

CHAPTER 6

6.1 Self Check page 184

1. Why are police considered the gatekeepers of the juvenile justice system?

Because they are given the ability to use discretion, that is, to make decisions about whether to take a juvenile into custody and, if necessary, process him or her further into the system. There are many options available to police.

6.2 Self Check page 194

How do police typically respond to status offenders?

This depends on whether the policing style in use is legalistic, watchman, or service-oriented. Legalistic police may crack down on status offenders, especially repeat status offenders, by taking them into custody and possibly even referring them to juvenile court. The typical watchman response is to stop the status offense, warn the juvenile, and send him or her home, without taking further action. The service-oriented police officer will probably try initiating a conversation with the juvenile to explain why the offense is wrong, in a way that will appeal to the juvenile's best interests (e.g., "Smoking will stunt your growth and give you cancer," "Missing school will make it harder for you to reach your goals in life"). The service-oriented officer may be more likely than the watchman-style one to take a juvenile into custody, but would probably refer them into a diversionary program that could help them give up delinquent behavior.

6.3 Self Check page 200

1. What are the responsibilities of juvenile departments?

They employ officers who, in effect, become juvenile justice specialists; this equips them to deal more effectively not only with juvenile offenders, but also with the special procedures, court system, and placement options that are unique to the juvenile justice system.

2. What role do intake officers play when a juvenile is taken into custody?

Intake officers are the people at detention facilities who decide whether to admit the juvenile into the facility; they are responsible for processing the juvenile into the facility. They can refuse to take the juvenile into custody, which sometimes place them in conflict with police officers who would like a particular juvenile to be detained.

6.4 Self Check page 205

Describe the PAL program.

Police Athletic Leagues (PAL) have been in use since the 1930s. In this program, police provide positive influences for children by playing sports with them and forming bonds of friendship and trust.

6.5 Self Check page 207

What are the peak hours for juvenile crime?

Research indicates that peak hours are between 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., with nearly half occurring between 2:00 and 6:00; the high point occurs between 3:00 and 4:00. In other words, the peak level is around the time that school is finished, and continues through the dinner hour. This is why many people feel that after-school programs would be the best remedy for juvenile delinquency.