



# Charleston County Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedures Manual

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**Sheriff Carl Ritchie**

12-03

## SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAM

- ☒ New
- ☐ Revised
- ☐ Reviewed

ACA Standards Reference:  
CALEA Standards Reference:  
NCCHC Standards Reference:  
SCLEA Standards Reference:  
SC Minimum Standards:

*This policy dated 1/29/2025 replaces prior policies cited above and supersedes all previously issued directives.*

I. Purpose:

To establish procedures for the School Resource Officer Program, including for the day-to-day operations of the School Resource Officers (SROs).

II. Policy:

Charleston County Sheriff's Office SROs will be selected, trained, and assigned to duties within the Charleston County School District's (CCSD) schools. SROs will provide security and law enforcement education to their assigned schools. SROs will adhere to our agency's policies as well as CCSD policies, if applicable, to provide the proper care of the students within these schools.

III. Definitions:

- A. For purposes of this procedure, the word "deputy" applies to all agency employees with a certification classification of Class I, Class II, Class III, or Reserve Deputy, as defined by the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy.

The following terms are used interchangeably; however, they carry guidance to specific employees based on usage of the term:

1. Deputy, deputies, deputy sheriff, detention deputy, sworn employee, uniformed sworn employee, sworn administrative employee, and
2. civilian, non-sworn employee.

- B. *Employee*: When used without further clarification, the term employee is inclusive of all agency members (sworn and non-sworn).

IV. Procedure:

A. School Resource Officer's Responsibilities:

1. Deputies assigned to the schools are, first and foremost, law enforcement officers charged with enforcing the law on school grounds and during school-related activities.
2. Augment crime and delinquency prevention by identifying risk factors and sharing information with other law enforcement and security personnel.
3. Serve as a positive community policing role model.

4. Enforce laws, ordinances, and policies and investigate criminal behavior.
5. Provide on-site crisis/emergency response to disasters, safety threats, etc.
6. Provide security at school functions.
7. Work closely with school officials to develop school safety and critical incident response plans.
8. Communicate openly with students regarding rights, responsibilities, concerns, and unlawful behavior.
9. Make referrals to community programs, social services, in-school programs, etc.
10. Act as a liaison to parents, school staff, and community leaders.
11. Assist in the development and implementation of school safety and crisis response plans.
12. Identify high-risk behavior or criminal activity in and around the school property.
13. Provide timely, pertinent crime-related information to school personnel and security.
14. Provide instruction to students in law and the Criminal Justice system.
15. The school principal or assistant principal will be notified as soon as possible of any arrests on school property during school hours.
16. The SRO may conduct searches of school premises or students on school premises consistent with constitutional guidelines if probable cause exists that criminal activity has occurred, and that the student or location/container possesses items that relate to the commission of that crime.
17. The SRO shall maintain detailed and accurate records of the operation of the School Resource Officer Program and shall submit other reports of an instructional nature as required.

18. Coordinate all activities with the principal and staff members concerned and will seek permission, advice, and guidance prior to enacting any program within the school. Outside resources provided by the SRO's must be vetted and approved by CCSO.
19. The SRO shall seek to establish individual rapport with students, teachers, and staff.
20. When requested, the SRO shall attend parent/faculty meetings to solicit support and understanding of the program, as well as to assist parents and faculty members in law-enforcement-related problems involving students.
21. Shall be available for conferences with students, parents, and faculty/staff members in order to assist them with problems of law enforcement or crime related nature. Student information obtained shall not be disclosed except as provided by law (FERPA).
22. The SRO shall become familiar with all community agencies which offer assistance to children, youths, and their families such as mental health clinics, drug treatment centers, etc. The SRO shall make referrals to such agencies.
23. Be highly visible throughout the campus but avoid a predictable routine in actions and movements.
24. Provide assistance to other law enforcement officers in matters regarding the SRO's school assignment.
25. The SRO must notify their immediate supervisor of any event that occurs. The SRO supervisor will be responsible for notifying their chain of command, the PIO, and the school security as soon as practical.
26. SRO's must notify their immediate supervisor and school administrators when absent from work or when the SRO will be off their assigned campus for an extended period of time.
27. SROs should ensure that non-criminal student disciplinary matters remain the responsibility of school staff and not the SRO. This fact will be communicated to school administrators as necessary. Enforcement of the code of student conduct is the responsibility of teachers and administrators. The SRO shall not take part in any school disciplinary actions; and will only accompany school personnel if

