

Strengthening Ethical Culture in Police Responses to Juvenile Brawls in Semarang

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Abstract

Police responses to juvenile brawls must protect public safety while preserving the rights, dignity, and developmental interests of children in conflict with the law. This article examines how organizational ethical culture shapes police handling of juvenile brawls in Semarang and develops a case-based model for institutional change. Ethical culture is operationalized through the alignment of formal policies, everyday practices, supervisory example, peer norms, complaint control, and disciplinary accountability. The study uses a qualitative instrumental single-case design at Polrestabes Semarang. The dataset comprises semi-structured interviews with police personnel and officials, children and families, oversight actors, local-government representatives, legal-aid and community stakeholders, together with complaint materials, case-related documents, regulations, and institutional records collected from February to September 2025. Data were interpreted through interactive qualitative analysis and source-method triangulation. The findings identify divergent operational orientations within the same organization. Coercive responses were reported more frequently in patrol and public-order encounters, whereas specialist Women and Children Protection Unit practices were more protective, communicative, and legally oriented. The divergence is not treated as a fixed warrior-guardian binary; it reflects context-dependent orientations reinforced by differences in competence, leadership, peer expectations, workflow, procedural guidance, and supervision. The article's contribution is an integrated Ethical Culture Change Model that links the substantive content of ethical culture to Lewin's change sequence and four systemic intervention targets: individual capability, social norms, work methods, and organizational governance. The model translates the case findings into operational instruments for training, PPA coordination, use-of-force review, complaint handling, supervision, and continuous evaluation.

Keywords: ethical culture, child-sensitive policing, juvenile brawls, children in conflict with the law, police use of force, organizational change

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INTRODUCTION

Juvenile brawls present a difficult policing problem because the police must interrupt violence, protect victims and bystanders, preserve evidence, and restore public order while recognizing that alleged participants may still be children. The term *brawl* may describe conduct ranging from mutual taunting and an incipient group confrontation to assault, weapon possession, property damage, or conduct causing death. A child-sensitive response therefore cannot presume that every person found near a confrontation has the same role, level of responsibility, or legal status. Initial police action should differentiate children suspected of an offence, child victims, child witnesses, and uninvolved children before coercive measures are selected.

Indonesian juvenile justice law provides a clear normative starting point. A child in conflict with the law is a child who has reached the age of 12 but is under 18 and is suspected of committing a criminal offence. This legal term is narrower than the broader category of children dealing with the law, which also includes child victims and child witnesses. The Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law requires child justice to prioritize protection, the best interests of the child, proportionality, deprivation of liberty as a last resort, and restorative approaches where the legal requirements are satisfied (Republic of Indonesia, 2012). The Child Protection Law further requires special protection for children dealing with the law and safeguards their dignity, identity, physical security, and recovery (Republic of Indonesia, 2014, 2016). These obligations do not negate legitimate public-order enforcement; they govern how it is performed.

The Semarang context makes the institutional problem particularly important. In December 2024, the House of Representatives publicly examined the fatal shooting of a 17-year-old student by a Polrestabes Semarang officer. Official parliamentary reporting stated that the officer faced criminal and police-ethics processes, while the Indonesian Child Protection Commission emphasized the state's duty to protect affected children and fulfil their rights (House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024; Indonesian Child Protection Commission, 2024). This incident cannot by itself establish an organizational culture or prove a general pattern. It nevertheless demonstrates why police responses involving children, public-order narratives, and the use of force require accurate documentation, independent review, and legal safeguards.

Research on police-youth encounters shows that coercive treatment may affect young people's perceptions of fairness and may reinforce hostility or moral disengagement, particularly when they experience police action as arbitrary or humiliating (Cleary, 2014; Zapolski et al., 2018). Conversely, communication, procedural fairness, de-escalation, and developmentally informed intervention can improve the quality of encounters without requiring officers to abandon safety or lawful enforcement (Engel et al., 2020; Kubiak et al., 2019). The implication is not that force is always unlawful, but that its legality, necessity, proportionality, and accountability must be demonstrable. Indonesian police rules similarly require graded and accountable use of force and respect for human rights in police duties (Indonesian National Police, 2009a, 2009b).

