

Lee Police Department

Policy & Procedure

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER




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I. Definitions:

School Resource Officer (SRO): a duly sworn Lee Police Officer with all necessary training, up-to-date certificates, including special school resource officer certification as required by subsection (b) of section 3 of chapter 6E or a special officer appointed by the Chief of Police charged with:

- (i) providing law enforcement;
- (ii) promoting school safety and security services to elementary and secondary public schools; and
- (iii) Maintaining a positive school climate for all students, families and staff.
- For the purpose of this section, a school resource officer shall be exempt pursuant to subsection (j) of section 10 of chapter 269, while serving in the officer's official capacity.

SRO Certification: The **Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission** shall have the power to issue a *specialized certification* for an individual acting, or intending to act, as a School Resource Officer [SRO], as defined in section 37P of chapter 71 of the MGLs;

- Provided, however, that a person shall not be appointed as a School Resource Officer, as defined in said section 37P of said chapter 71, unless specially certified as such by the POST Commission.
- Notwithstanding any General or Special Law to the contrary, a person who is appointed as a School Resource Officer, as defined in section 37P of Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts General Laws, as of the effective date of this act may continue in such appointment without receiving a certification to serve as such pursuant to subsection (b) of section 3 of chapter 6E of the General Laws; provided, however, that they **shall receive said certification by December 31, 2021.**

II. Purpose and Scope:

The protocols and procedures stipulated in this policy are applicable to all the participating schools in the Town of Lee including Lee Middle and High School, Lee Elementary School, and St. Mary's School. We remain committed to the continuing success of the SRO Program always stressing the ongoing respect and confidence that we are able to earn and maintain from the students, their parents and the school administration, faculty and staff of all the schools in the Town. The integrity of each officer of this department, as well as that of the organization as a whole, is absolutely necessary for students, their parents and teachers to give us their unwavering trust and confidence. Without this requisite trust, we cannot expect to form the necessary partnerships that we need to optimize our success at each school. Fundamental to building this trust within our entire school district is the fair and equitable treatment of all individuals; whether student, parent, faculty or staff, all persons shall always be treated with highest level of dignity and respect.

As a role model, the SRO is compelled to always present themselves in a professional manner. Through their appearance and actions, the SRO leads by example through their day-to-day contact with students, parents and staff members. They treat everyone in a positive manner that is respectful, fair and consistent regardless of race, national origin, citizenship, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.

III. Policy:

It is the policy of the Lee Police Department to institute a School Resource Officer (SRO) Program in conjunction with and at the request of the Superintendent of the Lee School System. The purpose of the program shall be to (i) provide and foster a safe and healthy environment for all students through the strategic and appropriate use of law enforcement resources, (ii) to achieve positive outcomes for youth and public safety where learning can prosper and (iii) to ensure that no student's right to receive an education is abridged by violence, the threat of violence, harassment, bullying or intimidation. The SRO has the primary responsibility for providing police services to the school community and assisting in the development and implication of programs and activities to promote crime prevention and public safety objectives. The SRO is a liaison between the police department, school administration, students, parents, town departments, local youth organizations, and other agencies within the community.

Note: School Resource Officers **shall not**:

- (i) serve as school disciplinarians, enforcers of school regulations or in place of licensed school psychologists, psychiatrists or counselors; and
- (ii) use police powers to address traditional school discipline issues, including non-violent disruptive behavior.

IV. Policy Review and Updating:

In furtherance of continuing reviewing and updating this SRO Policy, the Chief of Police, in consultation with the School Superintendent, shall establish operating procedures pertaining to the duties and responsibilities to provide guidance to the School Resource Officers about their daily operations, policies and procedures. At a minimum, the operating procedures within this policy as established by the Chief of Police, shall describe the following for the School Resource Officer:

- (i) the School Resource Officer uniform;
 - The SRO shall wear the regulation Lee Police uniform and when available operate a marked police vehicle while on duty unless otherwise directed by a supervisor. The SRO has an option of wearing a modified version of uniform/dress with the approval of the Chief of Police and/or their designee.

- (ii) use of police force, arrest, citation and court referral on school property; See Sections VII & XI.
- (iii) a statement and description of students' legal rights, including the process for searching and questioning students and circumstances requiring notification to and presence of parents and administrators;

See Sections IX, X, & XI.

