



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

GENERAL ORDER OPS-67 SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 20, 2014

This General Order contains the following numbered sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. ROLES
- III. RESPONSIBILITIES
- IV. CANCELLATION

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Howard County Department of Police (HCPD) to deploy resources to provide a safe environment for students and employees within the Howard County Public School System. The School Resource Program involves assigning a School Resource Officer (SRO) to each Howard County public high school and selected public middle schools to increase police visibility and to initiate proactive intervention strategies in a collaborative effort with students, staff, parents, and the community. These deployments shall be consistent with any Memorandum of Understanding in place between the Howard County Public School System and the HCPD.

II. ROLES

A. High School Resource Officer (HSRO)

The HSRO is first and foremost a law enforcement officer. This responsibility shall take precedence over any other duties. The HSRO, however, shall make every effort to ensure that his time is balanced to include law enforcement, teaching, counseling, and mentoring. The HSRO shall:

1. Enforce laws and/or notify school administration of disciplinary issues so the school can take action as appropriate.
2. Act as a resource with respect to delinquency prevention.
3. Provide guidance on ethical issues in a classroom setting.
4. Provide individual counseling and/or mentoring to students.
5. Teach students the role of law enforcement in society.

B. Middle School Resource Officer (MSRO)

The MSRO is first and foremost a law enforcement officer. This responsibility shall take precedence over any other duties. The MSRO shall make every effort to ensure that the focus is on mentoring and interacting with students. The MSRO will also balance teaching and counseling. The MSRO shall:

1. Enforce laws and/or notify school administration of disciplinary issues so the school can take action as appropriate.
2. Act as a resource with respect to delinquency prevention.
3. Provide guidance on ethical issues in a classroom setting.
4. Provide individual counseling and/or mentoring to students.
5. Teach students the role of law enforcement in society.

6. Participate in structured after school programs that promote community oriented policing strategies and positive student behaviors.
 7. Provide instruction to school staff on professional development days for matters related to the Maryland Model Gang Policy (Safe Schools Act of 2010).
- C. School Resource Officer Supervisor (SRO Supervisor)
- Each SRO Supervisor shall:
1. Provide general supervision of the assigned SRO, including reviewing this policy with each SRO at the beginning of every school year.
 2. Meet with Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) officials and/or principals at least annually to review this General Order and any applicable agreements.
 3. Maintain contact with the appropriate school official(s) to address any issues or concerns.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES¹

- A. General Operating Guidelines
1. The SRO will primarily work Monday through Friday. The work schedule may fluctuate to meet the operational needs of the Police Department or the School System. Only an SRO Supervisor can approve an SRO's attendance at functions or authorize schedule changes, with the exception of school-related secondary employment functions that are scheduled separately.
 2. SROs shall work in full uniform (to include their radio) at their assigned school(s), unless otherwise authorized by the appropriate SRO Supervisor. An inspection of the SRO's uniform, equipment, and vehicle will be conducted at least once per month by the appropriate SRO Supervisor, or his designee. The results of all inspections will be included in the SRO Supervisor's monthly report.
 3. SROs shall record and report programs conducted, classes taught, counseling and/or mediation contacts, arrests, and other information required by the SRO Supervisor on a monthly activity report. Monthly activity reports must be submitted to the appropriate SRO Supervisor by the fourth day of the following month (officers on planned leave must turn in their monthly report prior to the scheduled absence).
 4. All SROs are to remain on their assigned school campuses unless excused for official police business or with approval of the appropriate SRO Supervisor. The appropriate SRO Supervisor must make personal contact with school officials when the regularly assigned SRO is off or away from the school for the day, and shall assign a nearby on duty SRO to make periodic checks of the school throughout the day.
 5. SROs will notify the Communications Division and a school administrator prior to leaving the school grounds. In addition, SROs will keep Communications informed of their status within the school by utilizing the appropriate primary channel (i.e. A1 for schools in Northern District and B1 for schools in Southern District).
 6. Watch Commanders, through the appropriate SRO Supervisor, will arrange beat assignments when the schools have closed due to weather.

¹ CALEA 44.2.4

B. Law Enforcement Duties

SROs shall be responsible for the preliminary investigation of all criminal incidents that occur on their campus during their duty hours. An SRO may be relieved by a member from the Criminal Investigations Bureau or patrol officer at the direction of the on-duty Watch Commander.

C. Reporting Procedures

1. Police response to emergency calls
 - a. The school will call the Communications Division (911 Center) for any emergency call.
 - b. If the SRO is on duty and available at the location of the incident, the SRO will be the primary responding unit.
 - c. If the SRO is on duty, but not available, the reporting high school and Communications will make the officer aware of the incident.
2. For non-emergency calls, Communications shall attempt to raise the SRO on his radio. If unsuccessful, Communications will call the school office or the officer's mobile phone.
3. The SRO and the SRO's Supervisor shall notify each other and the Youth Services Division Commander of any incidents which may have an impact on the surrounding school community, to include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Abduction
 - b. Arson threats
 - c. Assaults (serious)
 - d. Breaking and entering
 - e. Bomb threats
 - f. Child abuse/sex offenses
 - g. Robbery
 - h. Vehicle theft
 - i. Potential for disturbances or fights

D. School/Community Incidents Requiring Notification to the SRO Section

1. All reports of incidents that occur on school property and are handled by an SRO will be forwarded to the appropriate SRO Supervisor, who will coordinate follow-up responsibility. On those cases where the SRO is assigned case responsibility, the appropriate SRO Supervisor will complete a case disposition report using HCPD Form 2139, or via the County e-mail system, and forward it to the reporting officer and his Supervisor within five (5) days.
2. All reports generated by the School Violence Tip Line will be forwarded to the assigned SRO as outlined in Special Order 2008-01, Police Tip Information.
3. Any reports that could impact the school community should be forwarded to the appropriate SRO Supervisor.

