

School Resource Officers

431.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines which define the relationship between the Hermantown Police Department and the Hermantown Independent School District (ISD) 700 utilizing school resource officers (SRO). It will further facilitate the understanding of this relationship with regards to criminal matters and law enforcement situations, which will arise at the local school level. The scope of this document is intended to encompass all aspects of SRO law enforcement unit, administration and operations.

431.2 POLICY

The Hermantown Police Department is committed to provide safe learning environments, provide valuable resources to school staff members, foster a positive relationship with students and develop strategies to resolve problems that affect our youth with the goal of protecting all children, so they can reach their fullest potential.

431.3 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

School - An elementary school, middle school, or secondary school, as defined in section 120A.05, subdivisions 9, 11 and 13.

School resource officer - A licensed peace officer who is assigned to work in an elementary school, middle school, or secondary school during the regular instructional school day as one of the officer's regular responsibilities through the terms of a contract entered between the peace officer's employer and the designated school district or charter school.

Positive School Climate - A school environment that makes students feel safe, supported and welcome.

Developmentally appropriate practices - Means individualized, responsive care that is appropriate for the child's age, cultural context, disability status and personality.

Great bodily harm - As defined in Minn. Stat. 609.02 Sub. 8 means bodily injury which creates a high probability of death, or which causes serious permanent disfigurement, or which causes a permanent or protracted loss or impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ or other serious bodily harm.

Prone restraint - As defined in Minn. Stat. 121A.58 and for purposes of this policy, prone restraint means placing a child in a face down position.

Custodial arrest - A custodial arrest is the actual, physical restraint of a person and subsequent detention. Custodial arrest may occur with or without a warrant depending on the circumstances.

De-escalation - Refers to the methods and actions taken to decrease the severity of a conflict, whether physical or verbal in nature.

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431.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- a. The SRO employed by the Hermantown Police Department should be carefully selected, thoroughly trained, and appropriately equipped to fulfill their role within the school community. The SRO should actively engage in early prevention and early intervention educational programs that focus on and support student needs.
- b. SRO's shall be specially trained in the principles and standards identified in Minn. Stat. 626.8482, Subd. 4 which recognize the unique role of an SRO to foster positive relationships, open communication and mentorship while providing a safe and constructive environment for students, staff and visitors in the school setting.
- c. SRO's are expected to recognize and consider alternatives to formal criminal referral such as diversion and restorative justice programs where possible and as appropriate for the incident, the involved students and families, victim(s) and the larger school community.
- d. When a criminal incident also involves a violation of school rules, SRO's should consider referral of the matter to school authorities in lieu of formal criminal referral, as appropriate for the incident, the students and families involved, the victim(s) and the larger school community.
- e. Nothing in this policy should be construed as limiting any other duty or responsibility imposed on peace officers; the expectation that peace officers will exercise professional judgment and discretion to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public when carrying out their duties; or creates a duty for school resource officers to protect students, staff, or others on school grounds that is different from the duty to protect the public as a whole.

431.5 SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAM

The Director of Public Safety should appoint SROs to serve in elementary, middle, and secondary schools upon contract with local school districts or charter schools. The goals and objectives of the SRO program are to provide a safe learning environment, provide valuable resources to school staff members, foster a positive relationship with students, and develop strategies to resolve problems. Methods to achieve these goals and objectives include but are not limited to:

- a. Assisting with the development and implementation of a school safety plan.
- b. Protecting the school against external threats by preventing unauthorized access to school property, and securing the school against a natural disaster or other violence.
- c. Creating respect for law and order in the public school system and minimizing criminal activity.
- d. Identifying students at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system and guiding them toward more positive and socially acceptable ways to behave.
- e. Reducing criminal activity on or near a school campus.
- f. Enhancing communication and understanding between students, their families, district staff, and the Department.
- g. Assisting with the coordination of security measures for school activities such as sports events, dances, and other large gatherings, if applicable.
- h. Auditing security measures, at least annually, throughout the school and making recommendations to enhance safety and reduce risk.