The literature often describes contrasting *warrior* and *guardian* orientations. Warrior-oriented policing privileges command, threat control, and coercive readiness; guardian-oriented policing places greater weight on communication, procedural justice, relationship-building, and citizen safety. Recent empirical work treats these as orientations rather than immutable officer types, and recognizes that an officer may display different orientations across tasks and situations (Murphy & McCarthy, 2024; Rahr & Rice, 2015). This distinction is important for the present case. The article does not classify every patrol officer as a warrior or every PPA officer as a guardian. It asks when, where, and through which organizational mechanisms coercive or protective orientations become more likely.

The central concept is ethical culture. In this study, ethical culture means the organizational conditions that make ethically appropriate conduct understandable, practicable, discussable, supported, and enforceable. It is observed through the consistency of written policy, supervisory example, peer expectations, routine practices, access to advice, complaint handling, and responses to misconduct. Ethical culture is therefore not equivalent to individual morality or the existence of a code of ethics. An organization may have detailed rules while everyday routines, informal modelling, or weak accountability encourage contrary conduct. Ethical-culture research highlights the significance of clarity, congruence between leadership and formal standards, feasibility, transparency, discussability, support, and sanctionability (Chadegani & Jari, 2016; Kaptein, 2008, 2011).

This organizational perspective explains why change management is relevant. If problematic handling results only from isolated misconduct, individual discipline may be sufficient. If the same operational choices are repeatedly learned, copied, tolerated, or left uncorrected, the intervention must also address the conditions that reproduce them. Lewin's unfreezing-changing-refreezing sequence provides a temporal logic for disrupting inherited routines, implementing alternatives, and consolidating new standards. A systemic change

perspective then identifies where intervention must occur: individual capability, social relationships and leadership, work methods, and organizational governance. Ethical culture supplies the substantive standard by which each intervention is assessed. The three perspectives are therefore not merely placed side by side; they perform different and complementary analytical functions.

Prior Indonesian studies have examined juvenile brawls, restorative justice, police organizational transformation, and the treatment of children dealing with the law (Aulia, 2021; Nizarli, 2011; Syahputra et al., 2023). International studies have examined police interviewing of juveniles, youth-focused crisis intervention, police injustice, de-escalation, and warrior-guardian orientations (Cleary, 2014; Engel et al., 2020; Kubiak et al., 2019; Murphy & McCarthy, 2024; Zapolski et al., 2018). Less attention has been paid to how contrasting handling practices arise within one Indonesian police organization and how those practices can be translated into a staged, management-oriented ethical-culture model. The gap is thus both empirical and design-oriented: the literature identifies desirable values and harmful practices, but offers less guidance on how a territorial police unit can convert those insights into coordinated changes in personnel capability, supervisory norms, operational workflow, and accountability.

The article addresses two questions. First, what patterns of police action and organizational conditions shape the handling of children in conflict with the law in juvenile-brawl cases at Polrestabes Semarang? Second, how can those findings be translated into an integrated model for strengthening ethical culture in child-sensitive policing? The novelty lies in distinguishing the field-derived problem structure from the theoretical architecture used to respond to it. The field material identifies the points at which ethical risk is produced; ethical-culture theory defines the desired institutional qualities; Lewin sequences the change process; and the systemic model specifies the targets of intervention. This produces a model that can be audited through concrete police-management instruments rather than remaining a general appeal for cultural change.

