School Resource Officer Engagement Guidelines

It is recognized that every situation cannot be predicted or determined by these guidelines, and members of the Oklahoma City Police Department (OCPD) SRO Program may deviate from these standard operating procedures if facts and circumstances require them to act for the safety of students, staff, citizens, officers, or suspects. SROs may rely on their training and experience in choosing alternate actions that are reasonable and appropriate for the circumstances. In the event of a conflict between this manual and the OCPD Policy Manual, the provisions of the Policy shall control.

Program Goals

- Create and maintain a safe, secure and orderly learning environment for students and staff
- Establish an open channel of communications with students, parents and staff
- Bridge the gap between the police and young people and increase positive attitudes toward law enforcement officials
- Teach the values of our legal system
- Promote respect for people and property
- Reduce juvenile crime by helping students formulate an awareness of roles, authority and justice
- Allow students access to the legal system
- Give students a realistic picture of our laws and legal system so they will have an investment in supporting and improving it
- Teach students how to avoid becoming a victim through self-awareness and crime prevention
- Take a personal interest in students and their activities
A School Resource Officer Program
What It Is, What It Provides, Who It Benefits and How

What It Is:
A School Resource Officer (SRO) Program places officers in schools in an effort to create and maintain a safe learning environment for our youth. In its most successful format, it is community based. It reflects a comprehensive community focus which integrates the SRO’s efforts with the existing network of resources in the community. The SROs are more than police officers in schools. The schools are their communities and the SROs serve as a resource for their communities— the schools.

Roles of the SRO:
First and foremost SROs are law enforcement officers whose primary purpose is to keep schools a safe environment in which to learn.
Secondly, SROs are law related educators who instruct students and school staff about the law and their rights and responsibilities under the law.
Third, SROs serve as liaisons, working collaboratively with others to provide links to law enforcement and other community resources and services.
Fourth, SROs serve as role models for youth.

What the SRO Program Provides:
1. It is a mechanism through which safe learning environments can be created and maintained;
2. It provides the community with an efficient, effective program;
3. And it saves money because the approach associated with it is one of prevention.

Who Benefits and How:
1. Students benefit because their schools are safer. They learn about their rights and responsibilities under the law and they have an additional resource available to them.
2. Parents benefit because their children are in safe learning environments. They also have greater access to information about their rights and responsibilities under the law.
3. Teachers and school administrators benefit because they are working in safe environments and they have another resource available to them;
4. Law enforcement officers benefit because they are better able to serve and protect their communities in an efficient, effective, and community based way;
5. The juvenile justice system benefits from the strengthened approach to youth who violate the law.
6. Taxpayers benefit because more efficient, effective strategies are used to address youth crime and violence.
7. The community benefits because the program strengthens interagency collaboration to tailor solutions to effectively address school related crime and disorder.
Timetable for a Successful Beginning

- **Before school begins**
  - Meeting administrators: A critical step. Meet early with the principal and other members of the school’s administrative team to discuss expectations and set the ground rules for communication and ongoing collaboration.
  - Reviewing each item in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and related SRO Program operational procedure is a good idea. The MOU is typically developed at higher levels (between the Superintendent of School and the Sheriff/Chief). Exactly how it will be implemented at the individual school level requires careful review and clear understanding by the SRO and building administrators.
  - Meeting teachers and other staff: Teachers and other school staff members typically return to school a week or two before students arrive. This time is typically spent in training sessions, faculty meetings, and classroom preparation. This is an excellent opportunity for the SRO to be introduced, to give a brief presentation on the role of the SRO, and to talk informally with staff members.

- **First day of school**
  - Should include an introduction to the entire student body. (Or at any time there is a new SRO)

- **First weeks of school**
  - Introduction to all students in classroom setting.
  - SRO should be highly visible, actively engage in informal discussions with students and staff, taking advantage of every opportunity to explain the SRO role.

- **First months of school**
  - Conduct brief presentations on the role of the SRO to students in the classroom setting.

- **First year of school**
  - SRO should conduct brief presentations on the role of the SRO to parents at PTA/PTO meetings, to any community advisory councils which may exist, and to professional groups associated with the school.

- **In subsequent years**
  - Establish opportunities for new students and staff members to meet the SRO and to be oriented to the SRO Program.

**Location of the SRO**

Where a SRO is housed in a particular school tends to be a function of space availability, layout of the school, working relationships with administrators, and convenience. Many have found that proximity to the principal or administrative staff with which the SRO works is an important factor in SRO Program efficiency and effectiveness. Others have found that because SROs are typically “out and about” the school campus maintaining a high level of visibility and rarely in an office, the actual location of the “office” is less important than accessibility to school administrators, records, telephones, and an appropriate space to interview students. If the SRO’s office is located away from the main administrative office, it is critical that the SRO be integrated into the school’s communication system.
School/Police Coordination

1. The principal should establish and nurture a relationship with members of the law enforcement agency. He/she should hold regular meetings with law enforcement managers to discuss school related problems. These meetings should be on a routine basis and not necessarily be in response to a specific problem or issue.

2. The principal should work with law enforcement to develop certain public safety related policies and procedures, i.e., bomb threats, threatened gang violence, demonstrations, natural disasters, etc. The police should also be invited to sit in on plans for graduation, athletic events, prom, and other activities where crowd control is an issue.

