

## School Safety Resource Officers (SSOs/SROs)

### DEFINITION

(1) "School resource officer" or "SRO", as defined in KRS 158.441, means an officer who has specialized training to work with youth at a school site and is:

- (a)
  1. A sworn law enforcement officer; or
  2. A special law enforcement officer appointed pursuant to KRS 61.902; and
- (b) Employed:
  1. Through a contract between a local law enforcement agency and a school district;
  2. Through a contract as secondary employment for an officer, as defined in KRS 16.010, between the Department of Kentucky State Police and a school district; or
  3. Directly by a local Board of Education.<sup>1</sup>

(2) "School safety officer" or "SSO" means school resource officer who is employed directly by the District.

### PURPOSE AND GOAL: SAFER SCHOOLS AND SAFER STUDENTS

The District is responsible for providing a safe environment for students, staff, and visitors. A safe school environment is a fundamental requirement for student success. Central to that responsibility is the implementation of a fair and equitable system of behavior supports and interventions for all students. School administrators are expected to develop and implement a plan with teachers to ensure that expected behaviors are intentionally, taught, modeled, learned, and reviewed to ensure student understanding and success. The District's commitment to achieving racial equity through awareness, action, accountability must be embedded in all school and District practices, to ensure that all students are treated fairly and without discrimination.

Also critical to school safety and student success is the importance of building and sustaining positive adult-to-student relationships that: celebrate and recognize positive student behavior; incorporate cultural competence; use age- and developmentally-appropriate strategies; and are based on respect and two-way communication.

A key desired outcome of implementation of this system of strategies and the development of positive relationships is the reduction of the number of students who become engaged with the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems.

The purpose of the SSO/SRO-program is to: promote and foster a safe environment in schools, at school-sponsored events, and on school transportation; provide a law enforcement presence on school property and at school-sponsored events; enhance educational programs relating to safety and positive behaviors; build positive relationships with students to support academic success and personal growth; and provide a liaison to community and law enforcement agencies; and contribute to the JCPS focus on building trusting relationships in school communities through approaches such as restorative practices, positive behavior interventions and supports, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed practice.

The goal of SSO program is to promote safer schools and safer students by employing law enforcement officers with high levels of specialized school-specific and student-focused training to work proactively with others in the school community to create a more safe and supportive learning environment. SSOs shall work as a team with administrators and teachers to develop

strategies to protect and support every child so they can reach their fullest potential. The District SSO program shall be based on the nationally recognized “triad” concept of school-based policing, which divides the SSO’s responsibilities into three areas: Educator, Informal Counselor, and Law Enforcement Officer. SSOs shall be trained to educate, counsel, and protect their school communities, working in close collaboration with educators, students, parents, law enforcement agencies, and the community. SSO’s shall work to foster positive relationships with students, and work as a team with administrators and teachers to develop strategies to resolve problems affecting children and youth, with the objective of protecting and supporting every child so they can reach their fullest potential.

The SSO program is one component of a broader effort within schools and central office to ensure a safe learning environment for students, staff and community. Schools are safer when administrators, teachers, and staff work intentionally to:

- Actively engage students ~~Students are actively engaged~~ in authentic learning that matters to their sense of self and personal development;
- Build a ~~A school’s~~ culture and climate fosters and sustains attitudes, beliefs, values and practices that focus on success for all students;
- Make ~~School administrators, teachers, and staff work intentionally to create~~ racial equity foundational to all school systems and practices, including regarding ~~in~~ access, resources, staffing, and curriculum for all students;
- Develop a ~~A~~ comprehensive system of supports is in place to address student mental health, social, and emotional needs, and the roots of disruptive ~~improve student behavior;~~ and
- Collaborate closely with appropriately ~~Appropriately~~ trained and equipped law enforcement professionals – SSOs – promote and foster a safe environment for students, faculty, staff, and the school community.

The purpose of the program is not to enforce or administer matters of school discipline and student conduct which are the responsibility of other District or school personnel.

#### **ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS**

- An ~~SSO SRO~~ will have such training, certification, and commission as is required by provisions of KRS Chapters 15, 61, and 158.
- In addition to requirements established under state law for SROs, an SSO shall meet all additional training and other requirements established by the District in the SSO job description and in procedures to implement this policy.
- Per KRS ~~158.4414158.(NEW)~~, an ~~SSO SRO~~ who fails to successfully and timely complete SRO training requirements shall lose ~~their his/her~~ SRO certification and shall no longer work in a school. An SSO who fails to meet other requirements established by the District shall be subject to the provisions of the policies and procedures governing employee discipline.
- An ~~SSO shall SRO is~~ also ~~expected to~~ obtain training on the use of physical restraint and seclusion as required of all school personnel except additional training applicable to “core team” school personnel designated to respond to dangerous behavior.
- An ~~SSO SRO~~ is vested with law enforcement jurisdiction and authority as described in KRS 61.902 to KRS 61.930 and other applicable law, including, but not limited to,

investigating and responding to possible criminal offenses and to health or safety threats to students or school personnel.