Research Design, Data Analysis, and Ethical Safeguards

This research uses a qualitative instrumental single-case study of Polrestabes Semarang. The case is instrumental because the organization is examined not only as a unique site but also as a means of understanding how a territorial police unit can develop different operational orientations toward the same category of child-related public-order incident. The unit of analysis is the organizational handling process: initial encounter, control and arrest decisions, communication, protection of identity, transfer or referral, investigation, supervision, complaint review, and organizational learning. The research period reported in the source manuscript was February to September 2025.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document study. The reported participant categories include Polri personnel and officials; children in conflict with the law or children affected by police action; family members; neighbourhood or community representatives; local-government and child-protection actors; legal-aid or civil-society representatives; and external police-oversight stakeholders. These details are essential because the breadth of stakeholder categories cannot substitute for transparent sampling information.

The documentary corpus reportedly included complaint materials submitted to the professional and security function, case-related or official records, applicable legislation and police regulations, institutional procedures, and public documents concerning the Semarang case. Public reports were used as contextual and corroborative sources, not as proof that an alleged pattern existed across the organization.

Analysis followed the interactive logic of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2014). For publication transparency, the revised analytical structure distinguishes: (1) descriptive handling practices; (2) the operational setting in which they appeared; (3) the organizational mechanisms that enabled or constrained them; (4) their consistency with child-protection, use-of-force, restorative-justice, and ethical standards; and (5) implications for the proposed model. Initial categories were derived from the legal and theoretical framework, while case-specific patterns were retained where they did

not fit the initial categories. Findings were compared across interview-source classes and documents.

Credibility was pursued through source triangulation and method triangulation: accounts from different stakeholder groups were compared with available documents and regulatory standards. The analysis avoids converting the recurrence of a theme into a prevalence estimate because the study is qualitative and does not provide a statistically representative sample. It also avoids attributing institutional intent from an individual incident. Transferability is supported through a thick description of the organizational mechanisms rather than by claiming that all Indonesian police units share the same pattern.

Research involving children and allegations of police violence requires explicit safeguards. Publication should identify the approving ethics body and approval number; the process for parental or guardian consent and child assent; procedures for voluntary participation, withdrawal, confidentiality, trauma-sensitive interviewing, referral for support, and protection from retaliation; and the method for removing names, ranks, locations, and details that could enable re-identification. Until those facts are supplied, no direct quotation from a child participant is reproduced in this revision. Findings are instead presented through a cross-source thematic matrix to reduce identification risk while preserving analytical traceability (UNICEF, 2013).

DISCUSSION

Child-Sensitive Policing as the Normative Baseline

A legally accurate terminology is indispensable. *Anak yang berkonflik dengan hukum* is translated as *child in conflict with the law*, not child under five, child with disabilities, an armed group, or any other variant. The category refers to a child aged 12 to under 18 suspected of committing a criminal offence. It should not be used automatically for every child found at a brawl scene, because some may be victims, witnesses, or bystanders. The first ethical obligation is therefore classification based on verified role and age rather than on appearance, group association, or an undifferentiated label such as *brawler*.

The child-sensitive baseline consists of several linked duties. Officers must protect life and bodily integrity, prevent further violence, use the least harmful lawful intervention reasonably available, preserve the child's privacy, provide access to parents or guardians and legal assistance where required, and assess the possibility of diversion or restorative handling in accordance with the law. Restorative justice is not synonymous with informally ending a case. It requires a lawful process, voluntary participation, attention to victims, and compliance with the eligibility and procedural requirements of the Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law and Police Regulation No. 8 of 2021 (Indonesian National Police, 2021; Republic of Indonesia, 2012).

Use of force and child protection must be analysed together. Police may face actual weapons, group violence, flight, or immediate danger, and the presence of a child does not eliminate the duty to protect others. Nevertheless, force must satisfy legality, necessity, proportionality, reasonableness, and accountability, with firearms reserved for circumstances involving a threat to life or serious injury. An ethical culture makes these principles operational through pre-deployment briefing, age-sensitive threat assessment, verbal communication, de-escalation where feasible, medical assistance, prompt reporting, supervisory review, and corrective action. It also rejects humiliating practices, unnecessary exposure of a child's identity, collective punishment, and treatment designed to produce spectacle rather than lawful control.

