



CHESTER COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**School Resource Officer Arrest for Corruption of Minors**

The Chester County District Attorney's Office and Downingtown Police Department announced the arrest of Stefanie Dunne for corruption of minors. The defendant was a police officer with Downingtown Borough who served as a school resource officer for Downingtown West High School. The victim was a former student at the high school.

First Assistant District Attorney Michael Noone stated, "This defendant betrayed her oath to enforce the law and protect children. She abused her position to have an inappropriate relationship with a student. This kind of behavior is unacceptable."

Downingtown Chief Howard Holland stated, "The Downingtown Police Department is extremely shocked and disappointed to learn of the actions of the ex-police officer. Officers are entrusted to protect children, not take advantage of them. This type of conduct is deplorable to anyone, but much greater to those who wear the Downingtown Police badge with honor. The actions of this individual should not be used to define our officers but should be seen as the way police agencies need to address inappropriate and criminal behavior."

The defendant is 44 years old and married. She resides in Thornton, Pennsylvania.

The allegations from the criminal complaint<sup>1</sup> are as follows:

The defendant was employed as a police officer for the Downingtown Police Department who was assigned as a school resource officer at Downingtown West High School. On May 4, 2019 at 10:45 P.M., the Upper Uwchlan Police Department discovered the defendant semi-clothed in the back of a parked vehicle in a secluded area with a 17-year old male juvenile. The juvenile was a former student at Downingtown West High School. Further investigation revealed an ongoing relationship between the defendant and the juvenile.

The defendant and the victim met when the victim was in ninth grade. They communicated through SnapChat and via text on their cell phones about having a sexual relationship. The victim stated the defendant would pick him up in her car and they would drive to secluded areas where they would have a physical relationship.

A forensic search of the victim's phone revealed several photographs of the defendant. There were over six thousand text messages between the defendant and the victim dating back to May of 2018. Many of the messages contain intimate references and sexual innuendo.

The defendant was arrested on July 30 and charged with one count of corruption of minors. The defendant's bail was set at \$50,000 unsecured. A preliminary hearing is scheduled for September 11, 2019 at District Court 15-4-02.

Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan stated, "Chester County police officers are held to high standards and are proud to maintain these standards. All of Chester County law enforcement is disappointed and outraged by this abuse of power and trust."

This case was investigated by the Chester County Detectives. The case will be prosecuted by the Chester County District Attorney's Office Child Abuse Unit. Any person with information regarding these or other incidents involving

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<sup>1</sup> A criminal defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in court.

defendant Stefanie Dunne should contact Detective Joseph Walton at (610) 344-6866.

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Approved for release:

Thomas P. Hogan