- (iv) chain of command, including delineating to whom the school resource officer reports and how school administrators and the school resource officer work together; See Section V.
- (v) performance evaluation standards, which shall incorporate monitoring compliance with the memorandum of understanding and use of arrest, citation and police force in school; [Pending Statewide MOU]
- (vi) protocols for diverting and referring at-risk students to school and community-based supports and providers.
- (vii) and information sharing between the School Resource Officer, school staff and parents or guardians. See Section XV.

V. Authority and Chain of Command:

As a law enforcement officer, the School Resource Officer (SRO) is responsible to the Chief of Police through his/her supervisory chain of command and is subject to adhere to all Lee Police Department Policies.

SROs also have what is referred to as a “secondary” chain of command while on duty at their assigned school. As an employee of the Lee Police Department, their primary chain of command begins with their Sergeant and progresses up the Chief of Police. Because they work within the schools, the SRO is also considered a member of the school staff. Therefore, their secondary chain of command begins with the Dean of Students of the School Resource Officer's assigned school and progresses to the Principal of the School to the Lee Superintendent of the School District.

- The Lee Police Department recognizes and respects the authority of the principal, and his or her designee, to be the primary leader and manager of each applicable school where an SRO maybe on duty. The SRO, however, has the authority and responsibility to ensure proper decisions are made in reference to crimes, crime scenes, and any incidents that pose a serious threat to public safety.

- During any law enforcement-related event on school grounds, the SRO will consult the principal or designee with law enforcement decisions being made to resolve the incident, when feasible. During any law enforcement-related event, it may become necessary for the SRO to temporarily take charge of the incident and/or school grounds to protect the integrity of the investigation and/or crime scene, and ensure the safety of the students and staff, until properly relieved. The School Resource Officer Program will be commanded and supervised by the Chief of Police.
- All Lee Police Department SROs will be sworn as certified police officers by the *Massachusetts Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission* (POST) and receive such additional SRO Certification as required by POST. As such, the SROs shall possess the same statutory and common law authority and powers of arrest as any other state or local law enforcement official regardless of whether they are on or off school property.
- When performing the duties of a police officer in the school environment, the officer shall have an understanding of the administrative responsibilities the school has in resolving misbehavior.
- The SRO will be familiar with the student handbook of all schools in town.
- Conduct and interactions with students should be of a quality that reinforces positive self-image, self-esteem, and professionalism.

VI. Goals and Objectives:

The Lee Police Department's School Resource Officers intend to provide law enforcement services and law-related education to the designated schools within the Lee School District. The SROs also act as liaisons between the schools, the community and the Police Department, as well as various agencies such as Department of Children and Families (DCF), the District Court Juvenile Probation Department, and other intervention and counseling resources.

Some of the more important significant goals and objectives shall include:

- To keep our schools safe and secure, so that teachers can teach, and students can learn.
- Provide students with a positive role model through the exhibition of Departmental values.

- Interact with students in a setting that builds self-esteem and trust and reinforces the police as positive role models.
- Interact with students, faculty, community, parents, and civic leaders to promote positive relations.
- Provide a classroom resource for instruction, if and when needed.
- Educate students about the law and the importance of individual responsibility as well as teambuilding and cooperation within our community.
- Serve as a resource for the students, teachers, and parents.
- Serve as a primary resource to students who are victims and suspects of unlawful or harmful activity in order to deter and protect them from further harm.
- Partner with the faculty and administrative team to teach the importance of good safety practices through various educational programs.
- Provide an active law enforcement figure on school grounds to deal with any law and safety/public order issues that may develop and take the appropriate enforcement action when necessary.

VII. School Resource Officer Duties and Responsibilities:

1. The SRO serves as a **visible deterrent** to crime and a positive representative of the Lee Police Department to students, faculty and staff. The SRO shall conduct visible patrolling of the exterior and interior grounds, particularly during the opening and closing of school.
2. The SRO shall while on duty assume primary responsibility for handling all **calls for police service** and coordinating the response of other police resources to the school's buildings, grounds, and surrounding areas.
3. Criminal activity that comes to the attention of the principal or school staff shall be reported immediately to the police department and assigned to the SRO unless such criminal activity requires additional personnel resources.
4. The SRO shall while on duty **meet with the principal or their designee** for the purpose of exchanging information about current crime trends, problem areas, or other areas of concern which have potential for disruption in the school or within the community, and shall be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in certain circumstances.
5. The SRO shall be responsible for monitoring the social and cultural environment to identify any issues that may be a **threat to the learning environment** of the school and the safety of the students and the general public
6. The SRO may make **formal presentations** to, or participate in, schoolbased community organization meetings such as the Parent Teacher Association and School Advisory Council meetings, with prior approval from the Chief of Police.

