

LAW ENFORCEMENT IN SCHOOLS

- 1.0 The School Resource Officer (SRO) program exists primarily to help provide a safe learning environment in District schools by reducing school violence; by improving school/law enforcement collaboration; and by improving perceptions and relations between students/adults and law enforcement. For the purposes of this policy, the term SRO is intended to mean the assigned School Resource Officer or any other on-duty law enforcement officer acting in a similar role. This policy provides guidelines for interactions between SROs and students, parents, visitors and staff members on school premises or at school functions.
- 2.0 **Authority.**
 - 2.1 Though SROs are not employees of Adams 12 Five Star Schools, they are valuable members of school staff, and as such they may assist administrators in enforcing District policies so long as there is not a conflict of interest with their duties as a police officer. School administrators may ask SROs to help with minor enforcement of District policies such as identifying visitors not wearing identification.
 - 2.2 SROs shall be familiar with District policies and regulations related to safety, conduct, and discipline issues, which are specified in the District's Student Code of Conduct. SROs shall not take into custody any student/adult who has violated District policy or the District's Student Code of Conduct when the violation does not also violate a criminal law.
 - 2.3 Consistent with the authority and duties of law enforcement officers, a SRO may undertake criminal investigations related to alleged unlawful student conduct on or off school property. The SRO will notify the school administrator following an investigation of any criminal violation involving students at a school as soon as practical.
 - 2.4 If an apparent criminal violation is observed on school property or at a school-sponsored activity, the person observing the violation may request assistance from a SRO. Such request is considered a referral regardless of the response by the SRO. SROs may also independently determine that a criminal investigation is necessary.
- 3.0 **Student Contact with School Resource Officers.**
 - 3.1 SROs will make every effort to avoid disrupting the learning environment by contacting students before or after school, during free periods or during lunch. If a student is asked to leave a class by a SRO, they will ensure the student receives a pass at the completion of the contact. This pass allows the student to return to class and also serves as a school-excused absence so as not to compromise the student's attendance record.
 - 3.2 The necessity and appropriateness of parental involvement varies with the circumstances surrounding contact between a law enforcement officer and a student.
- 4.0 **Interviews.** Except in an emergency or when other exigent circumstances exist, SRO interviews of students should be scheduled in advance and held in a private area out of sight of other students. Except in an emergency, or when there is reason to suspect child abuse and/or neglect perpetrated by a parent or guardian, parents should be notified in advance of an interview between an SRO and a student suspected of being a perpetrator or victim in a crime or potential crime.

- 4.1 Elementary and Middle School Students. At elementary and middle schools, a school administrator, counselor, or designee must be present when a SRO conducts a student interview, unless the parent(s) or guardian(s) has been contacted and given permission otherwise.
- 4.2 High School Students. At the high school level it is preferred that a school administrator, counselor or designee be present when a SRO conducts a student interview. However, at the school administrator's discretion, at the request of the student, or by parent/guardian permission, SROs may interview a student alone.

5.0 **Searches.**

- 5.1 Searches conducted by SROs must meet stricter criteria than those required for school staff to conduct a search, as described in District Policy 5130. Searches conducted by SROs shall comply with legal requirements as applicable. School administrators or staff will not assist or otherwise participate in a search conducted by law enforcement.

6.0 **Arrests.**

- 6.1 The SRO may arrest a student/adult based on probable cause if the SRO believes the student/adult has committed or is committing a crime.
- 6.2 If a student is arrested, the student has the same Miranda Rights as an adult which include the right to have an attorney present prior to questioning.
- 6.3 When a SRO removes a student from school for any reason, school administrators will make every reasonable effort to notify the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) before the student is removed.
- 6.4 If a SRO determines it necessary to place handcuffs on a student/adult, it should be done as discreetly as possible under the circumstances at the time. SROs have discretion as to when and where to handcuff a student/adult for the student/adult's safety, the safety of others, and the safety of the officer(s). Use of handcuffs or other types of restraint of a student must be in accordance with District Policy 5150.

7.0 **Confidentiality of Contacts and Records.**

- 7.1 Only parent(s)/guardian(s) and their attorneys or designated advocate; parole, probation, or Department of Human Services representation; and/or District staff may be present during interviews/interrogations by SROs on school premises.
- 7.2 The SRO shall only be provided access to student education records in which the SRO has legitimate educational interest, as determined by the District and in accordance with applicable law, related to maintaining school safety. The SRO shall maintain the confidentiality of student education records and not re-disclose any records. The SRO should consult the school administrator on questions concerning confidentiality of student education records.

LEGAL REFERENCES:

C.R.S. 22-32-109.1
C.R.S. 22-108-103(1)(f)
C.R.S. 22-33-106

CROSS REFERENCE:

Policy 5130
Policy 5150
Policy 5300