

# School Resource Officers

## 436.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy describes the Stillwater Police Department School Resource Officer (SRO) program (Minn. Stat. § 626.8482).

## 436.2 POLICY

The Stillwater Police Department is committed to enhancing the safety of students and faculty on campuses located in the department's jurisdiction by forming a partnership with school administrators, faculty members, and students.

## 436.3 SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAM

The Chief of Police should appoint SROs to serve in elementary, middle, and secondary schools upon contract with local school districts or charter schools. The goals and objectives of the SRO program are to provide a safe learning environment, provide valuable resources to school staff members, foster a positive relationship with students, and develop strategies to resolve problems. Methods to achieve these goals and objectives include but are not limited to:

- (a) Assisting with the development and implementation of a school safety plan.
- (b) Protecting the school against external threats by preventing unauthorized access to school property, and securing the school against a natural disaster or other violence.
- (c) Creating respect for law and order in the public school system and minimizing criminal activity.
- (d) Identifying students at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system and guiding them toward more positive and socially acceptable ways to behave.
- (e) Reducing criminal activity on or near a school campus.
- (f) Enhancing communication and understanding between students, their families, district staff, and the Department.
- (g) Assisting with the coordination of security measures for school activities such as sports events, dances, and other large gatherings, if applicable.
- (h) Auditing security measures, at least annually, throughout the school and making recommendations to enhance safety and reduce risk.

### 436.3.1 SRO CONTRACT

The contract between the school district or charter school and the Department shall:

- (a) Include the SRO's duties set forth in Minn. Stat. 626.8482, Subd. 2.
- (b) Address a mutually agreed upon policy regarding the use of plain clothes, modified uniforms, and other changes to SRO attire.
- (c) Articulate the role, if any, of the school district or charter school in the selection, vetting, and retention of the SRO.

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- (d) Establish a public notification process that an SRO will be present in the schools.
- (e) Address data practices policies and procedures.

A school district or charter school may contract with the Department for the SRO to perform additional duties (Minn. Stat. § 626.8482, Subd. 2). The contract should cover paid services, where applicable. The contract should also address how the SRO will be informed of school district resources available to school staff to assist with de-escalation of conflicts in school (e.g., specialized crisis teams, mediation opportunities).

### **436.4 SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER DUTIES**

The SRO duties and responsibilities include (Minn. Stat. § 626.8482, Subd. 2):

- (a) Fostering a positive school climate through relationship building and open communication.
- (b) Protecting students, staff, and visitors to the school grounds from criminal activity.
- (c) Serving as a liaison from law enforcement to school officials.
- (d) Providing advice on safety drills.
- (e) Identifying vulnerabilities in school facilities and safety protocols.
- (f) Educating and advising students and staff on law enforcement topics.
- (g) Enforcing criminal laws.

### **436.5 USE OF FORCE**

SROs should exercise age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate practices when interacting with students.

SROs shall not use force or their authority solely to enforce school rules or policies or participate in the enforcement of discipline for violations of school rules (Minn. Stat. § 626.8482, Subd. 2).

SROs should employ de-escalation techniques and physical intervention strategies consistent with their training, using only that amount of force that reasonably appears necessary given the facts and circumstances perceived by the SRO at the time of the event to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement purpose. See the Use of Force Policy for additional guidance.

### **436.6 ARREST CONSIDERATIONS**

When a criminal incident also involves a violation of school rules, SROs should consider referral of the matter to school authorities in lieu of formal criminal referral, as appropriate for the incident.

Custodial arrests in school should be avoided if reasonably practical. If a custodial arrest is necessary because of exigency or public safety considerations, the arrest should be made in a non-communal area away from the view of other students if practicable.

When reasonably practicable, appropriate school staff should be notified prior to and/or present during the custodial arrest of a student.

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#### **436.7 STUDENT AND PARENT DATA**

Department records containing student and parent data shall be maintained pursuant to state law and the Records Maintenance and Release Policy.

#### **436.8 TRAINING**

SROs shall complete required initial and ongoing POST-approved training within the required timeframes. The SRO's most recent training documents shall be maintained in the SRO's training file (Minn. Stat. § 626.8482, Subd. 3) (See the Personnel Records Policy for additional guidance).

#### **436.9 POLICY REVIEW**

The SRO shall review this policy prior to assuming SRO duties (Minn. Stat. § 626.8482, Subd. 3(c)).