

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAM - AR

Guidelines For The School Resource Officer (SRO) Program

The SRO program has certain guidelines to be understood by the law enforcement office and the school staff.

The SRO is, first, a law enforcement officer whose primary duty is the prevention of violent behavior and the detection and the apprehension of criminals.

A. The SRO will be expected to:

1. Become thoroughly familiar with the Talbot County Public Schools student handbooks, standards of social behavior and the principal's scope of authority.
2. Be visible in various locations in the school throughout the school day.
3. Be in full uniform, including firearm when reporting to their assigned school. An inspection of the SRO uniform, equipment and vehicle, will be conducted regularly by their supervisor.
4. Work primarily on a Monday through Friday schedule with Saturday and Sunday off. The SRO will report to the assigned school at predetermined times.

B. The SRO shall not enforce school regulations.

Infractions of school rules, as opposed to crimes or violations of laws, shall be handled at the school level. SROs shall be available for advice, assistance, and consultation; at the discretion of school administration.

1. The rights, duties, and privileges of the school authorities will not be undermined by the program.
2. The SRO will not become associated with repressive tactics by handling incidents such as school jokes or pranks.
3. The school's disciplinary mechanisms will function without law enforcement interference.
4. The development of good communications between the SRO and the school faculty members will make a positive difference in the climate of the school.
5. The SRO will be able to prevent disruptive behavior and crime more easily in a caring rather than a hostile atmosphere.

C. The SRO shall have no academic responsibility while assigned to a school.

1. The SRO will not be considered a teacher of the school, but rather as a qualified and competent law enforcement officer who can give presentations and to co-teach on such topics as safety, driver practices, drug abuse, police community relations, and other law enforcement related topics as appropriate.
2. If the SRO is presenting in a class, they will be treated as a guest speaker and will, at no time, be left in the classroom unattended.

D. SRO interviews with victims or suspects on school property

All school interviews with students who are suspects, witnesses to, or victims of criminal or delinquent acts, either on or off school property, should always be conducted with knowledge of the school principal or his designated representative, if they are to be conducted on school property. SROs concerned with obtaining admissions or confessions by children/suspects must operate within the guidelines set forth by the Talbot County Public Schools and the Governing Law Enforcement Agency's policies pertaining to juvenile rights waiver.

E. Confidential School Records

The use of confidential school records by the SROs shall be prohibited except under regulated conditions. When the SRO finds it necessary to utilize any school record, it shall be done only with the principal's approval. The social records of a child and his family, which include personal histories, clinical evaluations, agency reports, and other relevant private details, fall into the same category of privacy as do Juvenile Court records and should be restricted to authorized persons only.

F. Professional Development and Training

The Governing Law Enforcement Agency and the school System shall work collaboratively to provide necessary on going training for all School Resource Officers. Included in this training shall be knowledge of policies, procedures, and programs in schools that will help to make the Resource Officers' jobs most effective. The National Association of School Resource Officers training, in addition to training through the Governing Law Enforcement Agency shall be provided for School Resource Officers as deemed as necessary.

G. Emergency Situations

In emergency situations, the SRO may be justified in taking direct law enforcement action, both in and out of school. If the use of force or an arrest becomes necessary, the SRO must be guided by state laws, the juvenile code and the Governing Law Enforcement Agency guidelines, particularly as they apply to children. Whenever possible, school authorities and the parents of any child involved shall be notified as quickly as possible.

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