

ANGELA B. COOK
County Seat
TERESA DUNAWAY
Red Oak / Wylliesburg
GLORIA TALBOTT
Drakes Branch
R. B. "JAY" GEORGE
Keysville



R. "SCOTTY" HAMLETT
Cullen / Red House
ROBERT JOHNSON
Aspen / Phenix
JON BERKLEY
Bacon / Saxe
DANA L. RAMSEY
Clerk of Board

June 2020

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
CHARLOTTE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND
CHARLOTTE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
FOR THE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAM**

I. Purpose

It is the position of the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office to endorse and support through staffing the creation of positive interaction between law enforcement and the school community.

This endeavor is a partnership between education and law enforcement, which supports a collaborative, problem-solving approach to the problem of growing violence in schools. This Memorandum represents mutually agreed goals and objectives of the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office and the Charlotte County Public Schools for the School Resource Officer Program.

This Memorandum of Understanding will remain in force until such time as either party withdraws from the agreement by delivering a written notification of such rescission to the other party.

The conditions herein stated shall be reviewed annually, and may be modified upon the written concurrence of both parties.

II. School Resource Officer Job Description

The School Resource Officers will:

Abide by school board policies and shall consult with and coordinate activities through the school principal but shall remain fully responsive to the chain of command of the law enforcement agency in all matters relating to employment and supervision.

Refrain from functioning as a school disciplinarian. An administrative investigation should be conducted prior to SRO contact, except in an emergency situation. If the principal believes an incident is a law violation, he/she shall

contact the School Resource Officer and both shall then determine whether law enforcement action is appropriate.

Develop expertise in presenting various subjects such as understanding the laws, the police officers, and the police mission.

Encourage individual and small group discussions about law enforcement related matters with students, faculty and parents.

Attend meetings of parent and faculty groups to solicit their support and understanding of the police/school resource program and to promote awareness of law enforcement functions.

Make themselves available for conferences with students, parents, and faculty members to assist them with problems of a law enforcement or crime prevention nature.

Confer with the principal to develop plans and strategies to prevent and/or minimize dangerous situations on or near the campus or involving students at school-related activities.

Abide by school board policy concerning interviews should it become necessary to conduct formal police interviews with students or staff on property or at school functions under jurisdiction of the public schools.

Take law enforcement action in emergency situations as necessary and notify the principal of the school as soon as possible; whenever practical advise the principal before requesting additional enforcement assistance on campus. Any emergency law enforcement action/situation shall be at SRO/Sheriff's Office direction.

Give assistance to police officers in matters regarding the duties of resource officers whenever necessary.

Promote citizen awareness of law enforcement efforts, to assure the peaceful operation of school-related programs, to build support with students, and whenever possible participate in or attend school functions.

Reaffirm their role as law enforcement officers by wearing their uniforms, unless doing so would be inappropriate for scheduled school activities. (The uniform will also be worn at events where it will enhance the image of the officers and their ability to perform their duties.)

File reports as required by VA State Code/Department Policy/DCJS.

III. School Principal Responsibilities are as follows:

The principal of the school should ensure that a weekly meeting with the school officer is adhered to. The meeting may be delegated to other administrative staff.

The principal shall maintain the means to ensure effective communications exist between the SRO and the school staff.

All criminal activity, which comes to the attention of the principal or school staff shall be reported to the SRO when on duty. If an emergency situation exists and the SRO is not available, the principal shall notify the Sheriff's Office through the Public Safety Communications Center (911). Information that is not of an emergency nature may be held for the SRO or reported to the Sheriff's Office.

The school shall provide a work area (office space) for the SRO that has access to a telephone and a computer. It is recommended that the areas have a locked storage area for securing contraband recovered in the schools by the school staff. The SRO shall be responsible for collecting and storage of all illegal substances. The SRO will be responsible for the destruction of such property.

The school system shall provide in-service training, when available, to the SRO's in areas that will increase the effectiveness of the officers and their ability to accomplish their respective duties and responsibilities. The Sheriff's Office will bear the fiscal responsibility of any mandatory training/s required of the SRO's.

