

MESA POLICE Department Policy Manual	School Resource Officer Program	DPM 2.10.40 Effective 07/29/2015 Revised 02/14/2023
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1. PURPOSE

This policy provides Mesa Police Department (MPD) members with guidelines for the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program.

2. DEFINITIONS

Law Related Education (LRE): As defined by the ADE, the teaching of rules, laws, and the legal system that actively involves students to prepare them for responsible citizenship. It also provides instructions for legal rights, responsibilities, and the role of the citizen and requires students to practice the application of LRE in potential real-life situations.

Off-Duty School Resource Officer (SRO): For the purposes of this policy, trained officers who are authorized to work on a school campus during normal school hours in an off-duty capacity.

School District(s): For purposes of this policy, the term refers to:

- The Mesa Unified School District No. 4
- The Gilbert Unified School District No. 41
- The Queen Creek Unified School District No. 95

School Safety Program: The [School Safety Program](#) (SSP) is organized and funded by the [Arizona Department of Education](#) (ADE). The program funds School Resource Officers through the individual school districts. Officers assigned to schools participating in the SSP operate under an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the school district and the MPD.

3. GENERAL

3.1 Guidelines

- The School Resource Unit is intended to follow the "Community Policing" philosophy.
- Assigned officers will be an integral member of a community made up of the school campus and members of the surrounding neighborhoods and businesses.

3.2 Philosophy

- Furnishing a law enforcement professional who provides police services and resources to the campus and school community.

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- B. Keeping schools safe so that teachers can teach, and students can learn.
- C. Interacting with students, faculty, community, parents, and civic leaders to promote positive law enforcement relations that may extend beyond the school campus and outside of school hours.
- D. Serving as a liaison between the MPD and the school, as well as other law enforcement and social services agencies.
- E. Fulfilling the requirements of the School Safety Program at designated campuses.

4. PROGRAM

The MPD will assign an officer to selected schools, as determined by the Department, to act as a resource for school administration, staff, students, parents, and local businesses.

4.1 Intergovernmental Agreement

- A. School districts and the MPD:
 - 1. Both parties will act in the performance of their own individual government capabilities and not as agents or employees of the other.
- B. The MPD has sole authority over:
 - 1. Assignment of the officer.
 - 2. Determination of the officer's hours.
 - 3. Discipline of the officer.
- C. The appropriate area SRO Sergeant and chain of command will provide the direct supervision of the SRO and resolve disciplinary or performance matters, including officer performance evaluations.
- D. The MPD recognizes the necessity of working with the school districts in relation to:
 - 1. Assignments.
 - 2. Hours and disciplinary issues involving the officer.
- E. The MPD will confer with relevant parties when necessary.

5. SRO SERGEANT RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Supervision

- A. Supervise the SROs within their assigned area.
- B. Monitor the SRO's performance and effectiveness in dealing with the campus and the surrounding communities' interests and needs.
- C. Monitor the SRO's LRE hours to ensure that the SRO is providing the required LRE classes to the students at schools participating in the SSP.

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- D. Evaluate campus safety issues, student conduct on and off campus, traffic issues, and any other enforcement or safety issues facing the school and the surrounding community. Will coordinate the efforts to address these problems.
- E. In the event a major incident occurs, contact the SRO Lieutenant or contact the assigned Patrol Lieutenant who shall make notifications. Refer to [DPM 2.6.30 Major Incident Notifications](#).

5.2 School Relationship

- A. The SRO Sergeant shall meet with a member of each school's administration at least once a semester (two times per year) seeking information and feedback as to the SRO performance, school interests, and/or concerns.
- B. Any information regarding complaints about an SRO's performance, conduct, or availability will be referred to the appropriate SRO Sergeant as to the issue for review and investigation.
- C. Upon addressing the issue, the immediate supervisor provides the results of the findings and informs the original school representative of the results of the inquiry.

5.3 Administrative

- A. Attend the SRO meetings as scheduled.
- B. Develop and administer tests to establish and maintain an active SRO transfer list.
- C. Authorize and provide training for additional sworn members to work as Contract Off-Duty SROs.

6. SRO RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Law Enforcement Action

- A. Take proper and necessary law enforcement action on any criminal, civil, or petty offense, or other investigation that the officer determines is necessary within MPD policies and procedures.
- B. Serve as a deterrent to crime, potential violence, and misbehavior by maintaining a visible presence on the campus and adjacent areas.
- C. The officer's primary area of responsibility includes their assigned school campus(es), related parking lots, and areas near the school as deemed necessary.
- D. Handle police calls for service associated with these areas.

