



BALTIMORE CITY

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

GENERAL ORDER 18.04 SECTION K

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Approved: June 12, 2018

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. Directive
- II. Purpose
- III. Definitions
- IV. General
- V. Effective Date

I. DIRECTIVE

It is the policy of the Baltimore City School Police Force (BCSPF) to ensure a consistent high level of service is provided to all community members. BCSPF employees shall afford people who have mental and physical disabilities the same rights and dignity as are provided to all citizens.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) entitles people with mental illnesses or disabilities to the same services and protections that law enforcement agencies provide to anyone else. They may not be excluded from services or otherwise be provided with lesser services or protection than are provided to others. The ADA calls for law enforcement agencies to make reasonable modifications in their policies, practices, or procedures on a case-by-case basis. An individual with a disability has the right to ask that procedures be reasonably modified.

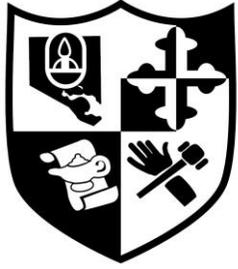
II. PURPOSE

Officers are not in a position to diagnose mental illness or disability. The purpose of this General Order is to provide officers with a general overview in providing the best quality of service as possible.

Training, sensitivity, and awareness will help to ensure equitable treatment of individuals with disabilities as well as effective law enforcement.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* – A Civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities by employers, businesses, and state and local governments. Law enforcement agencies must make their programs accessible, make new facilities accessible, take steps to communicate effectively, and make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, and procedures to provide people with disabilities



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the same services and protections as provided to other members of the public with certain limitations.

- B. *Developmental disability*- A long term disability that can affect cognitive ability, physical functioning, or both. Encompasses intellectual disability but also includes physical disabilities.
- C. *Disability* – A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.
- D. *Hearing impairment*- Partial or total inability to hear.
- E. *Intellectual disability*- Characterized by limitations both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and in adaptive behavior, which covers a range of everyday social and practical skills
- F. *Mobility impairment*- The inability of a person to use one or more of their extremities, or a lack of strength to walk, grasp, or lift objects. The use of a wheelchair, crutches, or a walker may be utilized to aid in mobility.
- G. *Psychological disability*- Refers to a spectrum of mental disorders or conditions that influence our emotions, cognitions, and/or behaviors. Psychological disabilities may include depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, etc.
- H. *Speech impairment*- An impaired ability to produce speech sounds and may range from mild to severe. It may include an articulation disorder, characterized by omissions or distortions of speech sounds; a fluency disorder, characterized by atypical flow, rhythm, and/or repetitions of sounds; or a voice disorder, characterized by abnormal pitch, volume, resonance, vocal quality, or duration.
- I. *Visual impairment*- A severe reduction in vision that cannot be corrected with standard glasses or contact lenses and reduces a person's ability to function at certain or all tasks.

IV. GENERAL

- A. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, or who have speech disabilities or intellectual disabilities, or who are blind or visually impaired may not recognize or be able to respond to police directions. These individuals may erroneously be perceived as uncooperative.
- B. Some people with disabilities may have a staggering gait or slurred speech related to their disabilities or the medications they take. These characteristics, which can be associated with neurological disabilities, mental/emotional disturbance, or hypoglycemia, may be misperceived as intoxication.



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- C. Officers should remember that mental illness is not a crime and does not, in itself justify or require police intervention.
 - D. Officers should be trained to distinguish behaviors that pose a real risk from behaviors that do not, and to recognize when an individual, such as someone who is having a seizure or exhibiting signs of psychotic crisis, needs medical attention.
 - E. Standard transport practices may be dangerous for many people with mobility disabilities. Officers should use caution not to harm an individual or damage their wheelchair. The best approach is to ask the person what type of transportation they can use, and how to lift or assist them in transferring into and out of the vehicle.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Order shall be effective on the date of publication.

I certify that I have read and fully understand this Order.

Signature _____ Date _____