



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

December 16, 2009

Ms. Tamma Willis  
McLennan County Sheriff's Office  
901 Washington Avenue  
Waco, Texas 76701

OR2009-17828

Dear Ms. Willis:

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# 364422.

The McLennan County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff") received a request for information pertaining to two specified case numbers. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions 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, such as section 58.007 of the Family Code. Section 58.007 provides in pertinent part as follows:

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

Fam. Code § 58.007(c). Law enforcement records relating to juvenile conduct, whether delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision, that occurred on or after September 1, 1997, are confidential under section 58.007 of the Family Code. *See id.* § 51.03 (defining "delinquent conduct" and "conduct indicating a need for supervision" for purposes of title 3 of the Family Code). For purposes of section 58.007, "child" means a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age. *See id.* § 51.02(2). Upon review, we find that report number 09-1141 involves allegations of a juvenile engaged in delinquent conduct that occurred after September 1, 1997. *See id.* § 51.03. It does not appear that any of the exceptions in section 58.007 of the Family Code apply to this information. Thus, report number 09-1141 is confidential pursuant to section 58.007(c), and must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code.

Next, we note the remaining report is subject to section 261.201 of the Family Code, which is also encompassed by section 552.101 of the Government Code, and provides in part:

(a) Except as provided by Section 261.203, the following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under Chapter 552, Government Code, 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 that the remaining report was used or developed in an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse under chapter 261 of the Family Code. *See* Fam. Code § 261.001(1) (defining "abuse" for the purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code); *see also id.* § 101.003(a) (defining "child" for purposes of section 261.201 as "person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes"). Accordingly, we find that the remaining report is within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. You do not indicate that the sheriff has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information. We therefore assume no such rule exists. Given that assumption, we conclude the remaining report is confidential under section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute). Accordingly, the sheriff

must withhold the remaining report under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code.<sup>1</sup>

In summary, the sheriff must withhold report number 09-1141 under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007(c) of the Family Code. The remaining report must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 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.oag.state.tx.us/open/index\\_orl.php](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php), 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 must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Paige Lay  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

PL/eeg

Ref: ID# 364422

Enc. Submitted documents

cc: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

---

<sup>1</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against the disclosure of this information.