E. Notification Responsibility

Communication and cooperation must exist between all departmental components in order to successfully manage criminal and non-criminal incidents. This requires prompt notification to various components on a case-by-case basis.

1. The SRO is required to keep his departmentally sanctioned mobile phone in his possession and active while on-duty.
2. The SRO will notify Communications, preferably via radio, as to his duty assignment for that day and a way to contact them if they are not available by the radio.
3. The SRO shall notify his Supervisor (or area Sergeant if Supervisor is unavailable) of any extraordinary or unusual events or situations involving his school.

F. Arrests

1. In certain situations, the SRO may be required to affect a physical arrest. This will be conducted consistent with policy and procedures, set forth in General Order OPS-04, Arrest Procedures. The school principal or assistant principal will be notified as soon as possible of any arrests on school property during school hours.
2. The SRO will have the discretion to use the referral arrest procedure, set forth in General Order OPS-04, Arrest Procedures, for charging a juvenile with a misdemeanor crime committed on school property.

G. Truants

1. An officer may **NOT** take a juvenile into custody simply because they are truant.
2. An officer may attempt to have the juvenile identify himself, his age, and his school. If that information can be obtained, the officer shall notify the school principal.
3. If any action is taken by an officer (voluntary transport, escort back to school, etc.), he shall initiate an incident report and document his actions.

H. Search and Seizure

1. The SRO will not initiate administrative searches of any area of the school or of any student.
2. The SRO may assist the school system when school personnel initiate a search. The SRO assistance should be limited to observing and keeping order while the school personnel conducts the search as articulated in the Annotated Code of Maryland Section 7-308: "A principal, assistant principal, or authorized school security officer of a public school may make a reasonable search of a student on the school premises, or on a school-sponsored trip, if she/he has a reasonable belief that the student has in his possession an item, the possession of which is a criminal offense under the laws of this state, or has committed a violation of any other State law or a rule or regulation of the County Board of Education. The search must be made in the presence of a third party."

"A principal, assistant principal or authorized school security officer of a public school may make a search of the physical plant of the school and every other appurtenance including the lockers of students. The right of the school official to search the locker shall be announced or published previously in the school."

3. The SRO may conduct searches of school premises or students on school premises consistent with constitutional guidelines if probable cause exists that criminal activity has occurred and that the student possesses items that relate to the commission of that crime.
4. Periodically, SROs may conduct drug scans at the schools in conjunction with the K-9 Unit and school officials. A scan does not constitute a search, but may lead to one based on a positive K-9 alert.

I. Interviews

1. An SRO may interview students on school premises in connection with a crime committed on the premises or in connection with an investigation which, if not immediately conducted, could compromise the success of that investigation or endanger the lives or safety of the students or other persons. A school official should be present throughout that questioning (COMAR 13A.08.01.13 State Board of Education).
2. An SRO may attend interviews of students/faculty on school premises which are initiated by the school's administration. Officers must be aware that information brought out in these interviews may relate to criminal offenses, and in order to establish that the interview was non-custodial, an immediate arrest cannot be made.
3. All interrogations/interviews shall be conducted in the same manner set forth in General Order OPS-15, Investigative Protocols.
4. An SRO will ensure that timely notification is made to the student's parent or guardian.

J. Information Dissemination

1. Each SRO shall be a source of information to the Department regarding criminal activity.
2. Each SRO will exchange information with police officers and the Intelligence Unit when that information will support the law enforcement mission of the Howard County Police Department.
3. Each SRO will observe the rules of confidentiality as outlined in Maryland State Law 3-8A-27:

"Confidentiality: A Police Record concerning a child is confidential and shall be maintained separate from those of adults. Its contents may not be divulged, by subpoena or otherwise, except by order of the court upon good cause shown. This subsection does not prohibit access to and confidential use of the record by the Department of Juvenile Justice or in the investigation and prosecution of the child by any law enforcement agency."

"A juvenile court record pertaining to a child is confidential and its contents may not be divulged, by subpoena or otherwise, except by order of the court upon good cause shown. This subsection does not prohibit access to and the use of the court record in a proceeding in the court involving the child by personnel of the court, the State's Attorney, counsel for the child, or authorized personnel of the Department of Juvenile Justice."

4. Each SRO may exchange information with the school administration that would support appropriate educational programming and related services to the child and maintain a safe and secure school environment for students and school personnel.

K. Police Integration of Howard County School Policies

If activity involves a status offense or a misdemeanor offense, the SRO may use discretion, with prior approval of the appropriate SRO Supervisor, and defer to the established policies of the Howard County School System.

L. Teaching and Instructional Duties

1. Teaching duties will comply with the current teaching curriculum as designed by the Howard County School System.
2. All audio visual aids and lesson plans shall be approved, prior to use, by the appropriate school official and the SRO Supervisor.
3. When teaching, the SRO shall have the regular classroom teacher present whenever possible.
4. Occasionally, SROs will be required to make special presentations to school groups both during and outside of regular school hours.

M. Counseling Duties

1. SROs may provide informal counseling based on their expertise as law enforcement professionals.
2. If further resources are needed to assist with a problem, the SRO may make a referral to a professional counselor, such as a school guidance counselor or other mental health professional.
3. SROs will document any incident and forward a memo to the appropriate SRO Supervisor detailing the contact and the referral to either school based or community based resources.

N. Related Policies

SROs must be familiar with the latest version of General Order OPS-50, School Issues.

IV. CANCELLATION

This General Order cancels and replaces General Order OPS-67, School Resource Officers, dated October 15, 2005.

AUTHORITY:



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