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Roles and Responsibilities of the School Resource Officer

Purpose

The school resource officer's primary purpose is to make sure the students and faculty are safe. Further, they are expected to:

- "Keep the peace" to facilitate learning
- To serve as a positive role model
- Act as a liaison between law enforcement and the school community
- Be visible and accessible
- Act as a student "reality counselor," providing students with accurate descriptions of how their behavior might be addressed in similar situations as adults
- Assist in school safety plans
- Assist in the planning and practice of safety drills (e.g., fire, evacuation, lockdown)
- Investigate criminal activity on school campus or off school campus regarding the school district

An effective SRO program is predicated on a productive, working relationship between the SRO and school administration. The SRO and administration share the same vision in working as a team to provide safe and secure schools.

Responsibilities and Roles of the SRO

The responsibilities of the SRO as set forth below shall be performed under the supervision of the principal of the building in which the SRO is serving.

- (a) Abide by board of education policies and consult with and coordinate activities through the school's principal. However, the SRO shall remain fully responsible to the Sullivan County Sherriff's Department in all matters relating to employment and supervision.

- (b) Develop an expertise in presenting various subjects, particularly in meeting federal and state mandates in drug abuse prevention education, and shall provide these presentations at the request of school personnel in accordance with established curriculum.
- (c) Encourage group discussions about law enforcement with students, faculty, and parents.
- (d) Under no circumstances shall the SRO be a school disciplinarian. The SRO will not be involved in the enforcement of disciplinary infractions, such as assigning detentions, suspensions, etc.
- (e) Attend meetings with parents and faculty groups to solicit their support and understanding of the SRO program and to promote awareness of latest SRO functions.
- (f) Where possible, serve as a member of the school student services committee, familiarizing all community agencies which offer assistance to youths and their families, such as mental health clinics, drug treatment centers, etc. Where necessary, the SRO may make recommendations for referrals to outside agencies.
- (g) Confer with the principal to develop plans and strategies to prevent and/or minimize dangerous situations on or near campus or involving students at school related activities.
- (h) Perform such duties as determined by a given school principal. However, such duties shall not include things normally assigned to school personnel such as lunchroom or hall duty. Nothing herein shall preclude the SRO from being available in an area where interaction with students is expected.
- (i) Familiarize and abide by board of education policies and applicable law concerning interviews with students should it become necessary to conduct formal law enforcement interviews with students or staff on school property or at school functions under the jurisdiction of the school district.
- (j) Should it become necessary to conduct formal police interviews with students, the SRO shall adhere to district policies, department policies, and any applicable federal or state legal requirements with respect to such interviews. Reports by the district to the police shall be made pursuant to applicable district policies, laws, and regulations.
- (k) The SRO shall act as a liaison for other law enforcement officers in matters regarding board of education policies while those other officers are on school grounds.

- (l) In order to assure the peaceful operation of school related programs the SRO shall, whenever possible, participate in or attend school functions.
- (m) The SRO shall reaffirm the role as law enforcement officer by wearing the Sullivan County Sherriff's Department uniform, unless doing so would be inappropriate for scheduled school activities. However, the uniform shall be worn at events where it will enhance the image of the SRO and their ability to perform their duties.
- (n) Whenever possible the SRO shall coordinate with the principal and be responsible for law enforcement and security activity at extracurricular events as determined by the principal.

It is understood and agreed that the SRO in pursuing the performance of their duties shall coordinate and communicate with the school principal or the principal's designee.

The SRO is also expected to:

- Serve on the school- and district level safety committees
- Conduct regular school security assessments
- Work collaboratively to identify and find solutions to problems of crime and disorder
- Serve on the school's threat assessment team
- Attend superintendent meetings, when requested
- Attend board of education meetings or large school functions when requested

School Searches

School resource officers need probable cause or a warrant to search; school officials need reasonable suspicion.

When searching for a weapon, especially a firearm, the SRO or law enforcement shall be immediately contacted.

When school officials find any evidence that can be potentially criminal, they will preserve and secure the evidence and immediately contact the SRO.