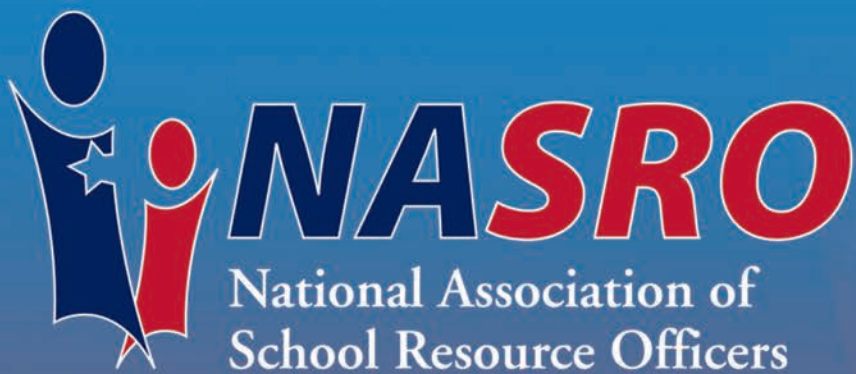




THE world's leader in school-based policing

Best Practices

School Resource Officer
Program Recommendations





NASRO'S Mission

The National Association of School Resource Officers, NASRO, the world's leader in school-based law enforcement, is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1991 with an unrelenting commitment to school safety. NASRO is dedicated to providing the highest quality of training to school-based law enforcement officers to promote safer schools and safer children. NASRO is an organization for school-based law enforcement officers, school administrators, and school security/safety professionals working as partners to protect students, faculty and staff, and their school community.

Why Adopt NASRO's School Resource Officer Program Recommendations?

NASRO has adopted School Resource Officer Program Recommendations as a guide for new and existing School Resource Officer Programs. NASRO's recommendations can be adopted by law enforcement agencies, school safety agencies, and school boards.

This publication represents recommendations for domestic and international agencies and departments, regardless of size or level of government (federal/national, state/provincial, or local). NASRO'S training is IADLEST certified and recognized by the C.O.P.S. Office as the standard for school-based law enforcement training.

The School Resource Officer Program Recommendations document was developed and is maintained by the National Association of School Resource Officers, Inc., (NASRO) a section 501(c)(3) Internal Revenue Code (IRC) membership association registered under Alabama law.

Intent of NASRO's School Resource Officer Program Recommendations

These recommendations are intended to provide a foundation of operating practices in the performance of the unit's mission. The seven sections address the key components of a School Resource Officer Program.

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The Major Benefits of Adopting NASRO'S School Resource Officer Program Recommendations

The recommendations outlined in this publication have been designed to guide the collaborative development of a School Resource Officer program. Local circumstances differ. These recommendations are not mandatory. Nevertheless, agencies and districts that choose to adopt these recommendations may see many benefits.

Greater Accountability

These recommendations provide the respective agency chief, sheriff, and school district leaders sound training principles, personnel qualification requirements, and examples of accepted industry recommendations that support informed decision-making and resource allocation. NASRO endorses carefully selected, specifically trained, and properly equipped law enforcement officers in schools. NASRO also endorses training district leadership who will be responsible for implementation and support of the School Resource Officer Program.

Controlled Program Costs

These recommendations can provide cost efficiencies through greater officer retention, limiting of re-occurring training expenses and lowering insurance premiums.

Community Support

These recommendations may foster a community's understanding and support of the School Resource Officer as a law enforcement officer, a community safety educator, and an informal counselor/mentor working to protect students, faculty and the school community.



Key Document Terminology

Community-Oriented Policing

Community-oriented policing emphasizes proactive problem solving in a systematic and routine fashion. Rather than responding to crime only after it occurs, community policing encourages agencies to proactively develop solutions to the immediate underlying conditions contributing to public safety problems. (*COPS Office <https://cops.usdoj.gov>*)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law protecting the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools receiving funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their student's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students". (<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>)

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a contractual document established between the operating law enforcement agency and the school district. This document assists in developing program goals, roles and responsibilities, and the method for evaluating the program's success in meeting identified goals.

NASRO SRO TRIAD Model

NASRO promotes three critical roles for the carefully selected, specifically trained, and properly equipped law enforcement officer assigned to work in a school or school community. This model has three components: (1) Law Enforcement Officer (2) Public Safety Educator and (3) Informal Counselor/Mentor.