The Code of Professional Ethics provides an institutional accountability layer. Compliance cannot be reduced to whether an officer is eventually sanctioned. It includes whether supervisors communicate the rule before an incident, whether officers can seek advice under pressure, whether unsafe or unlawful orders can be questioned, whether force and custody are documented, whether complaints are protected from retaliation, and whether lessons are fed back into training and deployment. These indicators translate ethical culture from an abstract value into observable organizational practice (Indonesian National Police, 2022; Kaptein, 2008).

Divergent Operational Orientations within Polrestabes Semarang

The source manuscript reports two recurring orientations within Polrestabes Semarang. The first appeared in routine patrol, large-scale patrol, and functional-duty encounters and involved verbal intimidation, physical coercion, humiliating treatment, or other control-oriented practices. The second appeared more clearly in the Women and Children Protection Unit, where handling was described as more communicative, protective, and attentive to legal procedure. The analysis does not treat these accounts as frequency estimates. It treats them as patterns that require explanation because they were reported across different source classes and were compared with complaint or case-related materials.

The setting of the encounter matters. Patrol officers often make rapid decisions in uncertain, mobile, and potentially violent conditions. Their immediate task may be to separate groups, secure weapons, protect bystanders, and prevent escape. PPA personnel usually enter at a later or more controlled stage, have specialist mandates, and are more likely to work with families and child-protection partners. These institutional differences partly explain the divergence. They do not excuse unlawful force, but they caution against interpreting the contrast solely as a difference in personal morality. Ethical risk arises when an organization expects general-duty officers to manage child cases without equivalent access to specialist knowledge, consultation, documentation, and supervisory support.

The warrior-guardian framework is therefore used as a continuum of operational orientation. Indicators of a coercive orientation in the data include treating the group primarily as a threat, relying on domination or fear to obtain compliance, using generalized labels, and giving limited weight to the child's role or developmental status. Indicators of a protective orientation include differentiated assessment, explanation of police action, proportionate control, privacy protection, family or PPA involvement, and attention to restorative or referral options. The same officer may move between these orientations depending on threat, supervision, unit expectations, and available procedures. The organizational task is not to eliminate tactical readiness, but to ensure that readiness is governed by legality, proportionality, and child-sensitive judgment.

The structured evidence matrix in Table 1 addresses a limitation in the original manuscript, which relied heavily on broad narrative claims. It makes visible which source classes support each theme and limits the resulting inference. Direct quotations should be added only after the author verifies consent, de-identification, and the risk of recognizing child participants. Where complaint or case records are used, the final submitted version should provide non-identifying document codes and dates so that the chain from evidence to finding can be audited without exposing protected information.

Table 1. Cross-source evidence matrix

Analytical theme	Interview source classes	Document source classes	Cautious analytical inference
Coercive handling in public-order encounters	Police personnel; children and families; external oversight and community representatives	Complaint records; case-handling documents; use-of-force and child-protection rules	The dataset reports recurring verbal or physical coercion in patrol and public-order settings, but does not support attributing the pattern to every officer or every brawl response.
Child-sensitive handling	PPA personnel and officials; children and families; child-protection stakeholders	Juvenile justice, restorative justice, ethics, and child-protection materials	Protective, communicative, and legally oriented practices were more visible in specialist PPA handling than in general patrol settings.
Organizational normalization	Police personnel and supervisors;	Complaint, supervision,	Repetition, senior modelling, fragmented guidance, and

Analytical theme	Interview source classes	Document source classes	Cautious analytical inference
Change requirements	external oversight actors	training, and procedural materials	inconsistent supervision may normalize practices that depart from child-sensitive standards.
	All reported stakeholder categories	Applicable regulations, internal governance documents, and scholarly literature	Sustainable change requires simultaneous intervention in individual competence, social norms, work methods, and governance arrangements.