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431.5.1 SRO CONTRACT

The contract between the school district or charter school and the Department shall:

- a. Include the SRO's duties set forth in Minn. Stat. 626.8482, Subd. 2.
- b. Address a mutually agreed upon policy regarding the use of plain clothes, modified uniforms, and other changes to SRO attire.
- c. Articulate the role, if any, of the school district or charter school in the selection, vetting, and retention of the SRO.
- d. Establish a public notification process that an SRO will be present in the schools.
- e. Address data practices policies and procedures.

A school district or charter school may contract with the Department for the SRO to perform additional duties (Minn. Stat. § 626.8482, Subd. 2). The contract should cover paid services, where applicable. The contract should also address how the SRO will be informed of school district resources available to school staff to assist with de-escalation of conflicts in school (e.g., specialized crisis teams, mediation opportunities).

431.6 SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER DUTIES

The SRO duties and responsibilities include (Minn. Stat. § 626.8482, Subd. 2):

- a. Responding to calls and the investigation of criminal offenses that occur on student occupied property while the SRO is on-duty or during school hours.
- b. Conducting follow-up investigations of offenses that occur on student occupied property during school hours or involve students.
- c. Teaching the DARE core curriculum (e.g. coordinate schedule, prepare lesson plans, keep inventory of DARE materials and merchandise, and organize and administer DARE graduation).
- d. Providing education for students, faculty, and administrators as requested and when available regarding law enforcement functions.
- e. Assisting faculty and administrators in establishing policies that contribute to the safety of school staff and students.
- f. Assisting the school district safety specialist and safe school committee with the development and implementation of a school safety plan.
- g. Participating as a member of the school district's multidisciplinary threat assessment team.
- h. Assisting on-duty officers when needed or asked for assistance on or away from school property.
- i. Fostering a positive school climate through relationship building and open communication.
- j. Protecting students, staff, and visitors to the school grounds from criminal activity.
- k. Serving as a liaison from law enforcement to school officials.
- l. Providing advice on safety drills.
- m. Identifying vulnerabilities in school facilities and safety protocols.
- n. Educating and advising students and staff on law enforcement topics.
- o. Use developmentally appropriate practices that take into consideration differences in culture, language, trauma and an individual's disabilities.
- p. Use methods that help school safety and security, focusing on safety over violence.

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- q. Encourage students to ask questions about school safety.

431.7 USE OF FORCE

SRO use of force is governed by and will comply with Minn. Stats. 609.06 Authorized Use of Force; 609.066 Authorized Use of Deadly Force by Peace Officers; 626.8475 Duty to Intercede and Report; and the Law Enforcement Agency Use of Force Policy.

Specific tactics and strategies to minimize uses of force or the use and duration of prone restraint or physical holds of students:

- a. Employ de-escalation techniques, the least restrictive physical intervention strategies, as reasonable, for addressing conflicts in schools as identified in the training required under Minn. Stat. 626.8482, Subd. 4., and use only that amount of force that reasonably appears necessary given the facts and circumstances perceived by the officer at the time of the event to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement purpose.
- b. Consistent with training after any use of force, the SRO shall assess the condition of the student and render aid as needed including restoring the student to a non-prone position as soon as possible.
Additional considerations for SROs when using force as allowed in Minn. Stat. 609.06 in a school situation, should include:

Additional considerations for SROs when using force as allowed in Minn. Stat. 609.06 in a school situation, should include:

- a. Immediacy and severity of the threat and potential for injury to officers, students, and others.
- b. The conduct of the individual being confronted, as reasonably perceived by the officer at the time.
- c. Officer/individual factors (e.g. age and/or maturity, physical size and/or abilities).
- d. The individuals' ability to understand and comply with officer commands taking into consideration the effects of suspected drug or alcohol use, the individual's mental state or capacity, and the student's education plan or accommodations, if known.
- e. Proximity to weapons or dangerous improvised devices.
- f. The degree to which the individual has been effectively restrained and his/her ability to resist despite being restrained.
- g. The availability of other reasonable and feasible options and their possible effectiveness (Minn. Stat. 626.8452).
- h. The immediate need for intervention verse allowing time and distance for additional de-escalation taking into consideration the seriousness of the suspected offense or reason for contact with the individual.
- i. Training and experience of the officer.
- j. Whether the individual appears to be resisting, attempting to evade arrest by flight, or is attacking the officer.
- k. The risk and reasonably foreseeable consequence of escape.
- l. Whether the conduct of the individual being confronted no longer reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to the officer or others.
- m. Prior contacts with the individual or awareness of any propensity for violence.
- n. Any other exigent circumstances.

