

**SOMERSERT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER GUIDELINES
Policy #700-53ap**

1. The SRO is, first, a law enforcement officer whose primary duty is enforcement of the law.
 - A. Order of Response: Each SRO office and the sending agency will be given a listing of school sites, the building principal's name and direct telephone number, and the individual in charge of the building in the absence of the principal. That list will be a priority reference for the primary administrative assistant (secretary) in each building.
 - B. Calls for Service
 - 1) The SRO assumes primary responsibility for handling all calls for service in disruptive, violent, or illegal behaviors and coordinates the response of other police resources. Any call going directly to the SRO regarding school site and school property incidents will be reported to and discussed with the site principal prior to action unless of an emergency or safety issue.
 - 2) The SRO provides information to the appropriate investigative units.
 - 3) The SRO is kept advised of all investigations that involve students from his/her assigned school.
 - C. Arrests on School Premises
 - 1) [COMAR 13A.08.01.12A]
When possible and appropriate, arrest by police should be made during non-school hours and away from the school premises.
 - 2) [COMAR 13A.08.01.12B]
When an arrest on school premises during the school hours is necessary, the responsible school official shall ascertain the facts from the arresting officer which will enable the school official to fully advise the parent or guardians and other school officials of the nature of the charge, the identity of the arresting officer, and the location of the student.
 - 3) [COMAR 13A.08.01.12C]
When an arrest has taken place on school premises or during school hours, every effort shall be made by school officials to inform the parent or guardians immediately and thereafter promptly to advise the local superintendent of schools.
 - 4) [COMAR 13A.08.01.12D]
Arrest on school premises during school hours shall be effectuated in such a manner as to avoid both embarrassment to the student being arrested and jeopardizing the safety and welfare of other students.
 - 5) [COMAR 13A.08.01.12E]
School officials may not permit questioning of a student under arrest on the school premises and shall request the arresting officer to remove the student from the premises as soon as practical after the arrest is made.

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- D. Questioning of Students on School Premises Regarding Violations of the Law
- 1) [COMAR 13A.08.01.13A]
Police investigations involving the questioning of students may not be permitted on school premises unless in connection with a crime committed on the premises or in connection with an investigation which, if not immediately permitted, would compromise the success of that investigation or endanger the lives or safety of the students or other persons, provided, however, that a school official should be present throughout that questioning.
 - 2) [COMAR 13A.08.01.13B]
A local school system shall permit personnel from a local department of social services or a police officer to question a student on school premises during the school day in an investigation involving suspected child neglect or suspected child abuse under Family Law Article, Title 5, Subtitle 7, Annotated Code of Maryland. The following apply:
 - (a) The local superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall determine, after consultation with the individual from the local department of social services or the police officer, whether a school official shall be present during the questioning of a student pursuant to this section.
 - (b) Records and reports concerning child abuse or neglect are confidential, and unauthorized disclosure is a criminal offense under Article 88A, §6(b), Annotated Code of Maryland.
 - 3) [COMAR 13A.08.01.13C]
Except as provided in §D of this regulation, whenever investigative questioning of students is permitted on them premises, the school official shall promptly advise the parent or guardians and the local superintendent's office of the nature of the investigation and such other details as may be required.
 - 4) [COMAR 13A.08.01.13D]
School officials are not required to notify parents or guardians of investigations on school premises involving suspected child neglect and suspected child abuse under Family Law Article, Title 5, Subtitle 7, Annotated Code of Maryland.
 - 5) [COMAR 13A.08.01.13E]
In the absence of an arrest, school officials may not authorize the removal of a student from school for the purpose of investigative questioning without the consent of the parent or guardians, except as provided below:
 - (a) A student may be removed from school premises if that student is a suspected victim of child abuse or neglect and the local department of social services has guardianship of the child or a court order to remove the child;
 - (b) The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall ensure that prompt notification of a student's removal from school under this section is made to the student's parent or guardians.
- E. Extension of Investigation to School Site to which the SRO is Not Assigned

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- 1) Authority: If the site has an SRO program, the investigating SRO officer should confer with the site SRO officer and turn the investigation within that site into his/her hands

If the site does not have an SRO program, the investigating SRO officer should contact the building principal to describe his/her need at this site. The building principal will contact the appropriate authority for that site's jurisdiction if it differs from the contacting SRO and requires a criminal investigation rather than a conduct investigation. Depending upon the nature of the concern, the site principal may elect to work with the investigating SRO, making certain that COMAR regulations are followed at all times. In cases where the building principal responds to the issue at hand or accesses another authority, the investigating SRO will receive a follow up response within one day of the referral.

