

# The School Resource Officer (SRO)

## The SRO

- ☒ The Santa Rosa County School System and Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office share the following goals and objectives regarding the SRO program:
  - ☒ Foster educational programs and activities that will increase the student's knowledge of and respect for the law and function of law enforcement agencies.
  - ☒ To encourage SROs to attend extra-curricular activities held at the school.
  - ☒ To act swiftly and cooperatively when responding to flagrant criminal offenses at the school ( disorderly conduct, weapons on campus, illegal drugs ).
  - ☒ To report serious crimes that occur on campus and cooperate in the investigation of crimes that occur on campus.
  - ☒ To cooperate with other law enforcement officials in investigations of criminal offenses which occur off campus.
  - ☒ To encourage SROs to coordinate traffic control and crossing guards when deemed necessary.



## The SRO: Duty Hours

- ☒ The SRO works 40 hours per work week.
- ☒ The SRO shall be on duty at their assigned school from 30 minutes before the beginning of the student instructional day until 30 minutes after the end of the students' school day unless modified by mutual agreement between the school and sheriff's office.
- ☒ It is understood that time spent in court or working juvenile cases related to their SRO duties shall be considered part of the 40 hours.
- ☒ The SRO shall earn compensatory time (comp time) and will be used on school holidays.



## The SRO: Duties

- ☒ To protect lives and property for the citizens and public school students of the county.
- ☒ To enforce Federal, State and Local criminal laws and ordinances, and to assist school officials with the enforcement of Board of education policies and Administrative Regulations regarding student conduct.
- ☒ To investigate criminal activity committed on or adjacent to school property.
- ☒ To counsel students in special situations, such as students suspected of engaging in criminal misconduct, when requested by the Principal or the Principal's designee or by parents of a student.
- ☒ To answer questions that students may have about Florida Criminal or juvenile laws.
- ☒ To assist other law enforcement officers with outside investigations concerning students attending the school(s) to which the SRO is assigned.
- ☒ To coordinate security for special school events and safety drills at the request of the Principal, Superintendent or his designee.
- ☒ To coordinate traffic control during the arrival or departure of students.



## The SRO: Interrogations

- ☒ In the event a serious crime is committed at school or at a school activity, the Principal, Assistant principal or Principal's designee with the assistance of the SRO should:
  - ☒ Question witnesses to determine that a crime was committed and who committed the crime. The SRO shall have the authority to question any student at school who may have information about criminal misconduct or the violation of the conduct policies of the SRCSS.
  - ☒ As a general rule, the questioning (interrogation) should be conducted in cooperation with and in the presence of a school official but when immediate action is necessary or in an emergency/crisis/life threatening situation, the SRO may interrogate a student without the presence of a school official.



## The SRO: Interrogations (cont...)

- ☒ Questioning the person suspected of committing the crime. The student, once they become a suspect must be given the opportunity to have his/her parents present during any questioning with regard to the SRO. The parent should be informed or attempts should be made to inform the parent. In the event that the parent can not be contacted, a school official must be present if the student wishes to answer any questions.
- ☒ If the suspect wishes to remain silent, to contact his/her parents or an attorney, or to end the interview, the questioning should cease and the suspect's request should be granted unless there is a reasonable cause to detain the student for questioning.
- ☒ If a student is detained, placed into custody or arrested, the student must be advised prior to further questioning of his/her "Miranda Rights" by the SRO.



## The SRO: Interrogations (cont..)

- ☒ The SRO shall work in conjunction with the school administration on determining when and where to interview students on campus.
- ☒ SROs or other law enforcement have the right to question victims without a school official present.
  - ☒ This is true in incidents of suspected abuse
- ☒ Reference Student Code of Conduct: page 24



## The SRO: Search Procedures

- ☒ If the school official has reasonable suspicion for suspecting that a search of a student's or a student's possessions will uncover evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or rules of the school, the school official may search the student and the student's pockets, pocketbook, book bag, desk locker, binders, vehicle or any other similar location within the student's control.
  - ☒ Reasonable suspicion for a school official can mean information received from some source that the school personnel believes to be reliable. This would include other students, in most cases.
- ☒ The right to make inquiries and searches under these "reasonable suspicions" shall be limited to the school official and not the SRO.
- ☒ The SRO should not participate since the SRO must have "probable cause" to search. It is best practices not to have the SRO present but another school official when "reasonable suspicion" results in a search.



### The SRO: Miscellaneous

- > School officials shall SROs to inspect and copy any public records maintained by the school.
- > SROs shall have access to student information including but not limited to demographics, grades, attendance and discipline.
- > Transporting students: the SRO may transport when students are suspended and sent home from school due to disciplinary actions if the student's parent or guardian has refused or is unable to pick up the child within a reasonable time period and the student is disruptive and their continual presence on campus is a threat to the safety and welfare of others.



### The SRO: Miscellaneous

- > School officials will notify the SRO in all cases involving the possession, sale or distribution of controlled substances at school or school activities.
- > Any controlled substances or suspected controlled substances confiscated by school officials will be turned over to the SRO.
- > If there is probable cause to believe that a student or any other person has sold or is selling a controlled substance at or near school, the SRO is to be notified.
- > In the event that any weapon is located or suspected to be in the possession of anyone on school campus the SRO shall be notified immediately.