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When a criminal incident also involves a violation of school rules, SRO's should consider referral of the matter to school authorities in lieu of formal criminal referral, as appropriate for the incident, the students and families involved, the victim(s) and the larger school community.

SRO's should exercise age-appropriate practices when interacting with children, and developmentally appropriate practices with youth and individuals known to have physical, mental health, developmental or intellectual disabilities recognizing that the individual's disability may affect their ability to understand or comply with commands from SROs.

431.8 CRISIS INTERVENTION AND DE-ESCALATION

SRO's are often required to make assessments of rapidly evolving situations, analyze potential responses and act upon various levels of safety concerns. Crisis intervention and de-escalation strategies should be used whenever possible in response to crisis or safety situations. The safety of the individual, SRO's, school staff, students, and others present should not be compromised during de-escalation tactics.

SRO's should understand and use developmentally appropriate principles of evidence-based crisis intervention and de-escalation strategies. These strategies include, but are not limited to:

- a. Be empathetic and non-judgmental
- b. Respect personal space
- c. Use non-threatening nonverbal communication
- d. Avoid challenging questions
- e. Allow time for decisions

431.9 ARREST CONSIDERATIONS

When a criminal incident also involves a violation of school rules, SROs should consider referral of the matter to school authorities in lieu of formal criminal referral, as appropriate for the incident.

Custodial arrests in school should be avoided if reasonably practical. If a custodial arrest is necessary because of exigency or public safety considerations, the arrest should be made in a non-communal area away from the view of other students if practicable.

When reasonably practicable, appropriate school staff should be notified prior to and/or present during the custodial arrest of a student.

431.10 STUDENT AND PARENT DATA

The contract between the school district and the law enforcement agency must address data practices policies and procedures. These procedures and policies shall identify the education records that can be shared with the law enforcement agency generally and with the SRO specifically and for what purposes.

Law enforcement records that contain student and parent data that are maintained by the law enforcement agency shall be governed by the agency's data practices policy and in compliance with the requirements of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stats., chapter 13, and Minnesota Rules, parts 1205.0100-1205.2000.

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431.11 TRAINING

Beginning September 1, 2025, a peace officer assigned to serve as a school resource officer must complete a training course that provides instruction on the learning objectives identified in Minnesota Statutes, section 626.8482, subdivision 4 prior to assuming the duties of a school resource officer.

A peace officer who has completed either the School Safety Center standardized Basic School Resource Officer Training or the National School Resource Officer Basic School Resource Officer course prior to September 1, 2025, must complete the training mandate before June 1, 2027. A peace officer covered under this paragraph may complete a supplemental training course approved by the board pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 626.8482, subdivision 4, paragraph (b), to satisfy the training requirement.

Whenever practicable, it is preferable that a peace officer completes the training required under this section prior to filling the role of SRO.

However, if an officer's employer is unable to provide the required training course to the officer prior to the officer assuming the duties of a school resource officer, the officer must complete the required training within six months of assuming the duties of a school resource officer. The officer is not required to perform the duties described in Minnesota Statutes, section 626.8482, subdivision 2, paragraph (a), clause (4) or (5), until the officer has completed the required training course. The officer must review any policy adopted by the officer's employer pursuant to section 626.8482, subdivision 6 before assuming the other duties of a school resource officer and must comply with that policy.

An officer who is serving as a substitute school resource officer for fewer than 60 student contact days within a school year is not obligated to complete the required training or perform the duties described in Minnesota Statutes, section 626.8482 subdivision 2, paragraph (a), clause (4) or (5) but must review and comply with any policy adopted pursuant to subdivision 6 by the law enforcement agency that employs the substitute school resource officer.

An SRO will complete a refresher course at a minimum of once every three years.

For each school resource officer employed by an agency, the chief law enforcement officer must maintain a copy of the most recent training certificate issued to the officer for completion of the training mandated under this section.

431.12 CHAIN OF COMMAND

The School Resource Officer reports directly to the Deputy Chief of Investigations/Administration.

431.13 POLICY REVIEW

The SRO shall review this policy prior to assuming SRO duties (Minn. Stat. § 626.8482, Subd. 3(c)).