriate level of investigative response and reporting.

Allocate appropriate level of investigation

Consider the individual incident, the potential impact on victim and community and the level of investigation required and assign appropriate investigators from CI or GD's

Ensure appropriate reporting

Ensure a COPS event is completed with an incident 'Offence Against the Person Other' and further classification 'Child Approach' and include an associated factor of "Child Approach Related"

SITREP

Ensure a SITREP is created for all child approach incidents.

Ensure proper linking and assessment

Ensure that all child approach incidents are reviewed on a monthly basis to establish any links between offences.

4. REPORTING

4.1 COPS Events

A child approach incident must be created for all reports. This incident is contained within 'Offence against the person other' category.

Should a substantive offence have been committed (ie sexual touching) an incident will be created for the substantive offence, and a child approach incident will also be created.

4.2 Situation Reports

A SITREP must be completed for all child approach incidents as they often raise serious concern within the community and attract media attention. Timely completion of SITREPs ensures that all appropriate information is communicated to the Police executive in a timely manner. All SITREPs are to be forwarded to South West Metro Region.

4.3 Media

Consider the use of social media, local media and Police Media Unit to report on child approach incidents. This type of incident raises fear within the Community and

so is subject of great discussion within the Community. A lack of informed facts often leads to misinformation being distributed causing further angst.

5. INVESTIGATION

5.1 Investigation

Ensure the investigating officer has the appropriate skills to conduct the investigation. In all investigations consider the following:

- Canvass of crime scene for imagery
- Collection of exhibits for forensic analysis
- Statements from children and witnesses
- Circulation of imagery internally for offender identification
- Circulation of imagery via media release for offender identification
- Liaison with Child Protection Register teams for offender identification

5.2 Offender identification and arrest

A SITREP must be completed should any person be charged with offences related to the report. All SITREPs to be forwarded to South West Metro Region.

Should the offender be charged with a registrable offence, court outcome to be monitored and a conviction / sentence will result in the offender being placed on the Child Protection Register.

Should the offender be charged with a non-registrable offence, the command will review the circumstances and assess the offender for a Child Protection Registration order. Should an application be viable, application has to be filed with court within 60 days of the offender being sentenced on the offence.

5.3 Monitoring and Review

South West Metro Region will maintain a power bi report for all child approach incidents. A link to the report is here:

<http://powerbi/reports/powerbi/Organisation%20Unit%20Reports/Field%20Ops%20Metro%20and%20Regional/South%20West%20Metro/South%20West%20Metro%20Region/Incidents%20and%20Crime%20Types/Child%20Approach>

This report should be used to review child approach incidents both within your command, neighbouring commands and across the region.