- As authorized under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”), SSOs within the Department of School Safety, as well as officers within the Department of Security and Investigations, SROs are designated as the District’s “law enforcement unit” under the Chief Operations Officer possessing the law enforcement authority and exercising safety and security functions described in state law and referenced above. Records created and maintained by an SSO SRO for a law enforcement purpose do not constitute education records under FERPA.<sup>3</sup> District staff other than law enforcement personnel are not responsible for the creation of law enforcement records and are expected to observe restrictions on access to such records. An SSO SRO is expected to provide guidance and insight to District officials and staff on such restrictions.

#### **NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT**

An SSO SRO who is directly employed by the District is a classified employee. An SSO SRO is therefore generally covered by District classified employee policies, including, but not limited to, policies regarding terms and conditions of employment; fringe benefits; employee discipline; and reductions in force.<sup>4</sup> However, as applied to an SSO SRO, such general District classified employee policies may be subject to the terms of his/her contract with the District; his/her job description; and his/her authority to carry out certain law enforcement functions as permitted by law, including, but not limited to, statutory provisions permitting officers to carry and use weapons.<sup>5</sup>

#### **TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

All Effective January 1, 2020, all SSOs School Resource Officers (SROs) shall successfully complete forty (40) hours of annual in-service training that has been certified or recognized by the Kentucky Law Enforcement Council for SROs, as well as all other additional training requirements for SSOs established by the District. Any SSO SRO who fails to successfully complete the state-mandated training requirements within the specified time periods, including approved extensions, shall lose their his/her SRO certification and shall no longer work in a school. An SSO who fails to meet other training requirements established by the District shall be subject to the provisions of the policies and procedures governing employee discipline.

As set forth in KRS 158.4414, the course curriculum for in-service training certified or recognized by the Kentucky Law Enforcement Council for SROs, shall include but not be limited to:

- (1) Foundations of school-based law enforcement;
- (2) Threat assessment and response;
- (3) Youth drug use and abuse;
- (4) Social media and cyber security;
- (5) School resource officers as teachers and mentors;
- (6) Youth mental health awareness;
- (7) Diversity and bias awareness training;
- (8) Trauma-informed action;
- (9) Understanding students with special needs; and
- (10) De-escalation strategies.

Course curriculum for additional District-mandated SSO training shall include, but not be limited to:

- (1) Bullying;
- (2) Cross-cultural communication and bias awareness training;
- (3) De-escalation strategies;
- (4) Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (MTSS and PBIS);
- (5) Restorative Practices;
- (6) Safe Crisis Management;
- (7) Student Support and Behavior Intervention Handbook;
- (8) Trauma-informed action;
- (9) Understanding students with special needs;
- (10) Youth Mental Health Awareness; and
- (11) Weapon qualification.

#### **DATA REPORTING AND PROGRESS MONITORING**

1. The SSO Standard Operating Procedures Manual, as described below, shall include detailed guidance for the reporting of incidents by SSOs, including but not limited to: the types of incidents that must be reported; the information required; the form of documentation; and the delivery, storage, and maintenance of incident reports,
2. The Executive Administrator for School Safety shall create a Data Review Team to establish program goals and metrics to assist in measuring progress toward meeting those goals.
3. The Executive Administrator will prepare regular reports for the Superintendent and the Board outlining program implementation activities, progress towards meeting goals, challenges, next steps, and program needs. Presentations to the Board shall be provided at least annually ~~on a regular basis~~, as determined by the Board Chair and the Superintendent .

#### **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL**

The Superintendent/Designee shall prepare an SSO Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Manual to provide operational guidance to the Office of School Safety and School Safety Officers (SSOs). The SOP Manual shall provide written processes that describe in detail how to perform tasks specific to the SSO program to meet statutory, regulatory, and Board policy standards; establish expectations for high quality operations; and to create a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

Using national best practices and procedures for school resource officer programs, the District will establish an SOP Manual Team, including members from District departments and the community, to develop SSO SOPs.

The manual shall be complete and in place prior to the initial assignment of SSOs to schools in the District, and shall be reviewed and updated by a reconstituted SOP Manual Team at least once every two years, and as needed.

**SUPERINTENDENT TO REPORT**

No later than November 1 of each year, the Superintendent shall report to the Center for School Safety the number and placement of SROs in the District. The report shall include the source of funding and method of employment for each position.

**REFERENCES:**

<sup>1</sup>KRS 158.441

<sup>2</sup>704 KAR 7:160

<sup>3</sup>20 U.S.C. 1232(g)(a)(4)(ii); 34 C.F.R. § 99.8

<sup>4</sup>KRS 161.011

<sup>5</sup>KRS 61.902 – KRS 61.930; KRS 527.020; KRS 527.070

~~New Section of~~ KRS 158.440 – KRS 158.4461

**RELATED POLICIES:**

09.14; 09.2211; 09.227; 09.422; 09.425; 09.4361