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Oath of Office and Code of Ethics	100 - 4		07-01-2019	1 of 3
Approval: Chief of Police	Manual: Policy and Procedure			

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to establish the use of Oath of Office for Sworn and Non-Sworn personnel in the organization and to establish the required conformance with the Code of Ethics.

II. DEFINITIONS

N/A

III. POLICY

A. Every employee in the Kinston Police Department will take an oath of office before assuming sworn and non-sworn positions. All sworn personnel will adhere to the Code of Ethics adopted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

B. Law Enforcement Oath of Office

I, (individual officer's name), the undersigned, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States; that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the State of North Carolina and to the Constitutional powers and authorities which are, or may be established for the government thereof; that I will endeavor to support, maintain and defend the Constitution of said State, not inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States; that I will be alert and vigilant to enforce the criminal laws of this state; that I will not be influenced in any manner on account of personal bias or prejudice; and that I will faithfully and impartially execute the duties of my offices as a law enforcement officer according to the best of my skill, abilities, and judgment, so help me God.

C. Code of Ethics for Law Enforcement Officers

1. All law enforcement officers must be fully aware of the ethical responsibilities of their position and must strive constantly to live up to the highest possible standards of professional policing. The Kinston Police Department believes it is important that law enforcement officers have clear advice and counsel available to assist them in performing their duties consistent with these standards, and has adopted the following ethical mandates as guidelines to meet these ends.

a. A law enforcement officer acts as an official representative of government who is required and trusted to work within the law. The officer's powers and duties are conferred by statute. The fundamental duties of an officer include serving the community; safeguarding lives and property; protecting the innocent; keeping the peace; and ensuring the rights of all to liberty, equality and justice.

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- b. A law enforcement officer shall perform all duties impartially, without favor or affection or ill will and without regard to status, sex, race, religion, political belief or aspiration. All citizens will be treated equally with courtesy, consideration and dignity. Officers will never allow personal feelings, animosities or friendships to influence official conduct. Laws will be enforced appropriately and courteously and, in carrying out their responsibilities, officers will serve to obtain maximum cooperation from the public. They will conduct themselves in appearance and deportment in such a manner as to inspire confidence and respect for the position of public trust they hold.
- c. A law enforcement officer will use responsibly the discretion vested in the position and exercise it within the law. The principle of reasonableness will guide the officer's determinations and the officer will consider all surrounding circumstances in determining whether any legal action shall be taken. Consistent and wise use of discretion, based on professional policing competence, will do much to preserve good relationships and retain the confidence of the public. There can be difficulty in choosing between conflicting courses of action. It is important to remember that a timely word of advice rather than arrest – which may be correct in appropriate circumstances -- can be a more effective means of achieving a desired end.
- d. Whatever a law enforcement officer sees, hears or learns of, which is of a confidential nature will be kept secret unless the performance of duty or legal provision requires otherwise. Members of the public have a right to security and privacy, and information obtained about them must not be improperly divulged.
- e. A law enforcement officer will not engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will an officer condone such acts by other officers. The public demands that the integrity of officers be above reproach. Law enforcement officers must therefore, avoid any conduct that might compromise integrity and thus undercut the public confidence in a law enforcement agency. Officers will refuse to accept any gifts, presents, subscriptions, favors, gratuities or promises that could be interpreted as seeking to cause the officer to refrain from performing official responsibilities honestly and within the law. Officers must not receive private or special advantage from their official status. Respect from the public cannot be bought; it can only be earned and cultivated.
- f. Law enforcement officers will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice. An officer or agency may be one among many organizations that may provide law enforcement services to a jurisdiction. It is imperative that an officer assists colleagues fully and completely with respect and consideration at all times.

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- g. Law enforcement officers will be responsible for their own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve their level of knowledge and competence. Through study and experience, an officer can acquire the high level of knowledge and competence that is essential for the efficient and effective performance of duty. The acquisition of knowledge is a never-ending process of personal and professional development that should be pursued constantly.

- h. Law enforcement officers will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to their agencies or themselves. An officer's character and conduct while off duty must always be exemplary, thus maintaining a position of respect in the community in which he or she lives and serves. The officer's personal behavior must be beyond reproach.