Adolescents who have an adult to confide in are less likely to take part in risky behaviors. Taking steps to prevent these behaviors is important because they're linked to many chronic health problems later in life. Evidence shows that mentoring programs are an effective way to improve behavioral, social, emotional, and academic outcomes in adolescents. (*National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), SAMHSA*)

All three components provide the School Resource Officer opportunities to establish positive and trusting relationships with students, staff, parents and the school community.

School-Based Law Enforcement

School-based law enforcement is an essential component of community-oriented policing. The School Resource Officer should be knowledgeable about student brain development, development of students with disabilities, positive discipline, trauma-informed practices, implicit bias, intersectionality, and culturally responsive education. They should have skills in evidence-based early intervention and early prevention strategies, including restorative practices, diversion practices, youth mental/behavioral health first aid, and evidence-based de-escalation programs. (*NASRO August, 2020*)



Administrative Recommendations

Definition of the School Resource Officer

The School Resource Officer (SRO) is a carefully selected, specifically trained, and properly equipped full-time law enforcement officer with sworn law enforcement authority, trained in school-based law enforcement and crisis response, assigned by the employing law enforcement agency to work in the school using community-oriented policing concepts.

Purpose of the School Resource Officer

The purpose of a successful School Resource Officer program is to build positive and trusting relationships between law enforcement and students. This purpose is best accomplished by using NASRO's SRO TRIAD Model: Law Enforcement Officer, Public Safety Educator, and Informal Counselor/Mentor. Each element of the NASRO SRO TRIAD Model will be further explained throughout this document.

Program Support

For the School Resource Officer program to be successful, the law enforcement agency head and the superintendent of the school district should understand and support the School Resource Officer Program, including an understanding of the recommendations put forth in this document.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or a similar contractual document should be established between the operating law enforcement agency and the school district. This document will assist in developing program goals and evaluating the program to assess the success in meeting identified goals. It is recommended that MOUs are regularly reviewed.

Example Memorandum of Understanding topics may include:

- ▲ **Defining the Roles and Responsibilities of Formal School Discipline.** The School Resource Officer should NOT administer formal school discipline such as detentions, suspensions, or expulsions. These decisions are the sole responsibility of the school personnel.

- ▲ **The School Resource Officer Acts in Accordance with the Recommended NASRO SRO TRIAD Model.** As a law enforcement officer, the School Resource Officer should abide by federal, state, and local laws. As a public safety educator, the School Resource Officer can address topics intended to have a positive impact on student behavior and safety. As an informal counselor/mentor, the School Resource Officer can guide students toward positive school behavior and may refer students to school personnel as necessary.
- ▲ **Defining Roles and Expectations Related to the Decision to Take Enforcement Action.** The responsibility and discretion to take enforcement action lies solely with the School Resource Officer, respective to state law, local ordinances, and the School Resource Officer's departmental standard operating procedures. The School Resource Officer's continual collaboration with school personnel and their understanding of each student's needs may impact the decision to take enforcement action.

Chain of Command

The School Resource Officer should abide by the law enforcement agency's policies pertaining to the chain of command.

Uniform

The School Resource Officer should be clearly identified as law enforcement. The uniform apparel and law enforcement equipment should be defined by the agency policy. (see additional information "Equipping the School Resource Officer") NASRO supports properly equipped School Resource Officers.

Weapons Storage

Normal duty gear is defined by the School Resource Officer's agency's policies. In the event additional weapons or gear is utilized, the cost and storage of these items can be determined by the law enforcement agency.

Use of Less Lethal Tools

The School Resource Officer should abide by agency policies pertaining to the use of less lethal devices. If there is a desired deviation from the agency's policies, the cost, storage, and use can be addressed and agreed upon.

Sharing of Information

The School Resource Officer and school personnel can share information in accordance with their respective state laws. Access and use of school camera footage, body-worn cameras, student database information, and any other information sharing practices should be addressed and agreed upon.

Documentation and Reporting Requirements

The School Resource Officer should be under the immediate supervision and direction of their law enforcement agency. The agency's policies should identify the documentation and reporting procedures to be used. Any law enforcement documentation requested by school personnel should be addressed and agreed upon.

Expenses

The salary (including overtime), benefits, and equipment costs, office and supplies can be addressed and agreed upon.