Source: Reconstruction from the manuscript's reported interview categories, document review, and thematic findings. Participant counts and document identifiers require author confirmation.

Organizational Mechanisms that Normalize Ethical Risk

Four interacting mechanisms help explain how an unethical handling practice can become normalized. The first is individual capability. General-duty officers may have unequal knowledge of juvenile justice, child development, trauma, communication, and restorative pathways. A rule may be formally known but not recognized as relevant during a rapidly escalating encounter. Ethical competence therefore requires more than memorizing prohibitions; it includes moral awareness, legal issue recognition, threat discrimination, judgment among alternatives, commitment to the chosen ethical option, and the practical skill to carry it out.

The second mechanism is social. Police learn not only from formal training but also from supervisors, senior colleagues, stories about effective policing, and peer reactions after an incident. When harsh treatment is praised as decisive, not questioned during debriefing, or reproduced by senior personnel, it acquires normative force. Conversely, a supervisor who requires justification for force, protects officers who report concerns, and models respectful communication makes child-sensitive conduct safer and more credible. This is why the article uses leadership congruence, discussability, and peer support as ethical-culture indicators rather than assuming that written policy determines practice.

The third mechanism is the organization of work. The source manuscript describes insufficient separation between public-order control and child-sensitive follow-up, limited PPA involvement at the earliest stage, and an absence or incompleteness of integrated guidance. A fragmented workflow can cause a child to move from street control to custody, interview, documentation, and family contact without a clear point at which age, role, vulnerability, or diversion eligibility is reassessed. The remedy is not to require PPA personnel to attend every patrol. It is to define consultation triggers, handover standards, mandatory records, referral pathways, and responsibilities that connect frontline action to specialist support.

The fourth mechanism is governance and accountability. Incomplete use-of-force reporting, weak complaint triage, inconsistent supervisory review, or the absence of cross-unit evaluation reduces the organization's ability to distinguish justified action from preventable harm. It also permits each incident to be treated as isolated. Ethical governance requires records that can answer basic questions: what threat was perceived, what alternatives were attempted, what force was used, whether the child was injured, when a guardian or lawyer was contacted, whether identity was protected, whether PPA was consulted, and what corrective action followed. These are management questions as much as legal questions.

These mechanisms show why the claim of a *deviant subculture* must be used cautiously. The material supports an institutional risk of normalization where recurring practices are learned and insufficiently corrected. It does not justify labeling the entire Polrestabas, a whole unit, or every officer as deviant. A more defensible conclusion is that organizational arrangements may create pockets of practice in which coercive handling becomes easier to reproduce than child-sensitive handling. This formulation preserves the seriousness of the

finding without exceeding the qualitative evidence.

The Integrated Ethical Culture Change Model

The proposed model integrates three analytical functions. First, ethical-culture theory defines the desired organizational condition. Policies, practices, and norms should consistently encourage ethical conduct and inhibit misconduct. For a public police organization, this corporate-origin framework must be adapted to public-law duties: legality, coercive authority, human rights, external oversight, and accountability to affected communities. The model therefore adds supervision, complaint protection, force review, and child-rights compliance to the general policy-practice-norm structure (Chadegani & Jari, 2016; Kaptein, 2008).

Second, Lewin's sequence supplies the temporal architecture. *Unfreezing* means establishing that the existing routine is neither inevitable nor institutionally acceptable. It requires review of cases and complaints, leadership acknowledgment of the gap, safe discussion of operational pressures, and a shared legal baseline. *Changing* means implementing new competencies, supervisory routines, workflows, and accountability instruments. *Refreezing* means embedding the changes in recurrent training, promotion and evaluation expectations, standard documentation, recognition and discipline, and periodic audit. Refreezing is not permanent closure; it is stabilization with a mechanism for continued learning.