Participation in other activities such as panel discussions, mentoring programs, and community coalitions or task forces must be approved by the Chief of Police.

7. The SRO when available will be tasked with coordinating programs conducted in the schools by other Officers of the Police Department and/or other agencies to avoid redundant services and to ensure equitable distribution of such programs and activities.
8. The SRO when on duty will provide for the **disposal of illegal substances** recovered by the school and not needed for criminal prosecution.
9. Be familiar with and abide by Lee Public School and Lee Police Department Rules and Regulations and Policies and Procedures.
10. As a general rule, SROs will not get involved with the enforcement of school rule violations or act as a disciplinarian unless there is a violation of the State law as well.
11. The SRO, when available, will assist in conducting investigations for other crimes off of school grounds that may have a direct effect on a student or the school community.
12. The SRO, when available, will be the designated case officer for crimes committed at school. This means the SRO will then complete the investigation and all the necessary follow-up investigatory case work. This may include the collection of evidence and interviewing victims, witnesses and suspects.
13. When necessary, the SRO may make an arrest, detain and or hold those suspected of a crime in police custody as prescribed by state law and Department policy. Some serious crimes require specialized expertise or logistical support to investigate. Under these circumstances, an appropriate investigator from Lee Police Department or appropriate investigator from an outside law enforcement agency, will be assigned as the case officer. The SRO will then assist the investigator, and function as the liaison between the victim, the school staff, and the Department.
14. The SRO will coordinate with school staff to promote crime prevention programs and enhance the police/community relationship with the surrounding neighborhoods. This may be accomplished by requesting additional police units to conduct foot, bicycle or vehicle patrol of the school grounds and adjacent areas.
15. Take appropriate action for any on-sight situations requiring police attention.
16. Act as a liaison and resource between the law enforcement community, other governmental agencies and the school.

17. Interacting with students to promote and reinforce the development of basic life skills and personal control and responsibility for one's actions.
18. Conduct investigations involving threats to the school building and/or students. The main function of the SRO when on duty, is to be on school grounds during school hours. Follow-up investigations may be conducted; however, these should generally be conducted after school hours.
19. The SRO when on duty may leave the school grounds during school hours on certain follow-up investigations only with the appropriate supervisory approval. The SRO may participate in school conferences, especially when potential delinquency is a factor.
20. The SRO may have input into intervention and preventive strategies and community resources available.
21. Participate in special assignments related to Departmental activities such as point control for major events.
22. Inform the school administration of current student criminal involvement and criminal trends that affect the safe environment of the school, as needed. It is also recommended that the SRO maintain a relationship with the Juvenile Probation Officer of the District Court.
23. The SRO while on duty may perform preventive patrol for students in route to and from school. Attention will be directed to observations pertinent to the safety and well-being of children.
24. Interact with the uniform patrol officers in order to share information and work together on matters of mutual concern.
25. Attend special events as necessary to interact and prevent problems.
26. Participate in various Department-sponsored and endorsed activities that foster a positive relationship between the students and the SRO.
27. Maintain contact with the Chief of Police or their designee, in order to facilitate administrative needs.
28. Attend scheduled meetings that may be established by the supervisors for information exchange and resolution of special problems.
29. Be responsible for the proper vehicle use and maintenance as outlined in Directives and in the Department Policy.

VIII. School Resource Officer Supervision:

The Chief of Police or their designee, is the direct Supervisor of all SROs.

The SRO Supervisor shall meet with the SROs on a regular basis.

The SRO Supervisor, when possible, shall meet with the school principal where an SRO will be working as follows:

1. Prior to the start of the school year to review school-police department expectations and clarify any operational procedures.
2. At the conclusion of the school year to review the program and suggest any and all recommendations for improvements or changes.

IX. Police Investigations:

A.) In appropriate circumstances where the assigned SRO has either reasonable suspicion, reasonable belief or probable cause that a crime has, is or is about to have been committed or that a public safety emergency exists, shall have the authority to take the appropriate police enforcement action without the prior authorization or approval of the school principal or contacting the involved parents, keeping in mind at all times the requisite balance that needs to exist in the educational environment of the school. The investigation and questioning of any student during school hours or at school events should be limited to situations where the investigation is directly related to the school.

The school principal shall always be notified as soon as practical of any significant enforcement events by the SRO. The SRO should coordinate activities so that any action that is taken between agencies is cooperative and in the best interests of the school and public safety.