- 2) Questioning: Police may not question a student (s) on school premises as a part of an investigation unless:
 - (a) Immediacy is critical and a school official is present
 - (b) General safety or lives are endangered and a school official is present
 - (c) The issue is a suspected child neglect or abuse and consideration has been given to the school authority regarding the need for a school officer's presence during questioning
- 3) Procedure for Exceptions:
 - (a) The parent /guardian must be promptly advised unless it is a case of neglect or abuse involving the parent or guardian
 - (b) The superintendent's office must be promptly notified of the nature of the investigation
- 4) Removal: In the absence of an arrest, school officials may not authorize the removal of a student from school for the purpose of investigative questioning without the consent of the parent/guardian.

2. The SRO is responsible for becoming thoroughly familiar with Somerset County Public Schools student handbooks, standards of social Behavior and the principal's scope of authority within the school.
3. The SRO works under the principal's leadership in his/her assigned school.
 - A. School principals have full responsibility for the enforcement of school discipline and school rules and regulations (**conduct violations**).
 - B. The SRO shall function as a safety and educational resource person in cooperation with school personnel
 - C. The school personnel should telephone the local police agency for assistance if the SRO is unavailable when needed in a law enforcement capacity or in 911 emergency situations.
 - D. The SRO will conduct investigations of criminal activity when it is reported to him/her.

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4. Reporting Responsibilities of the SRO
 - A. The SRO shall complete investigative reports in accordance with department policy. Reports shall be submitted to the SRO's supervisor in his assigned division.
 - B. The SRO shall complete the appropriate reports whenever an arrest of a student who is 18 years old or older occurs.
 - C. The SRO shall complete a juvenile referral report and the required reports when making an arrest of a student under the age of 18. The report should be submitted in accordance with department procedures.
 - D. The principal shall be notified of all arrests made on school property.
 - E. The SRO will forward copies of all investigative reports, arrest reports, and juvenile referrals to his/her supervisor in a timely manner as directed by his/her supervisor. Reporting of incidents occurring outside of the school site or property involving students of a given school will be reported to the building principal as required by law.
 - F. The SRO should record daily on the SRO Daily Activity Report programs conducted, classes taught, and counseling contacts made with the students or staff during the work day. These Daily Reports will be kept current and turned into the sending agency's supervisor at the close of the month.

5. The primary duties of the SRO involve preventing violent behavior, detecting criminal activity, and apprehending delinquents or criminals. As such SRO's
 - A. Consider their primary duty to be the prevention of violent behavior and the detection and apprehension of criminals.
 - B. Will be in full uniform when reporting to his/her assigned site or in appropriate duty uniform as approved by his/her supervisor.
 - C. Shall allow infractions of school rules, as opposed to crimes or violations of the law, to be handled at the school level offering advice, assistance, and consultation as requested
 - D. Shall not hold any academic responsibility while assigned to a school site but may assume a periodic instructional role related to the law and justice education
 - E. May take direct law enforcement action into his or her hands in emergency situations as guided by the state laws, the juvenile code, police guidelines, and common sense.
 - F. Shall not access or request access to confidential records except under regulated conditions and with the approval of the building principal.
 - G. Shall participate in professional development and training
 - H. Shall, in conjunction, with the building principal of each participating site facilitate school staff orientation to the SRO program and other professional development meetings or activities as appropriate
 - I. Shall participate in county update and review SRO Program countywide meetings for participating school administrators, SRO officers, and SRO supervisors to be held quarterly at the Office of the Superintendent of Schools