Third, the systemic targets prevent change from being reduced to training. The individual target covers knowledge, communication, de-escalation, child development, and moral decision-making. The social target covers leadership example, peer norms, psychological safety for reporting, and supervisory coaching. Work methods cover age and role assessment, operational briefing, PPA consultation, use-of-force reporting, referral, diversion, and family communication. Governance covers SOPs, complaint handling, data review, ethical discipline, external coordination, and evaluation. Each target responds directly to a mechanism identified in the case analysis.

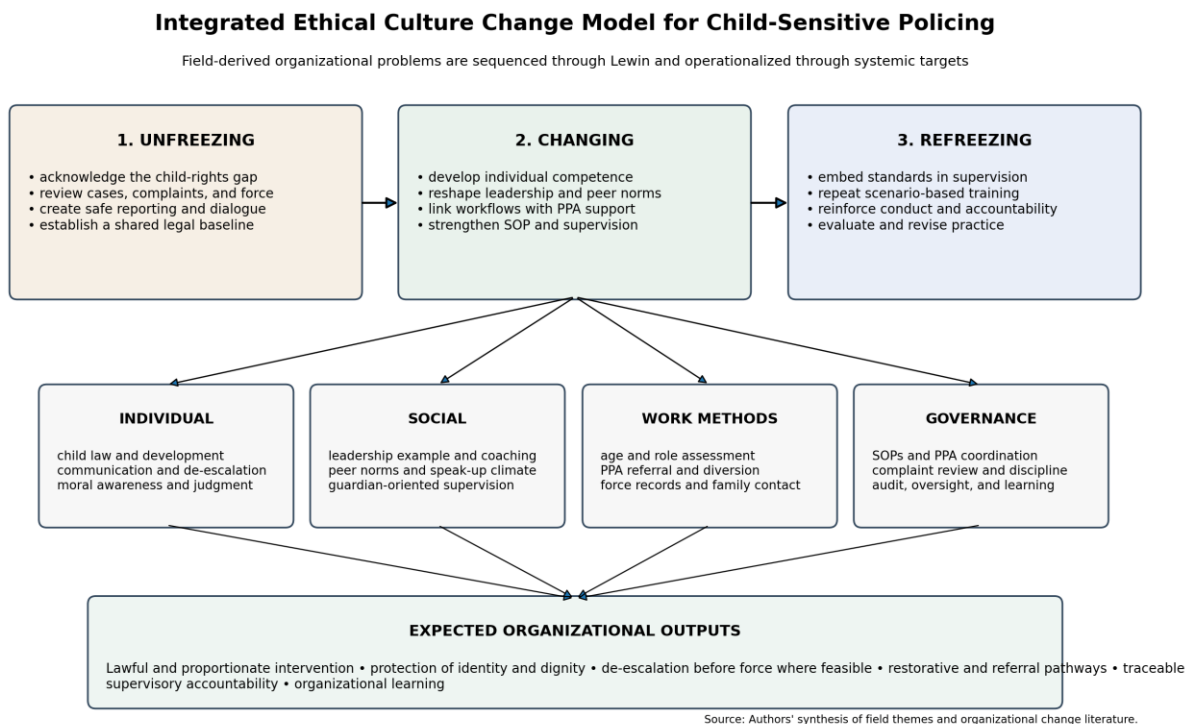
The model's added value is thus not the novelty of any one component. Its contribution is the traceable connection between field-derived risks, an ethical standard, a sequence of change, and auditable management instruments. Table 2 shows this logic. Figure 1 presents the model visually. The model remains a normative and organizational proposal: the present study does not test whether implementation reduces force, complaints, or ethical violations. Those outcomes require subsequent evaluation using a transparent baseline and mixed qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Table 2. Analytical integration of the ethical culture change model

