Policy Type: **EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS**

Policy Title: **Interactions with Members of the Public**

Policy Statement

With respect to all interactions between the police and members of the public, the Board is committed to ensuring the adoption and implementation of practices that preserve and enhance trust, legitimacy and confidence in the Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS). In its responsibility to prevent crime, enforce the law, assist victims, maintain the peace, and respond to emergencies, the DRPS are expected to provide services that are respectful, accessible, effective and consistent with the fundamental rights and freedoms protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code. Each information exchange and interaction with public should strive to demonstrate a professional commitment to excellence.

Policy Application

The Chief of Police shall:

1. Use of authority and de-escalation

a. Ensure that the use of police powers is lawful, necessary, proportionate and consistent with applicable legislation, regulations and Service procedures.
b. Implement de-escalation, communication and conflict-resolution approaches where reasonably practicable and consistent with the circumstances and safety of the public and police members.
c. Ensure that the public receives clear and understandable information about the reason for an interaction, detention, search, arrest or other exercise of police authority where disclosure is legally permissible and operationally appropriate.
d. Ensure that any use of force is subject to the requirements of applicable law, Board policy, Service procedures, reporting, review and accountability mechanisms.
e. Ensure that interactions with persons experiencing mental health, substance-use, cognitive, developmental or other vulnerabilities are approached with appropriate care, de-escalation and consideration of available community-based supports, where circumstances permit.

2. Privacy

a. Elicit, collect, access, use, retain, disclose or dispose of personal or identifying information only for a lawful, authorized and legitimate policing purpose.
b. Establish appropriate safeguards against unauthorized access, use, disclosure, alteration or loss of information concerning residents and visitors.

c. Consider the adoption of relevant guidance and best practices on the protection of personal information by the Privacy Commissioner of Canada and the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario

3. Body-worn cameras and recording technologies

a. Maintain procedures governing the appropriate use, activation, handling, retention, security and disclosure of body-worn camera footage and other recordings involving members of the public.
b. Ensure that recording practices respect privacy, dignity, legal requirements and legitimate expectations of privacy while supporting transparency and accountability.
c. Ensure that non-compliance with applicable recording requirements is subject to appropriate supervisory review and accountability processes.

4. Accessibility and service delivery

a. Comply with applicable accessibility legislation and standards, including requirements relating to service animals, support persons, communication supports, accessible documents, notice of service disruptions, staff training and feedback mechanisms.
b. Take reasonable steps to accommodate communication needs, including language, hearing, speech, cognitive or other barriers, subject to operational, legal and safety requirements.
c. Provide residents and visitors with reasonably accessible information about police services, emergency and non-emergency contacts, available assistance and applicable public processes.

5. Calls for service and communication

a. Maintain effective systems for receiving, assessing, prioritizing and responding to calls for service.
b. Establish reasonable public expectations regarding police response, including communicating when a requested service is outside the mandate or immediate capacity of the Service.
c. Provide timely and understandable communication concerning significant delays, service disruptions or other circumstances that materially affect access to police services, where disclosure is appropriate.
d. Use plain, respectful and understandable language in communications with members of the public.
e. Ensure that timely communication is provided to the Board in circumstances that may adversely impact public trust in the Service or result in negative media coverage.

6. Community engagement

a. Enable meaningful opportunities for residents, visitors, community organizations and affected communities to provide input concerning policing services and their experience of interactions with the Service.
b. Consider community feedback, demographic information, complaints, service data and other relevant evidence when assessing whether residents and visitors are being treated equitably and respectfully.

c. Communicate publicly, subject to legal and operational limitations, information that assists the community in understanding policing operations, accountability mechanisms and any significant changes affecting interactions with the public.
d. Identify and address organizational practices, behaviours or patterns that undermine public trust, equitable treatment or confidence in policing.

Reporting

The Chief of Police shall provide an annual report to the Board to enable effective oversight of this policy.