



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

April 7, 2009

Mr. Kelley Messer  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Abilene  
P.O. Box 60  
Abilene, Texas 79604-0060

OR2009-04595

Dear Mr. Messer:

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# 339421.

The Abilene Police Department (the "department") received a request for police report number 08-013219. You claim that the submitted 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 section 261.201(a) of the Family Code, which provides as follows:

(a) 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, 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). You state that the submitted report was used or developed in an investigation into alleged child abuse conducted by the department. *See id.* § 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of Family Code ch. 261). Based on your representations and our review of the submitted report, we agree that the submitted information is subject to section 261.201 of the Family Code. As you do not indicate that the department has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information, we assume that no such rule exists. Given that assumption, we conclude that the department must withhold the submitted report in its entirety under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (addressing predecessor statute).<sup>1</sup> As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure.

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 at (512) 475-2497.

Sincerely,



Sarah Casterline  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

SEC/jb

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<sup>1</sup>We note that the requestor, as the parent of a child who is the subject of reported abuse, may have a right of access to certain abuse records maintained by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (“DFPS”). Section 261.201(g) of the Family Code provides that DFPS, upon request and subject to its own rules: shall provide to the parent, managing conservator, or other legal representative of a child who is the subject of reported abuse or neglect information concerning the reported abuse or neglect that would otherwise be confidential under this section if DFPS has edited the information to protect the confidentiality of the identity of the person who made the report and any other person whose life or safety may be endangered by the disclosure. *See* Fam. Code § 261.201(g).

Ref: ID# 339421

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

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