Office Space and Office Supplies

A clearly defined location should be established for the School Resource Officer to conduct confidential school and law enforcement business. It is recommended that the School Resource Officer's office/space and who will provide office supplies such as paper, a printer, computer, etc. be addressed and agreed upon.

Hours on Campus

Expectations of the School Resource Officer's campus hours and responsibilities that may require the officer to be away should be addressed and agreed upon.

Day-To-Day Duties

It is recommended that the School Resource Officer utilize the NASRO SRO TRIAD Model: Law Enforcement Officer, Public Safety Educator, and Informal Counselor/Mentor in their day-to-day duties. It is recommended that the School Resource Officer not be assigned to specific locations or duties on a daily basis, but rather have flexibility to be available to assist teachers, administrators, and students when requested and is consistent with their roles as a law enforcement officer, public safety educator, and informal counselor/mentor.

Extracurricular Activities

There are demonstrated benefits to the School Resource Officer's involvement in extracurricular activities. Such involvement by the School Resource Officer allows the officer to demonstrate their commitment to building positive relationships with students, staff and parents. It is recommended that the expectations of extracurricular attendance and compensation should be addressed and agreed upon.





School Resource Officer Staffing

NASRO recommends one School Resource Officer in every school. Additional School Resource Officers may be needed based on additional considerations. Examples of additional considerations could be:

- ▲ Size of the campus (acreage and number of buildings)
- ▲ Number of non-sworn safety team members on campus
- ▲ History of calls for service to the school
- ▲ Crime rate of the surrounding school community
- ▲ School culture and climate local survey data

US Department of Education Climate and Culture Surveys <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/edscls/index.asp>

Center for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Survey <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/feature/index.htm>

School Resource Officer Rotation

Building positive relationships with students, staff, administration, and the community often means a dedicated School Resource Officer spends important hours performing the roles of law enforcement, public safety educator, and informal counselor/mentor.

It is recommended that the School Resource Officer, who is receiving proper supervision and favorable evaluations from law enforcement supervisors and school administration, remain in their position without a mandatory rotation from their assignment to support established positive and trusting relationships. NASRO does not recommend mandatory rotation out of the School Resource officer assignment. It is recommended that the School Resource Officer, who receives poor evaluations from law enforcement supervisors with input from school administration should be removed from the position.

School Resource Officer Selection

A clearly defined process for the selection of the School Resource Officer is useful when carefully selecting the best law enforcement officer. This selection process can be agreed upon by the agency and the school administration. If possible, it is recommended that the school administration be involved in the selection process, including but not limited to, the interviewing of School Resource Officer candidates.



Key Components of the Selection Process

Law Enforcement Qualifications

It is recommended that the selected law enforcement officer has at least three (3) years of law enforcement experience. This level of experience will help the selected law enforcement officer obtain credibility among the school faculty, students, and parents. This level of experience will also allow the selected law enforcement officer to have a greater understanding of the local agency's policies and procedures.

Experience in Youth Development

It is recommended that the selected law enforcement officer has demonstrated their willingness to engage with youth to develop positive relationships.

Communication Skills

The selected law enforcement officer should have excellent verbal and written communication skills. The selected law enforcement officer will be communicating, both written and spoken formats, with a variety of audiences. The selected law enforcement officer should be capable of presenting their information in several formats to meet the varying circumstances when communicating to the school community.

School Resource Officer Training

The NASRO SRO Triad Model

It is recommended that the School Resource Officer be trained to utilize NASRO's SRO TRIAD Model. This model includes understanding and applying the principles of each TRIAD component: Law Enforcement Officer, Public Safety Educator, and Informal Counselor/Mentor.

School-based law enforcement is the epitome of community-oriented policing and therefore the School Resource Officer should be familiar with community-oriented policing concepts. To be an effective law enforcement officer in a school environment, the School Resource Officer should have a working knowledge of:

- ▲ Constitutional and State law
- ▲ Armed response

- ▲ Crime prevention and mitigation
- ▲ Interview and interrogation techniques
- ▲ Investigations
- ▲ Crime Prevention Through Environmental School Design (CPTED)
- ▲ Patrol operations
- ▲ Advocacy within the juvenile justice system
- ▲ Mandatory reporting

To be an effective public safety educator, the School Resource Officer should be capable of delivering lessons on public safety topics such as:

- ▲ Crime prevention
- ▲ Social media
- ▲ School safety
- ▲ Victimization
- ▲ Laws pertaining to students
- ▲ Safe traffic stops
- ▲ Driver safety
- ▲ Law enforcement careers
- ▲ Decision making
- ▲ Other topics requested by staff/parents/students