IV. Understanding the School Resource Officer Program

What is a School Resource Officer Program?:

A School Resource Officer (SRO) Program places officers in schools in an effort to create and maintain a safe learning environment for our youth. In its most successful format, it is at its foundation, community-based. It reflects a comprehensive community focus that integrates the officers, and the SRO's stationed in the schools, with the existing network of resources in the community. The SRO's are more than police officers in schools. The schools are their communities and the officers in a SRO program fulfill three roles as they act as a resource for their communities - the schools:

- they first and foremost are law enforcement officers whose primary purpose is to "keep the peace" in their communities so that students can learn;
- secondly, they are counselors who provide guidance to students and act as a link to support services both inside and outside the school environment;
- And thirdly, they are teachers who provide the schools with an additional resource by sharing their expertise in the classroom.

Beyond these identified roles and, perhaps most importantly, SRO's are positive role models for many youth who are not exposed to such role models in today's society.

What a School Resource Officer Program Provides:

The bottom line associated with a SRO program is threefold:

- it is a mechanism through which safe learning environments can be created and maintained;
- it provides the community with an efficient, effective program; and,
- it saves money because the approach associated with it is one of prevention.

Who Benefits and How:

Everyone! Specifically:

- students benefit because their schools are safer, they have another resource available to them, and they are exposed to positive role models;
- parents benefit because their children are in safe learning environments and they have an additional resource;
- teachers and school administrators benefit because they are working in safe environments and they have another resource available to them;
- law-enforcement officials benefit because they are better able to serve and protect their communities in an efficient, effective, and community-based way;
- the court system benefits because much of the time and money savings associated with SRO's are incurred by the court system;
- taxpayers benefit because their tax dollars are being used in an efficient, effective way which has cost savings associated with it;
- The community benefits because the community foundation of the program brings the community together and allows it to address its own needs in a comprehensive, successful way.

V. School Resource Officer Mission and Objectives

Mission:

The primary mission of the School Resource Officer is to create a partnership between the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office and Charlotte County Public Schools. This program is intended to maintain a safe learning environment for our youth, to identify and prevent criminal activity through counseling and referral of delinquent behavior, and to promote positive relationships between students and law enforcement officers.

Objectives:

1. Provide assessment of schools and provide early identifications of high risk or criminal activity on the school properties.
2. Provide timely, pertinent crime related information to school personnel.
3. Coordinate student activities that promote a safe school environment.
4. Act as a liaison between school and law enforcement personnel.
5. Be a resource for violence reduction and avoidance for students.
6. Serve as a juvenile mediator for law enforcement/school related problems.
7. Enhance the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program.

8. Implement the Class Action Program, which provides students with some working knowledge of the law and the criminal justice system.

VI. Guidelines on Communications

Good communications between the officer and the administration of the school is essential in providing a safe learning environment.

1. The School Resource Officer assigned to a school is considered a member of the school's staff and should attend meetings when possible, contributing their knowledge and expertise toward the solution of matters affecting the operation of the school.
2. The School Resource Officer should keep the principal and administrators abreast of police related matters and to receive input and any advice in dealing with such matters.
3. Every officer should earn the trust and confidence of faculty, administration and other employees of community schools, parks, recreation areas and other gathering places for youth.
4. The officer's presence should not affect administrative responsibilities.
5. Classroom management rests with the teacher.
6. Officers are not on site to scare anyone, they are there to "provide a safe learning environment."
7. To be effective, an officer has to be on site, prioritize what is important and get approval from his/her supervisor, when warranted, before leaving any assignment.

VII. School Resource Officer Arrest and Interview Procedures

Police Investigation and Questioning:

The SRO has been given the authority to stop, question, interview, and take police action without prior authorization of the principal. The investigation and questioning of students during school hours or at school events should be limited to situations where the investigation is related to school. Investigations and questioning of students for offenses not related to the operation of, or occurring at, the school should ordinarily be limited to those which delay might result in danger to any person, flight from the jurisdiction by a person suspected of a crime, or destruction of evidence.

The principal shall be notified as soon as practical of any significant enforcement events. A SRO should coordinate their activities with school staff so that action between the agencies is cooperative and in the best interest of the school and public safety.

Arrest Procedures:

School Resource Officers are expected to be familiar with school rules and their application within the school system. Routinely, rule infractions will not be handled as violations of law, but rather referred to the principal for action. Any questions related to the enforcement of rules versus laws within schools should be discussed with the principal. This specifically applies to underage smoking and general standards of conduct.

