



SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

Job Description Overview for Principals

The following is an overview of the role of the School Resource Officer (SRO). It is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of responsibilities, as the position has been designed to have some flexibility depending on the needs of the school and the particular abilities and interests of the officer.

The conduct of all police officers is governed by the Criminal Code of Canada, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the Police Services Act, and the Rules and Procedures of the Toronto Police Service. Except when there is a threat to life of safety, when on school property, officers will also follow the Police/School Board Protocol.

Job Description (Summary)

Relationship Building

The primary goal of the SRO program is to establish positive relationships through an active uniform presence in the school community. Officers are to take a proactive approach with students and school administration to build healthy and trusting relationships.

The SRO and school administration should discuss how the SRO can best achieve the goal of building positive relationships with students. The SRO is not a hall monitor.

Investigations

SROs can, and usually will, investigate criminal offences that occur on school property. However, there are situations where the SRO may direct the investigation to another unit. For example, police procedure directs that only trained sexual assault investigators may conduct certain types of investigations. An SRO may also direct the investigation to other officers when the investigation is so large or complex that it would interfere with his/her duties at the school or when the SRO believes the investigation would interfere with the relationships that have built at the school.

The decision of who investigates an occurrence rests with the SRO, in consultation with their divisional supervisor.

Charges

As per police procedures, SROs will complete occurrences regarding most criminal offences that they become aware of. Completion of an occurrence does not mean that criminal charges will be laid.

Police have considerable discretion when deciding whether or not to lay criminal charges.

To avoid criminalizing behaviour that would normally be dealt with through school discipline, SROs will generally take direction from the school principal regarding the laying of charges related to property crime and minor assaults.

In situations involving personal injury or threats, the SRO will solicit the Principal's input regarding the laying of criminal charges, but the decision to lay charges rest solely with the officer or his/her supervisor.

Arrests

Except in exigent circumstances, the SRO will discuss with the principal how to minimize disruption to the school when it is necessary to interview, search, or arrest a student at school during school hours.

The arrest of students may be conducted by the SRO or another officer.

Arrested students will be handcuffed and searched by police.

Exigent Circumstances

Exigent circumstances refer to urgent, pressing, and/or emergency circumstances. Exigent circumstances usually exist when immediate action is required for the safety of the police or others. Such circumstances may include a bomb threat, a person possessing or using a weapon, or a fire on school property.

In exigent circumstances, police will assume primary responsibility as may be necessary to ensure school safety. The principal will continue to have a role consistent with his/her statutory responsibility for the health and welfare of students and members of the school community, and to maintain proper order and discipline in the school.

If the SRO is not immediately available, in an emergency, school staff shall call 9-1-1 immediately.

Crime Prevention

The SRO will provide crime prevention information and facilitate crime prevention initiatives in the school.

Information on the range of crime prevention presentations and initiatives that an SRO may provide can be found on the School Action Teams website at www.schoolactionteams.com.

Note: The School Action Teams website is no longer available, the presentation are still available through the Divisional Policing Support Unit.

Threat Assessment

SROs will be trained in threat assessment policies and processes and will encourage schools to conduct threat assessments where necessary.

If there is a serious threat to the life or safety of any member of the school community, the SRO will take immediate action to intervene.

Emergency Planning

The SRO will assist with completion of the Toronto Emergency Safe Schools Strategy (TESSS) documents.

If requested, SROs will plan and assist with lockdown drills and training related to threats to school safety.

Supervision/Support

SROs are part of the local division's Community Response Unit (CRU). They are supervised by a sergeant(s) and staff sergeant at the division.

The SRO program is coordinated and supported by the Youth Services Section of the Community Mobilization Unit. Officers from Youth Services will regularly attend schools to provide support to SROs.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Working Hours

SROs are assigned to work an 8 hour shift from Monday to Friday.

Shifts are based on school hours, with flexibility for school and community events. Changing a shift to accommodate school activities is at the discretion of the SRO and requires the approval of a supervisor.

SROs require time at the beginning and end of their shift to report to their division. SROs are entitled to a 1 hour lunch.

Reporting

When arriving at the school, the SRO will report, in person, to the Principal or designate. When leaving the school, the SRO will report, in person, to the Principal or designate.

The SRO will provide a monthly calendar to the Principal indicating training days, court, annual leave, or other days that he/she will be absent from the school.

Equipment – School Board

As per the agreement between the Service and the School Boards, SROs must be provided with an office with a lockable door, a phone, a phone line, and an internet connection. If possible, the officer should be provided with a locker to store equipment.

The SRO may not share an office with other staff, nor should he/she be placed in a secluded area of the school where it may be considered inappropriate to meet students.

The SRO should be assigned a parking spot, if applicable.

School Resource Office Coordinator

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