Model component	Function in the integrated framework	Semarang case problem addressed	Expected management instrument
Ethical culture	Defines the substantive standard: policies, practices, norms, leadership example, discussability, enforcement, and accountability must support ethical conduct and inhibit misconduct.	A gap between formal child-protection rules and recurring operational habits.	Ethics-linked SOPs; supervisor review; safe reporting; proportionate discipline; recognition of ethical conduct.
Lewin's change sequence	Orders the process into unfreezing, changing, and refreezing so that reform is not reduced to one-off training.	Entrenched routines and reluctance to question inherited handling practices.	Diagnostic review; staged implementation; consolidation through routine

Model component	Function in the integrated framework	Semarang case problem addressed	Expected management instrument
Systemic change targets	Locates intervention in four mutually dependent domains: individual, social, work methods, and governance.	The source of risk is distributed across competence, peer norms, fragmented workflow, and incomplete oversight.	evaluation. Training and coaching; leadership standards; PPA referral protocol; force documentation; complaint and audit controls.
Moral decision process	Connects awareness, judgment, intent, and action to scenario-based police decision-making.	Officers may know a rule but fail to identify its relevance or act on it under pressure.	Scenario assessment; reflective supervision; decision logs; feedback on proportionality and child impact.

Source: Authors' analysis.



Source: Authors' synthesis of field themes and organizational change literature.

Figure 1: Integrated Ethical Culture Change Model for Child-Sensitive Policing.

Source: Authors' synthesis of field themes and organizational change literature.

Operational Implications for Police Management

Implementation should begin with an interim child-sensitive instruction while a full SOP is developed. The instruction should require age and role verification; prohibit humiliating treatment and unauthorized disclosure

of identity; define when PPA consultation is mandatory; require medical attention and guardian notification; link diversion and restorative pathways to legal eligibility; and require a written justification for force. It should also clarify that protecting the child and protecting officers are compatible objectives: accurate risk assessment, communication, coordinated tactics, and documentation reduce uncertainty for both.

Training should be scenario-based rather than lecture-only. Scenarios should involve mixed groups of children, uncertain roles, weapons discovered after initial contact, injured children, filming by bystanders, pressure from crowds, and conflicting information. Officers should be assessed on threat recognition, communication, tactical positioning, proportionality, privacy, PPA referral, reporting, and post-incident care. De-escalation research warns that training alone has an uneven evidence base and must be reinforced through supervision and organizational systems (Engel et al., 2020). Field coaching, after-action review, and feedback are therefore integral rather than optional.

Supervision should use a standardized review instrument for juvenile-brawl incidents. The instrument should examine the reason for intervention, perceived threat, sequence of commands, force level, injuries, age verification, separation of suspects from victims and witnesses, family and legal contact, PPA involvement, diversion assessment, confidentiality, and completeness of records. A review that identifies a procedural weakness should trigger an accountable corrective action: coaching, additional training, workflow repair, discipline where warranted, or policy revision. The purpose is not automatic punishment but consistent organizational learning.

Complaint handling requires both independence and protection. Children and families may fear retaliation or may not understand internal police procedures. Complaints should therefore be received through accessible channels, registered promptly, protected from informal settlement pressure, and reviewed alongside body-worn video, CCTV, medical records, custody logs, force reports, and witness accounts where available. External child-protection and oversight institutions can contribute to periodic anonymized review without assuming operational command. This arrangement strengthens credibility while preserving lawful internal responsibility.

Evaluation should avoid a single metric. A decline in complaints may reflect better practice, but it may also reflect reduced access or confidence. Useful indicators include completeness of force reports, timeliness of guardian contact, PPA consultation, documented diversion assessment, injuries, repeated findings against the same unit, completion and retention of scenario competence, stakeholder experience, and the quality of corrective actions. Table 3 translates the model into staged responsibilities, outputs, risks, and controls. Public trust should be treated as a possible long-term implication, not as an outcome measured by this study.