The following procedures will be adhered to where arrests of students or staff become necessary:

1. The warrant arrest of a student or employee of the school should be coordinated through the principal, whenever practical.
2. Persons who have been deemed as non-students, or whose presence on school grounds has been restricted or forbidden, shall be arrested for trespassing. Principals and employees of the school, through court appearances, will support this action when necessary.
3. Arrest of students or staff during school hours shall be reported fully to the principal as soon as practical.
4. School officials, according to school policy, will handle Assault and Battery cases, without bodily injury (i.e. phone, computer threats). These cases may be reported to the SRO on forms provided by the Sheriff's Office per VA Code § 22.1-279.3:1. The school administrator shall immediately report to law enforcement any act enumerated in clauses (ii) through (vii) of subsection A of § 22.1-279.3:1 that may constitute a criminal offense. The school administrator should advise the parents of the student(s) involved that if they wish to pursue charges they need to contact either the SRO or the Sheriff's Office.
5. Underage Possession of Alcohol - § 4.1.305 - Although a charge exists for possession of alcohol on school property (§ 4.1-309); if the offender is a juvenile, it is best to use the above code section as it is a class 1 misdemeanor. It also provides for a minimum \$500.00 fine or 50 hours community service and such persons license to operate a motor vehicle may be suspended for a period of not more than one year.
6. Drugs. The SRO may charge any person who possesses any illegal drugs on school property. The SRO may wish to have the substance analyzed by the laboratory prior to placing charges. The SRO shall report any drug offenses to the principal.
7. Possession of Tobacco by Minors - §18.2-371.2. No person shall sell to, distribute to, purchase for or knowingly permit the purchase by any person less than 21 years of age. The school administration will handle offenses of possession of tobacco products by an underage person according to school policy. The SRO should be made aware of any action taken by the administration for the above violation.

Search and Seizure:

School officials may conduct searches of student's property and person under their jurisdiction when reasonable suspicion exists that the search will reveal evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. The standard for the search is reasonable suspicion.

The SRO shall not become involved in administrative (school related) searches unless specifically requested by the school to provide security, protection, or for the handling of contraband. These searches **must** be at the **direction** and **control** of the **school official**.

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

Any search by an officer shall be based upon probable cause and, when required, a search warrant should be obtained. Stop and frisk will remain an option when there is reasonable suspicion that a criminal offense has been committed or may be committed, and that the suspect may be armed.

Administrative Hearings:

The SRO shall attend suspension and/or expulsion hearings upon request of the school principal. The officer shall be prepared to provide testimony on any actions that were taken by the officer and any personally observed conduct witnessed by the officers. The SRO shall make available any physical evidence that is available. It will be the responsibility of the SRO to transport and safeguard any weapon that is needed at the expulsion hearing.


The officer shall not provide any official police document or juvenile record to the school or expulsion hearing officer. The Code of Virginia prohibits release of such information unless the schools, through the appropriate court, subpoena such documents.

Upon receiving a subpoena concerning an administrative school hearing, the Captain/Major shall be notified and given a copy of the subpoena before close of business that day. Any action on the subpoena shall be coordinated between the Major, Captain, and the SRO.

VIII. Frequently Asked Questions About SROs


1. Are School Resource Officers really Police Officers?
Yes, School Resource Officers are really Police Officers. They attended training just like any other Officer and are certified by the State of Virginia and regulated by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services.

2. Is the Principal of a School the School Resource Officer's boss?
No, they work together to provide a safe learning environment for both the students and the staff of that school.
3. Is a School Resource Officer different from other police department's officers?
Yes, the School's Resource Officer enforces the laws on School Board Properties real or leased. This gives the School Resource Officer a big challenge to provide safety for everyone, including those students who ride on school buses, attend football games and go to proms, etc.
4. What does the School Resource Officer do?
Our schools are very active and each officer has a responsibility to the school, students and staff of that school to interact with the school and surrounding schools. The School Resource Officer offers crime prevention and intervention programs, classroom lectures, counseling, conferences with students and parents. They are evaluated on their interaction with their school community.



Royal Freeman, Sheriff
Charlotte County Sheriff's Office

Date 05/29/20



Robbie W. Mason, Superintendent
Charlotte County Public Schools

Date 5/29/20