

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### School Resource Officer

#### Purpose, Mission, and Role

A School Resource Officer (SRO) is a commissioned law enforcement officer in the state of Washington with sworn authority to make arrests, deployed in community-oriented policing, and assigned by the employing police department or sheriff's office to work in schools to address crime and disorder problems, gangs, and drug activities affecting or occurring in or around K-12 schools.

The mission of the Kennewick School District SRO program is to improve school safety and the educational climate at the school. The role of the SRO on campus typically involves three parts: educator, informal counselor, and law enforcer. The focus of any SRO working in the district is to keep students out of the criminal justice system when possible. The SRO shall be integrated into the school community through participation in faculty and student meetings and assemblies as appropriate. SROs shall support a positive school climate by developing positive relationships with students, parents, and staff, and by helping to promote a safe, inclusive, and positive learning environment.

The primary responsibility for maintaining proper order and conduct in the schools resides with school principals or their designee, with the support of other school staff. This may include minor violations of the law occurring during school hours or at school activities. The SRO program does not diminish the district's authority and shall not be used to attempt to impose criminal sanctions in matters that are more appropriately handled within the district. Principals or their designee maintain order and handle all student discipline matters consistent with 3300 - Student Discipline Policy and Procedures, 3314 -Student Exceptional Misconduct, 3240 – Student Responsibilities and Limitations. SROs appropriately interact with students informally to reinforce school rules.

Teachers and school administrators may ask an SRO to intervene if a student's presence poses an immediate and continuing danger to others or an immediate and continuing threat of material and substantial disruption of the educational process or in other emergency circumstances consistent with 3300 - Student Discipline Policy and Procedure, 3314 - Student Exceptional Misconduct, 3240 – Student Responsibilities and Limitations. SROs do not need to be asked before intervening in emergencies.

As a general rule, law enforcement activity should take place at a location other than school premises. However, there are circumstances where formal law enforcement intervention/activity at school is warranted and may be conducted by an SRO. These law enforcement activities may include interviews and interrogations; search of a student's person, possessions, or locker; citations, filing of delinquency petitions, referrals to a probation officer, actual arrests, and other referrals to the juvenile justice system, consistent with 4411 – Relations with Law Enforcement,

Child Protective Services, and County Health Department. 3418 - Alcohol and other Drug Use/Abuse Policy 3230 – Student Privacy and Searches, 3300 Student Discipline, 3314 - Student Exceptional Misconduct, 4210- Regulation of Dangerous Weapons on School Premises.

The SRO duties do not extend to immigration enforcement, and the SRO will not inquire into or collect information about an individual’s immigration or citizenship status, or place of birth. Neither will the SRO provide information pursuant to notification requests from federal immigration authorities for the purposes of civil immigration enforcement, except as required by law, consistent with 4310 – District Relationship with Law Enforcement and Other Government Agencies, 4520 Cooperative Programs with Other School Districts and Public Agencies, 4411 - Relations with Law Enforcement, Child Protective Services, and the County Health Department.

#### Agreement, Training, and Program Review

The District and the Kennewick Police Department will adopt an agreement and annually review the SRO program using a process that involves parents, students, and community members. Law enforcement agencies are responsible for training their employees, including SROs; therefore, the law enforcement agency will confirm in the agreement that SROs have been trained in all the topics required by RCW 28A.320.124(1), including:

- Constitutional and civil rights of children in schools, including state law governing search and interrogation of youth in schools;
- Child and adolescent development;
- Trauma-informed approaches to working with youth;
- Recognizing and responding to youth mental health issues;
- Educational rights of students with disabilities, the relationship of disability to behavior, and best practices for interacting with students with disabilities;
- Collateral consequences of arrest and prosecution and pathways for youth to access services without court or criminal justice involvement;
- Local and national disparities in the use of force and arrest of children;
- De-escalation techniques when working with youth or groups of youth;
- State law regarding restraint and isolation in schools, including RCW 28A.600.485;
- Bias free policing and cultural competency, including best practices for interacting with students from particular backgrounds, including English learners, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ), and immigrants; and,
- The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. Sec. 1232g) requirements, including limits on access to and dissemination of student records for non-educational purposes.

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Additionally, the agreement will include a process for families to file complaints with the district and local law enforcement agencies related to the district SROs and a process for investigating and responding to complaints. The agreement will incorporate an annual collection and reporting of data regarding calls for law enforcement service and the outcome of each call. In addition, the agreement will also incorporate the SRO's duties and the limitations thereof consistent with this policy; other related governing policies, and the governing regulations.

Legal References      [RCW 10.93.160](#) – Immigration and Citizenship Status  
[RCW 26.44.030](#) Interviews of children  
[RCW 26.44.050](#) - Abuse or neglect of child — Duty of law enforcement agency or department of social and health services — Taking child into custody without court order  
[RCW 26.44.110](#) Information about rights — Custody without court order — written statement required — Contents  
[RCW 26.44.115](#) Child taken into custody under court order — Information to parents  
[RCW 28A.300.640 - 645](#) – School-based threat assessment program  
[RCW 28A.320.124](#) – School resource officer programs  
[20 USC. 1232g](#) Family Education Rights and Privacy Act 2

Adopted: August 12, 2020