3. Policies should be established with the law enforcement agency concerning the police coming onto school property to arrest

4. The police should be consulted concerning school construction projects.

5. If possible, the principal should choose a single law enforcement officer to coordinate security for afterschool events where security is required. Using a single coordinator will allow for the development of an enforcement philosophy that is relatively constant and does not change from event to event. The principal and staff should meet with the officer periodically to review security at these events.

Duties and Responsibilities of School Resource Officers

1. Each SRO shall be assigned to a school on a full-time basis. During those hours that school is in regular session, the SRO may also be assigned additional responsibilities as determined by the SRO leadership in the case of an emergency.

2. The school principal may request the SRO to assist in any additional duties that are mutually agreed upon by the principal and the SRO that do not violate the terms of this Agreement.

3. The SRO operates under the specific supervision of the OCPD. When a situation arises regarding a matter, which is in the purview of law enforcement, the SRO will fall under the supervision of the OCPD and will answer to the appropriate chain of command.

4. SRO Instructional Responsibility:
   a.) The very heart of the SRO program is the SRO mentoring students. This builds the initial rapport and credibility with the students and is necessary for a successful program.
   b.) The SRO shall act as a guest speaker when invited to do so by the principal or a member of the faculty. The SRO shall not be asked to act as a substitute teacher.
   c.) The instruction may include, but is not limited to:
      1.) Police and their role in society:
      2.) Laws
      3.) Juvenile and adult criminal justice system;
      4.) Career opportunities in law enforcement;
      5.) Drug prevention/education (e.g. DARE or similar programs);
      6.) Any other law related class that may be needed.

5. Additional Responsibilities of the SRO:
a) The SRO shall coordinate all activities with the principal and staff members and will seek permission, advice, and guidance prior to enacting any program within the school.

b) The SRO shall initiate and moderate individual and group discussion with students, based upon material presented in class to further establish rapport with the students.

c) When requested and as scheduling allows, the SRO shall attend parent/faculty meetings to solicit support and understanding of the program, as well as assist parents and faculty members in law enforcement related problems involving students.

d) As scheduling allows, the SRO shall be available for conferences with students, parents, and faculty/staff members in order to assist them with problems of a law enforcement or crime-related nature. Confidential information obtained shall not be disclosed except as provided by the applicable State and/or Federal Law.

e) The SRO shall become familiar with all community agencies, which offer assistance to children, youths, and their families such as mental health clinics, drug treatment centers, etc. The SRO shall make referrals to such agencies when necessary thereby acting as a resource person to students, faculty, and staff the school and/or community. The SRO shall notify the principal of the referrals as soon as practicable.

f) The SRO shall assist the principal in developing emergency plans and strategies to prevent and/or minimize dangerous situations such as hostage situations, armed person(s) on campus, student disturbances, and natural/man-made disasters.

g) The SRO shall take law enforcement action as required. As soon as practical, the SRO shall make the principal of the school aware of such action. The SRO shall take appropriate law enforcement action against intruders and unwanted guests who appear at the school and related school functions to the extent the SRO may do so under the authority of the law.

h) The SRO shall give assistance to other law enforcement officers in matters regarding the SRO’s school assignment.

i) The SRO shall, whenever possible, participate in or attend school functions.

j) The SRO may be assigned investigations relating to runaways, thefts, child abuse or neglect, or any crime. The SRO may be asked to conduct investigations at other schools, or assist other SRO’s/police officers in law enforcement activities at different schools or other locations, when directed to do SRO leadership.

k) The SRO shall maintain detailed and accurate records of the operation of the School Resource Officer Program and shall submit other reports of an instructional nature as required by the principal, school staff, and/or OCPD.

l) **The SRO shall NOT act as a school disciplinarian, as disciplining students is a school responsibility. However, if the principal believes that an incident is a violation of the law, the principal may contact the SRO and the SRO will then determine whether law enforcement action is appropriate. SRO’s may be used for regularly assigned lunchroom duties, bus duties, hall monitors, or other monitoring duties. SRO’s are not to be used as routine crossing guards or for continuing vehicle traffic control. However, if there is a temporary problem, the SRO may assist the school until the problem is resolved, with the presence of a school administrator.**
ARREST PROCEDURES
School Resource Officers are expected to be familiar with school rules and their application with the school. Routinely, rule infractions will not be handled as violations of law, but instead referred to the principal for action. Any questions related to the enforcement of rules versus laws within the school should be discussed with the principal’s Instructional Leadership Director (ILD) or the office of Student Discipline and Compliance. This specifically applies to general standards of conduct.

The following procedures will be adhered to where arrests of students or staff become necessary:

1. The arrest of a student or employee of the school with a warrant or petition should be coordinated through the principal whenever practical.
2. Persons whose presence on schools grounds has been restricted or forbidden or whose presence is in violation of law shall be arrested for trespassing.
3. Arrest of students or staff during school hours or on school grounds shall be reported to the principal as soon as practical.
4. The principal must complete a Student Arrest Form and scan it to the appropriate parties listed on the form.
5. If the arrest is related to a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and may result in a long term suspension, the Office of Student Discipline and Compliance must be contacted for a Long Term Suspension number and the scheduling of an Evidentiary Hearing, if applicable.