The SRO shall provide information to the appropriate investigator any leads that come to the attention of the SRO bearing in mind the statutory limitations of information sharing via MGL Chapter 71 Section 37P and Section XI below.

B.) Criteria For Emergency/Non-Emergency Calls:

The following criteria set forth are designed to act as a guide. In most cases, the SRO while on duty will take disposition of a call for service at any school within town. However, when booking is necessary or eminent, a patrol officer will be dispatched to the school to handle the transport and the booking of the juvenile. For all situations that require immediate police response, the SRO designated schools should call 911 and then page, text or call the SRO.

Listed below are some examples of situations that **require an immediate police response:**

- Immediate life-threatening emergency (medical or otherwise);
- Large fight in progress;
- Unruly and disruptive crowds;
- Disruptive parent who will not leave voluntarily;
- Bomb threats;
- Child abuse (in progress and threat to the welfare of child};
- Crime in progress where the protection of evidence is essential, or the apprehension of the violator is possible;
- Safety hazards (i.e., chlorine, natural gas leaks);
- Assaults (with serious injury) For the following situations that require police services but where time is not of the essence, the school should call or text the SRO assigned to the school and advise them of the situation. The SRO can then take the information for the police report the next time the SRO is at the school;
- Mandatory Reporting Law (c.119-51A);
- Break and Entry (where the school is the victim and evidence may be present);
- Vehicle breaks where the victim is on scene and standing by.

For those situations that require police services **but do not require an immediate response**, the school should call, or text the SRO assigned to the school. If the SRO is not able to respond, the school should call for an on-duty Day Shift Patrol Officer.

Listed below are some examples of situations that do not require an immediate response:

Note: Students who are found to be in possession of illegal contraband or drugs, and the item has been confiscated (contraband must be placed into evidence the same day)

- Theft (no suspects, no witnesses available)
- Assaults (which are over and under control with little or no injury, or where students have already been sent home, no suspects, no witnesses are available.)
- Threats or intimidation (no suspects, no witnesses.)
- Malicious/Wanton damage to property (no suspects, no witnesses are available)

- And any other incident of a minor nature, status offense, Town Ordinance violation, etc.

X. Search and Seizure:

The School Resource Officer must follow Departmental Policy and respect the School's policy in conducting searches. The rules of criminal evidence apply in school exactly the same as they apply under normal circumstances. The school administration cannot be used as an agent to search a student's locker.

The school administrator has the authority to search a locker prior to there being a confirmation that a crime has been committed. Once an SRO is aware of a potential crime, the SRO must brief the SRO Supervisor and obtain a search warrant for a student's locker.

Unless EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES EXIST, or you have CONSENT, get a warrant.

Impound and Chain of Custody

The seizure of drugs and evidence on school property must be dealt with immediately. If an SRO seizes drugs or obtains evidence, they will immediately contact dispatch and have a Patrol Officer or Investigator respond to the school and collect the property for impoundment at Police Station pursuant to Department policy. SROs will not place the property in their assigned vehicle at any time other than in the process of completing the required paperwork and/or during transportation to the station. Once an SRO comes in contact with seized property, they will maintain immediate control until that property is released to the assisting officer.

Search and Seizure by School Officials

School officials may conduct searches of students' property under their jurisdiction when reasonable suspicion exists that the search will reveal evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law or the rules of the school.

The SRO may stop an individual when there is reasonable suspicion that a criminal act has, is or is about to be committed and may pat frisk that person if the officer has reasonable suspicion that the person may be armed in accordance with Departmental Policy and Procedures.

The SRO may only conduct what constitutes a search based on probable cause and in accordance with Departmental Policy and Procedure.

The SRO shall not become involved in administrative (school related) searches unless specifically requested by school officials to provide security, protection, or for handling of seized contraband:

- These searches must be at the direction and control of the school official and not the SRO.

- At no time shall the SRO request that an administrative search be conducted for law enforcement purposes or have the administrator act as the officer's agent.

XI. Arrest Procedures:

The following procedures shall be adhered to whenever an arrest of any student or staff becomes necessary:

- The arrest of a student or employee of the school with a warrant should be coordinated through the principal and accomplished after school hours whenever possible.
- Persons whose presence on school grounds has been restricted or forbidden or whose presence is in violation of the law shall be arrested for trespassing.
- Arrests of students or staff during school hours or on school grounds shall be reported to the school principal as soon as practical.
- SROs will adhere to Department Policy on Juveniles, for information pertaining to interviews and interrogations.