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- E. Evidence seized on campus shall be impounded the same day or secured with supervisor approval according to [DPM 3.2.45 Impounding Evidence & Property](#) and shall not be left on the school campus.
- F. Seize property/evidence only involving criminal investigations on campus and not school rules violations (i.e., seizing a skateboard from a student who was riding on campus is a school rule violation and not a violation of the law).
- G. Use the Notification Matrix (refer to [DPM 2.6.30 Major Incident Notifications](#)) as a guide for reporting incidents to Department members.

6.2 Responsibilities at School

- A. SROs will not get involved with enforcement of school rules violations unless there is also a violation of state law, to prevent criminal activity, or to protect persons or property. Examples of school rules violations include: disobedience, disruption of class, ditching, disorderly language, dress code, and cell phone violations.
- B. Be available to the schools to provide support, information, and documentation when meeting with parents reference their child's behavior or misconduct while on campus or adjacent areas.
- C. Provide training on security and crime-related topics for school personnel, when appropriate.
- D. Assist school administration with the planning and operation of drills and other campus safety exercises such as lockdowns, fire, and evacuation drills.
- E. While on campus, assist the Juvenile Probation or Parole Officer as needed, as well as other social service agencies such as the Department of Child Safety.

6.3 School Safety Program Responsibilities

- A. If assigned to a school participating in the SSP or as assigned by the SRO Sergeant:
 - 1. Complete the required amount of LRE hours.
 - 2. Complete the required SSP reports and logs.
 - 3. Assist the school district in completing grant application renewals.
 - 4. Follow LRE "Best Practices" as set forth by the SSP.
 - 5. Attend all required trainings as set forth by the SSP.

6.4 On-Officer Body Camera (OBC) Requirements for SROs

- A. SROs shall follow OBC procedures as directed in [DPM 3.4.35 On-Officer Body Camera Program](#) with some exceptions. Since SROs are in contact with students and school staff for most of the workday, it is not feasible to record every contact due to the amount of time the OBC would be activated, and the

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sensitive or private matters discussed with students, school staff, and parents.

- B. Ensure school staff are aware of and understand the OBC policy, and if possible, inform school staff involved in an investigation when the OBC is activated.
- C. To encourage active participation, do not use the OBC during formal or informal counseling sessions with students or school staff.
- D. For OBC purposes, give school staff members the same consideration as City employees and follow the recording prohibitions during administrative functions/meetings or private conversations.
- E. Only record school staff when conducting an official law enforcement investigation. SROs should be aware of areas where students have a reasonable expectation of privacy (i.e., bathrooms, locker rooms, nurse's office, etc.).
- F. Use the OBC with adults primarily when:
 - 1. You reasonably believe a crime has occurred or may occur.
 - 2. Addressing a person who is causing a disturbance.
- G. Use the OBC with juveniles ONLY when conducting a law enforcement investigation and adhere to the Parents' Bill of Rights as outlined in [ARS 1-602](#) and ensure all body camera recordings will be part of a law enforcement investigation.

6.5 Administrative Responsibilities

- A. Attend SRO Unit briefings as determined by the SRO Sergeant.
- B. Complete Daily Activity Logs as assigned by the SRO Sergeant.

7. CONTRACT OFF-DUTY EMPLOYMENT IN SCHOOLS

- A. Contract Off-Duty SROs:
 - 1. Shall be approved by the SRO Sergeant.
 - 2. Prior to working in a school as a Contract Off-Duty SRO, will complete training as required by the SRO Sergeant.
 - 3. While working as a Contract Off-Duty SRO, will report to the SRO Sergeant. In the absence of the SRO Sergeant, will report to the on-duty Patrol Sergeant.
 - 4. Will be filled through Off-Duty Employment unless specifically authorized to work on-duty by a supervisor. Refer to [DPM 1.2.115 Off-Duty & Outside Employment Protocols](#).

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REFERENCES

- [Arizona Department of Education](#)
- [ARS 1-602 Parents' Bill of Rights](#)
- [DPM 1.2.115 Off-Duty & Outside Employment Protocols](#)
- [DPM 2.6.30 Major Incident Notifications](#)
- [DPM 3.2.45 Impounding Evidence & Property](#)
- [DPM 3.4.35 On-Officer Body Camera Program](#)
- [School Safety Program](#)