To be an effective informal counselor/mentor, the School Resource Officer should be properly trained in:

- ▲ Mentoring
- ▲ Crime prevention
- ▲ Empowering youth
- ▲ Resiliency and overall wellness
- ▲ Adolescent brain development
- ▲ Social and emotional development
- ▲ Supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion
- ▲ Improving youth decision-making skills
- ▲ Trauma-informed practices



Basic SRO Course

It is recommended that the School Resource Officer complete a foundational school-based law enforcement course, such as the NASRO SRO Basic Course prior to being assigned. This course provides important foundational information for understanding and fulfilling the School Resource Officer's knowledge and skills as a law enforcement officer, public safety educator, and informal counselor/mentor. NASRO encourages school administrators to attend this course with their School Resource Officer in support of a successful School Resource Officer program.

If it is not practical for the new School Resource Officer to complete a foundational school-based law enforcement course prior to the assignment, it is recommended to complete a Basic School Resource Officer course within one (1) year of beginning the assignment.

Advanced SRO Course

It is recommended that the School Resource Officer successfully complete an advanced level school-based law enforcement course approximately one (1) year after successful completion of the basic foundational course.

This training advances the School Resource Officer's knowledge and skills as a law enforcement officer, public safety educator, and informal counselor/mentor.

This training advances their knowledge and skills in:

- ▲ Collaborating with school administrators for crime prevention strategies
- ▲ Developing a better understanding of the causes and solutions for school violence
- ▲ Conducting site assessments on the school buildings within the school district

Management Course

It is recommended that the School Resource Officer's agency supervisor and district administrator who have the responsibility of implementing, supervising, managing, and evaluating school-based police officers and/or programs complete this course prior to program implementation. The goal is to provide managers with information, skills and strategies to develop, coordinate, and maintain a successful School Resource Officer program in their school communities.

Single Officer Rapid Deployment Training

It is recommended that the School Resource Officer successfully complete on-going training for single officer rapid deployment. This training will provide appropriate methods for the School Resource Officer to respond to active assailants or threats in the school.

Adolescent Mental Health Training for the School Resource Officer

It is recommended that the School Resource Officer successfully complete an Adolescent Mental Health Training course approximately one (1) year after successful completion of a basic School Resource Officer foundational course.

This training will help the School Resource Officer understand how using a student focused approach can have important benefits for all: School Resource Officer, students, teachers, and families. To achieve this, the goals of this training include understanding the important role the School Resource Officer and educators play in effectively intervening with youth who have mental health needs. This course will help the School Resource Officer:

- ▲ Understand adolescent brain development
- ▲ Understand mental/behavioral health conditions in youth
- ▲ Learn and practice crisis intervention, de-escalation, and communication techniques
- ▲ Discuss the role of the School Resource Officer in supporting student success
- ▲ Learn about the important role of families
- ▲ Learn what service options are available to support students

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

It is recommended that the School Resource Officer successfully complete a school CPTED course approximately one (1) year after successful completion of the basic School Resource Officer foundational course.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design uses design, management, and activity strategies to reduce opportunities for crime to occur, to reduce fear, and to improve the overall security of schools. This course will help the School Resource Officer understand how to:

- ▲ Develop expertise in the practice of school CPTED
- ▲ Develop a common language and understanding of School CPTED for enhanced communications with other professionals and practitioners
- ▲ Develop expertise in the use of the Centers for Disease Control CPTED School Assessment (CSA)

School Administration Policies and Procedures

It is recommended that the School Resource Officer participate in additional school-related training topics in support of an successful School Resource Officer program. Examples of these include but are not limited to:

- ▲ Structure of the school's discipline policy
- ▲ Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and other school-related law issues
- ▲ Working with special needs students and the special education department within the school
- ▲ School-utilized behavioral intervention program

State Conference and NASRO'S Annual School Safety Conference

It is recommended that the School Resource Officer attend annual training related to school safety topics that support and maintain the relevancy of the School Resource Officer's skill set. School Resource Officer conferences provide current training, resources, and connections to other School Resource Officer programs. NASRO recommends that the School Resource Officer annually attend training conferences in their state or region. NASRO encourages School Resource Officers to attend a national conference whenever possible.

