



GROTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

	DEPARTMENT MANUAL; P&P: Operations	
POLICY & PROCEDURE # 137	DATE OF ISSUE: 09/01/2020	EFFECTIVE DATE: 09/01/2020
SUBJECT: School Resource Officer	ISSUING AUTHORITY: Chief Michael F. Luth	
REFERENCE(S): Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission # 44.2.4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDS <input type="checkbox"/> RESCINDS	

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to provide guidelines regarding the School Resource Officer's (SRO) role and responsibilities. The SRO program is designed to provide school administrators and staff with law enforcement resources and expertise in order to maintain safety and order in the school environment. The program is also intended to reduce juvenile delinquency and promote positive behavior from students, as well as provide delinquency prevention, mentoring and a positive role model to students.

II. POLICY [44.2.4]

- A. It will be the policy of the Groton Police Department to maintain a School Liaison Program with law enforcement presence on all of the Groton-Dunstable school campuses.
- B. Agency SROs can only be assigned to schools upon the request of the school superintendent.
- C. In assigning the SRO, the chief shall assign an officer that the chief believes would strive to foster an optimal learning environment and educational community that promotes a strong partnership between school and police personnel. The chief of police shall give preference to candidates who demonstrate the requisite personality and character to work effectively with children, youth and educators in a school environment with a demonstrated ability to work successfully with a population that has a similar racial and ethnic background as those prevalent in the student body, and who have received specialized training relating to working with adolescents and children, including cognitive development, de-escalation tactics, as defined in section I of chapter 6E and alternatives to arrest and diversion strategies. The appointment shall not be based solely on seniority. The

performance of a school resource officer shall be reviewed annually by the superintendent and the chief of police.

- D. All SROs shall serve as liaisons between the faculty and students of their respective schools and the Department. An SRO's assigned school building, grounds and surroundings shall serve as their assigned patrol area. An on-duty SRO shall have primary responsibilities for handling calls for service and coordinating the response of other police and emergency resources to their assigned school(s).
- E. If an SRO is on-duty and available, they should respond and if practicable, assume the role of primary investigator in incidents concerning a juvenile(s).
- F. Any patrol officer or detective needing to contact a student(s) at any of the above-noted schools should coordinate their activities with the on-duty SRO.
- G. If resources allow SROs are encouraged to attend all school social and sporting events, school council and PTO meetings. SROs may accompany school groups on appropriate field trips. The SRO will notify their supervisor prior to taking part in any trip outside of the Town of Groton.
- H. The Department will ensure that SRO's obtain certification.
- I. At the discretion of the Chief of Police and School Administration SROs are authorized to wear civilian clothing or the assigned patrol uniform in compliance with the Department's Uniform Policy (Policy 1.10).

III. DUTIES

The SRO will operate in cooperation with school staff, but shall not interfere in school matters. School authorities should handle the infractions of school rules and policies. The SRO shall be available for assistance and consultation regarding these matters; however, school officials maintain responsibility for the enforcement of school rules and regulations.

The SRO's primary duties are to [44.2.4]:

- A. Address crime and disorder problems, drug activity, gangs, violence and other activities that adversely affect the proper learning environment of their assigned schools.

- B. Work closely with the school department and other agencies needing assistance with students.
- C. Educate students on alcohol, drug and tobacco awareness, crime prevention and safety, conflict resolution and mediation, and the law enforcement profession.
- D. Offer information to other department members about school crime and delinquency problems.
- E. Provide security at school events.
- F. Provide on-site emergency response to safety threats or disasters, and
- G. Monitor the school's social environment to identify emerging youth criminal activity and gangs.
- H. Searches of students or their effects will follow department guidelines.
- I. Within their role of advisor to the school, SROs may:
 - i. Counsel or mentor students, and make appropriate diversions and referrals for at-risk students to community-based programs, social service agencies and/or in-school programs.
 - ii. Act as a liaison to parents and parent groups, school staff and community leaders.
 - iii. Communicate openly with students regarding rights, responsibilities, concerns and unacceptable behavior.
 - iv.
- J. In cases of an "Administrative Search" by school officials, the SRO should not be involved unless specifically requested to do so by school officials to provide security, protection or proper handling of evidence or contraband. Such searches shall be at the direction and control of school officials.

IV. RESPONSE TO CALLS

SROs are expected to respond to criminal activity and calls for service at the schools when they are working, unless already engaged in a call. All calls for service shall be properly documented in the CAD system.

SROs will follow applicable department policies when investigating a crime or responding to a call for service on school grounds. SROs responding to calls for service or investigating criminal activity at a school will make every effort to inform the school's principal of the incident(s) as soon as possible.

V. PROHIBITED CONDUCT

- A. An SRO will not arrange or schedule a private off-campus meeting with a student unless the SRO's supervisor approves such activity.
- B. SROs shall not transport students in their personal vehicles.
- C. School department personnel and school resource officers, as defined in section 37P, shall not disclose to a law enforcement officer or agency, including local, municipal, regional, county, state and federal law enforcement, through an official report or unofficial channels, including, but not limited to, text, phone, email, database and in-person communication, or submit to the department of state police's Commonwealth Fusion Center, the Boston Regional Intelligence Center or any other database or system designed to track gang affiliation or involvement, any information relating to a student or a student's family member from its databases and other recordkeeping systems including: (i) immigration status; (ii) citizenship; (iii) neighborhood of residence; (iv) religion; (v) national origin; (vi) ethnicity; or (vii) suspected, alleged, or confirmed gang affiliation, unless it is germane to a specific unlawful incident or to a specific prospect of unlawful activity the school is otherwise required to report.
 - i. Nothing in this paragraph shall prohibit the sharing of information: (i) for the purposes of completing a report pursuant to section 51A of chapter 119; (ii) upon the specific, informed written consent of the eligible student, parent or guardian; (iii) to comply with a court order or lawfully issued subpoena; (iv) in connection with a health or safety emergency pursuant to the provisions of 603 C.M.R. 23.07(4)(e); or (v) for the purposes of filing a weapon report with the local chief of police pursuant to this section

VI. CUSTODY SITUATIONS

Any SRO taking a student into custody on school grounds shall:

- A. Follow all applicable department policies for arrest, detainee custody, use of force, citation, and court procedure and transportation.

- B. Afford students' their legal rights, including the process for searching and questioning students and circumstances requiring notification to and presence of parents and administrators where the student is under the age of 18 years.
- C. Notify the school's principal prior to the arrest whenever practical, or as soon as possible after the arrest is made.

VII. TRAINING

Recognizing the specialized nature of their duties, the Department will send officers assigned to any SRO position to an approved SRO training program whenever possible. SROs will attend all other required Department Training.