Table 3. Operational implementation roadmap

Stage	Responsible level	Priority action	Verifiable indicator	Principal risk and control
0-3 months	Polrestabas leadership, Satreskrim/PPA, Samapta, Propam, training function	Issue an interim child-sensitive handling instruction; review recent brawl cases and force reports; map referral and diversion pathways.	Approved instruction; completed case review; named focal points; documented referral map.	Symbolic compliance. Control through signed supervisory review and documented follow-up.
3-6 months	Training function, unit commanders, PPA specialists	Deliver scenario-based training on age assessment, communication, de-escalation, lawful force,	Completion records; pre/post scenario assessment;	Training without transfer to practice. Control through field

Stage	Responsible level	Priority action	Verifiable indicator	Principal risk and control
6-12 months	Polrestabes leadership, Propam, operational units, external child-protection partners	privacy, family contact, diversion, and trauma-sensitive interaction.	supervisor observation checklist.	coaching and repeat assessment.
		Institutionalize an integrated SOP, complaint triage, mandatory force documentation, PPA consultation triggers, and periodic external case review.	SOP adoption; proportion of cases with complete records; response time to complaints; PPA consultation rate.	Defensive reporting or data manipulation. Control through cross-source audit and confidentiality safeguards.
Continuous	Polda and Polrestabes evaluation functions	Evaluate child outcomes, proportionality, complaint trends, officer learning, and consistency across units; revise policy and training based on findings.	Quarterly dashboard; closed-loop corrective actions; reduced repeat findings; documented policy revision.	Metric fixation. Control through qualitative file review and stakeholder feedback, not numerical targets alone.

Source: Authors' analysis.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that police handling of juvenile brawls at Polrestabes Semarang cannot be understood through a single organizational label. The reported data reveal divergent operational orientations. Patrol and public-order encounters were associated with accounts of verbal or physical coercion, while specialist PPA handling was described as more communicative, protective, and legally oriented. The distinction does not establish two fixed categories of officers. It shows that ethical conduct is conditioned by operational setting, specialist competence, leadership, peer expectations, workflow, guidance, documentation, and supervision.

The legal baseline requires police to maintain order and protect safety while distinguishing children in conflict with the law from victims, witnesses, and bystanders; protecting identity and dignity; using force lawfully and proportionately; and assessing restorative or diversion pathways where legally available. The central institutional problem is therefore not whether the police should exercise authority, but whether the organization consistently structures that authority around child-sensitive legality and traceable accountability.

The article contributes an integrated Ethical Culture Change Model. Ethical-culture theory defines the desired alignment of policies, practices, leadership, norms, and accountability. Lewin's model sequences the transition through unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. The systemic model directs intervention toward individual capability, social norms, work methods, and governance. The resulting framework converts an abstract call for cultural reform into a staged set of police-management instruments. Its effectiveness remains to be empirically tested; the study supports its analytical and institutional rationale rather than claiming proven causal effects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Polrestabes Semarang should adopt an integrated child-sensitive handling protocol for juvenile-brawl incidents. The protocol should define age and role assessment, lawful-force standards, PPA consultation triggers, privacy protection, medical and family contact, diversion screening, handover, documentation, and

complaint review. Unit-level procedures should be aligned with the Juvenile Criminal Justice System Law, the Child Protection Law, police restorative-justice rules, use-of-force rules, human-rights standards, and the Police Professional Code of Ethics.

The training and personnel functions should develop recurrent scenario-based modules that connect moral awareness, judgment, intent, and action to operational decisions. Completion should not be measured only by attendance. Officers and supervisors should demonstrate competence in communication, tactical de-escalation, child development, proportionality, documentation, and referral. PPA personnel should serve as specialist instructors and consultation partners without transferring all responsibility away from general-duty units.

Commanders and Propam should institute mandatory supervisory review of force, injury, identity disclosure, and complaints involving children. Review results should produce documented follow-up and be aggregated for organizational learning. Accessible complaint channels and anti-retaliation safeguards should be developed with child-protection institutions and legal-assistance providers. The model should be piloted, independently evaluated, and revised before wider replication. Evaluation should combine administrative indicators with confidential qualitative feedback from officers, children, families, and oversight actors.

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