School Resource Officer conference topics may include, but are not limited to:

- ▲ Crisis planning
- ▲ Threat assessment
- ▲ Active threat response
- ▲ Emergency management
- ▲ Adolescent mental health
- ▲ Social media trends
- ▲ Mentoring
- ▲ Classroom Instruction
- ▲ National and state resources in support of safe schools





Equipping the School Resource Officer

The School Resource Officer is a sworn police officer trained to serve and protect the community. As such, they have a duty to serve and protect schools within their jurisdiction as part of a total community-oriented policing strategy. As opportunities for violence are greater in disorderly environments, the School Resource Officer's contributions to the general order of the school cannot be overlooked. The presence of the School Resource Officer, as a result of their law enforcement activities and day-to-day visibility and interaction with students and staff, promotes a safe and orderly environment where students and educators can feel safe and supported.

(To Protect & Educate: The School Resource Officer and the Prevention of Violence in Schools: nasro.org)

Armed School Resource Officer

NASRO supports properly equipped School Resource Officers. NASRO recommends the School Resource Officer be equipped with the tools consistent with a patrol assignment. This should be addressed and agreed upon in the MOU.

Less Lethal Options for the School Resource Officer

The School Resource Officer should have less lethal options available under departmental policy. NASRO recommends the School Resource Officer follow departmental use of force continuum/standard operating procedure.

Long Gun Options for the School Resource Officer

The School Resource Officer should always follow departmental standard operating procedures/ rules and regulations regarding departmental approved issued long guns. The equipping of the School Resource Officer with a departmental approved issued long gun and firearms and the storing of these weapons can be addressed and agreed upon.

It is recommended that the Memorandum of Understanding should provide for:

- ▲ Safe and secure storage of the long gun in the school.
- ▲ Long gun's access limited to the School Resource Officer and the law enforcement agency
- ▲ If a safe is used, officer's safe's code can be provided to dispatch and responding officers.

The School Resource Officer Uniform

The School Resource Officer should wear a uniform that is described and agreed upon by the MOU or similar contractual document. Regardless of the uniform approved for the School Resource Officer, each officer should wear equipment consistent with the equipment they would wear as a patrol officer. It is strongly suggested that the School Resource Officer wear body armor with any type of uniform approved to be worn in the school environment.

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Collaboration Between Law Enforcement and the School Community

A successful School Resource Officer program should have a strong collaboration between the law enforcement agency and the school community. It is recommended that these responsibilities are defined and agreed upon in the Memorandum of Understanding and communicated to those responsible for the success of the School Resource Officer program.

Defining Roles of the School Administrator and the School Resource Officer

It is recommended that a school administrator who will be partnering with the School Resource Officer complete a Basic school-based law enforcement course and other school-based law enforcement courses with the School Resource Officer. This will strengthen the collaboration and the understanding of this partnership in support of an effective School Resource Officer program.

Effective partnerships can be supported through but are not limited to the following methods:

- ▲ The MOU and regular review for program improvements and updates
- ▲ The School Resource Officer's responsibility to their agency's chain of command
- ▲ Established sharing of information on policies and procedures
- ▲ Regular review of the school's CPTED
- ▲ Crisis management planning and practice
- ▲ Community education in school-related law concerns of parents
- ▲ Regular collaborative meetings with administration

Collaboration During the School Resource Officer Probationary Period

It is recommended that the selected School Resource Officer have a probationary period agreed upon by the operating law enforcement agency and the school district. This provides all parties an opportunity to determine if the selected officer is a proper fit for the school community.

If possible, it is recommended that the school administrator participate in the probationary review of the selected School Resource Officer as agreed upon by the MOU to allow all parties to best determine if the selected officer is a proper fit for the school community.

Collaboration in the School Resource Officer Evaluation

The supervising officer should be responsible for the School Resource Officer's evaluation. If possible, it is recommended that the school administrator have the opportunity to offer feedback as a part of the evaluation to reinforce a collaborative partnership.

Best Practices

School Resource Officer Program Recommendations

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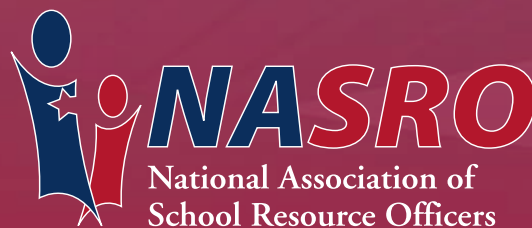
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