XII. School Administrative Hearings:

The SRO shall make themselves available to attend any suspension and/or expulsion hearings upon request of the school principal.

The SRO shall:

1. Be prepared to provide testimony on any actions that were taken by the officer and any personally observed conduct witnessed by the officer.
2. Make available any physical evidence in the possession of the police department.
3. Unless otherwise arranged, it will be the responsibility of the SRO to transport and safeguard any physical evidence, such as a weapon, that is needed at the disciplinary hearing.

XIII. SRO Selection Process:

The selection process is the most critical aspect of the SRO Program and shall be conducted as follows:

- In assigning a School Resource Officer, the Chief of Police 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 1 of chapter 6E and alternatives to arrest and diversion strategies.
- Any Patrol Officers that are interested in the SRO position shall submit a written request via an email (on an attached Word Document) stating their specific reason(s) for seeking this important position and representing the Lee Police Department at the Schools within town.
- Each candidate shall also submit a resume.
- If an SRO opening is available and is to be filled, each candidate will be scheduled to appear before the Chief of Police and the School Superintendent if available for an in-person interview to determine whether each candidate is qualified for the position.
- All candidates shall be notified in writing of the selection board's final decision.
- The appointment **shall not** be based solely on seniority.
- The performance of a School Resource Officer shall be reviewed annually by the Superintendent of Schools and the Chief of Police.

XIV. SRO Position (Job) Description:

A. Policy Summary

The School Resource Officer (SRO) has the primary responsibility for providing police services to the school community and development and implementation of programs and activities to promote crime prevention and safety objectives. The SRO is a liaison between the police department, school administration, students, parents, town departments, youth organizations, and other agencies within the community.

B. Duties and Responsibilities {See Section VII For a complete list}

The SRO is a sworn Town of Lee Police Officer assigned to provide the law enforcement expertise and resources to assist school staff.

C. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

The School Resource Officer must have excellent oral and written communications skills, the ability to work with diverse groups, possess exceptional conflict resolution skills, be a creative problem solver, be available for after school functions, and have a good knowledge of Juvenile Laws and Juvenile Court procedures.

D. Qualifications:

1. A minimum of three (3) years as a full time Lee Police Officer.
2. Successful completion of a MPTC School Resource Officer Training Program.
3. SRO Certification approved by POST.

XV. Limitation on Sharing of Student Information

- School department personnel and School Resource Officers, as defined in section 37P of Chapter 71 of the MGL's, 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.**

Nothing in this paragraph shall prohibit the sharing of information: [**Exceptions**]

- (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

***Note:** "A school **may disclose** information regarding a student to appropriate parties in connection with a **health or safety emergency** if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. This includes, but is not limited to, **disclosures to the local police department** and the Department of Social Services under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 71, section 37L and M.G.L. c. 119, section 51A."

(v) for the purposes of **filing a weapon report** with the local Chief of Police pursuant to section 37L of Chapter 71 of the MGLs.

XVI. Mandatory SRO In-Service Training Program

Pursuant to MGL Chapter 6 Section 116H:

(a) The ***Municipal Police Training Committee*** shall establish and develop an in-service training program designed to train School Resource Officers [SROs], as defined in this policy and section 37P of chapter 71 of the MGLs.

Such program **shall include training on:**

- (i) the ways in which **legal standards regarding police interaction and arrest procedures** differ for juveniles compared to adults;
- (ii) **child and adolescent cognitive development**, which shall include instruction on common child and adolescent behaviors, actions and reactions as well as the impact of trauma, mental illness, behavioral addictions, such as gaming and gambling disorder, and developmental disabilities on child and adolescent development and behavior;
- (iii) engagement and **de-escalation tactics** that are specifically effective with youth; and
- (iv) **strategies for resolving conflict and diverting youth in lieu of making an arrest**. Such program shall also include training related to:

- (i) **hate crime identification** and prevention training curriculum including acquisition of practical skills to prevent, respond to and investigate hate crimes and hate incidents and their impacts on victim communities;
- (ii) **anti-bias, anti-racism and anti-harassment strategies**;
- (iii) **bullying and cyberbullying**; and
- (iv) comprehensive training to help school resource officers interact effectively with school personnel, victim communities and build public confidence with cooperation with law enforcement agencies.

(b) **The course of instruction**, the learning and performance objectives and the curriculum and standards for training developed pursuant to this section **shall be developed in consultation with experts on child and adolescent development and child trauma and with educators and**

attorneys experienced in juvenile and education law and preventing and addressing youth hate crimes.