- there is a threat of violence.
28. School Resource Officers will refrain from “working” carpool areas and other stationary post. This causes SROs to establish a daily routine and limits the availability of the SRO on campus before and after school. On occasion, SROs may assist in areas such as the carpool area under the following conditions:
    - a. A vehicle is being operated in an unsafe manner, which would require law enforcement intervention; and
    - b. the School Resource Officer observes an unsafe situation that needs to be addressed immediately.
  29. SROs will wear authorized agency issued uniforms at all times for all school functions. This requirement also applies if the SRO is participating in summer camp programs or field days.
  30. All SROs are to remain on their assigned school campuses unless excused for official police business and/or with approval of the unit supervisor.
  31. SRO’s may be required to leave their assigned campuses and assist with incidents at other campuses as directed by the unit supervisor. SROs are to advise dispatch when leaving their assignment to respond to another school.
  32. In the event of an active shooter at another campus, or at a nearby location, SROs are to remain at their assigned campuses to maintain security, unless expressly directed to respond by the unit supervisor.
- B. SROs are assigned to the Bureau of Community Engagement. The SRO supervisor will assign deputies to selected schools within its jurisdiction.
1. SROs shall remain employees of the Charleston County Sheriff's Office and shall not be employees of the School District.
  2. SROs must adhere to all Sheriff's Office policies and all applicable Charleston County School District (CCSD) policies.
    - a. If CCSD policies conflict with Sheriff's Office policies, the policies of the Sheriff's Office will take precedence.
    - b. Guidance from the unit supervisor may be sought to clarify any policy conflict.

C. Selection of School Resource Officers:

1. Vacancies in the agency School Resource Program will be advertised through intra-agency memoranda. To be considered for assignment, candidates must submit a written request through their chain-of-command to the SRO Unit supervisor as part of an intra-agency vacancy package as outlined in [Policy 4-15 Intra-Agency Vacancies](#). Candidates will be chosen on the basis of qualifications and an interview by an agency selection board.
2. A minimum of 18 months (post release from field training and/or as specified in the intra-agency vacancy announcement) of continuous service as a deputy with the Charleston County Sheriff's Office with satisfactory work performance, to include no disciplinary action within the last twelve months from the posted deadline of the intra-agency vacancy submittal. The Sheriff may waive these requirements and assign deputies to the program at their discretion.
3. Selected officers must be able to satisfactorily obtain a School Resource Officer course of certification.
4. Officers must demonstrate above average abilities in dealing with children.

D. Arrest and Interview Procedures:

1. Arrests shall be made in accordance with state statutes, and local ordinances.
2. All school interviews conducted on school property with students who are suspects, witnesses, or victims of criminal or delinquent acts occurring on or off school property will always be conducted with the permission of the school principal or their designated representative (See [policy 12-01 Juvenile Procedures](#)).
3. As with any criminal investigation body cameras must be activated and Miranda given to the students. Parents and legal guardians cannot invoke or waive the juvenile's constitutional rights (See [policy 12-01 Juvenile Procedures](#)).

E. Prohibited Conduct:

1. SROs are strictly prohibited from ever having an intimate relationship

- with any student regardless of their age or status.
2. SROs are to never share any personal information (i.e. personal cell phone numbers, addresses, social media, etc.) with any student, regardless of their age or status.
  3. SROs are prohibited from creating fake social media accounts, so they can befriend, have relationships with, or investigate students, unless the investigation is approved by the unit supervisor.
  4. The SRO shall not act as a school disciplinarian.
  5. SROs shall not transport students in their official vehicle unless:
    - a. The student is under arrest;
    - b. the student is a victim of a crime;
    - c. an emergency exists; or
    - d. permission from the unit supervisor is obtained.

See [policy 12-01 Juvenile Procedure](#) in reference to in-car camera usage while transporting a juvenile.

6. The SRO will not initiate administrative searches of any area of the school or of any student. The SRO will only seize property as it relates to suspected criminal activity.
- F. Regular Duty Hours of School Resource Officers:
1. Each SRO shall be assigned to a school on a full-time basis during those days and hours that the school is in regular session. SROs should use the district academic calendar when scheduling planned leave.
  2. At times when school is not in session, assignments shall be at the discretion of the unit supervisor.