

# Parent's Checklist for SROs in Your Children's Schools

What parents should ask about School Resource Officers (SROs) in their child's school



# Purpose and Use of Checklists

Dear Parents and Caretakers of Students:

Often parents and caretakers place their children in public schools and learn that police officers are among the adults involved in their children's education and discipline. Over the years, SFY has interviewed and trained with many such officers—including sworn officers deployed by municipal police departments, sheriff's deputies, officers hired by the school system, and security guards.

Routinely, we find that parents are not aware of the scope of officers' authority, and officers are not aware of what parents have been told about law enforcement's role in the school. This causes anxiety, confusion, and at times produces significant problems that are hard to resolve and cast a shadow over school climate.

In an effort to address these issues with officers, SFY raises and discusses them during our Policing the Teen Brain in School trainings.

In an effort to support parents' understanding, SFY has created this "checklist" to provide parents with a set of questions that will help parents understand the scope of authority of law enforcement is used in their children's schools. The checklist focuses on issues key to children's experience of law enforcement and helps parents anticipate issues that may arise during their child's schooling.

Answers to the questions raised in the checklist are useful for creating a parent guide about how the academic and law enforcement approaches in your child's school can converge or collide.

We hope you will find this useful and invite you to share your thoughts about the checklist at: [info@strategiesforyouth.org](mailto:info@strategiesforyouth.org)

Sincerely,



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Strategies for Youth

Credits:

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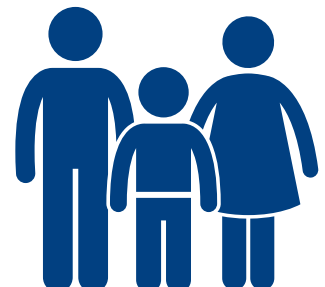
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## Definitions

- ICE** Immigrant and Customs Enforcement
- IEP** Individual Education Plan
- MOU** Memorandum of Understanding
- SRO** School Resource Officer



# Working Agreements



## What is the Working Agreement Between Your Child's School and Law Enforcement?

- 1 Does a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) exist stating the relationship between the school and the law enforcement agency? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Is it publicly available on the school's website? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Does it define obligations, responsibilities, and roles of School Resource Officers (SROs) and school personnel? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Does it define legal protections for students and rights of parents to know? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2 Is your SRO one of the following?
  - ☐ A sworn municipal police officer deployed to a public school system
  - ☐ A sworn deputy sheriff deployed to a public school system
  - ☐ A sworn officer hired by your child's public school district
  - ☐ A security guard hired by your child's public school district
- 3 Who pays for the SRO?
  - ☐ The local police department alone pays for the officers sent to the school
  - ☐ The sheriff's department alone pays for the deputies sent to the school
  - ☐ The school district pays law enforcement departments to send officers
    - What percentage of the officers' salaries are paid for by the school system? \_\_\_\_\_
    - How much does the school district pay annually? \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ The school district assumes all costs for the sworn officer and/or security guards
- 4 Which government agency pays the salaries of the school resource officers SROs?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Which government agency is designated as responsible for the conduct of the SROs?  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Working Agreements (CONTINUED)

6 What is the process for developing an MOU?

- What role do parents have in the process? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Are parents involved in setting policy for SRO's involvement? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Does the MOU board distinguish between discipline and delinquency? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Does the MOU require the school and/or law enforcement agency to publicize data on the school's website about number of suspensions, expulsions, police citations and/or arrests? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

7 How is the attorney for the schools involved in the development of the MOU?

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# SROs and School Personnel



## School/Law Enforcement Policies Regarding SROs' Role

- 1 What written guidelines exist to guide teachers', school administrators' and school staff's interactions with officers?

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- Are these guidelines publicly available on the school website? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

- 2 How has the role of an SRO been defined? \_\_\_\_\_

- Is it written and publicly available on the school website? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

- 3 What is the legal authority for SROs' involvement in your child's school?

- ☐ State law
- ☐ State education policy
- ☐ District policy
- ☐ School principal decision
- ☐ Law enforcement agency commander decision

- 4 What is the role of the SRO in school discipline? \_\_\_\_\_

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- What student behaviors fall under the category of "discipline"? \_\_\_\_\_

- 5 When may an SRO become involved in a classroom incident? \_\_\_\_\_

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- 6 Does state law require arrest of students for certain school-based behaviors? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

- What are they? \_\_\_\_\_

- 7 Are there alternatives to arrest? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

- What are they? \_\_\_\_\_

# SROs and School Personnel (CONTINUED)

## SROs Relationships with Teachers and Administrators

- 1 In what circumstances **must** teachers call officers to intervene? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 In what circumstances **may** teachers call officers to assist them? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Does available data confirm that the policies are being followed? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 3 In what circumstances do administrators call officers to assist them or deploy them to assist teachers?
  - Searches of students? ..... ☐ May Call ☐ Must Call
  - Searches of lockers? ..... ☐ May Call ☐ Must Call
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ May Call ☐ Must Call
- 4 Are teachers, administrators, and school staff informed about SROs' role? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No  
How? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Are teachers trained with SROs about the following topics?
  - Child and adolescent development ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Trauma-informed approaches to working with youth ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Recognizing and responding to children's mental health issues ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - De-escalation techniques ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Learning disabilities impacts and their impacts on student behavior ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - De-escalating incidents involving youth and youth in groups ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Use of force and restraints ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Juvenile law and collateral consequences of arrest and court involvement ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Implicit bias ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

# SRO Qualifications, Selection & Evaluation



## SRO Recruitment

- 1 Are schools and community members involved in the selection of an SRO? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Who participates in the selection of the SRO? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Did the selected officer volunteer or was the officer assigned to be an SRO? .....  
☐ Volunteer ☐ Assigned
- 3 Was the officer placed in the school by union seniority rules? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

## SRO Performance History

- 1 Does the officer have a history of coaching and volunteering with community youth? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2 Does the officer have a professional history of teaching, social work, or youth services? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 3 Have complaints been made against the officer? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - How many involve youth? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Has the officer been sued for "objectively unreasonable and/or excessive force" prior to becoming an SRO? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

## Training for SROs

- 1 Has the officer received training to work in schools prior to being placed in a school as an SRO?  
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2 Did the training include these topics:
  - Child and adolescent development and psychology ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Trauma-informed approaches to working with youth ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Recognizing and responding to children's mental health issues ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No



# SRO Qualifications, Selection & Evaluation (CONTINUED)

- Learning disabilities and their impacts on behaviors ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Special education laws and protections ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Emotional and behavioral disabilities ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- De-escalation techniques ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Working with youth in groups ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Use of force and restraints with children and youth ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Use of permissible and prohibited restraints ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Juvenile Law and collateral consequences of arrest and court involvement ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Implicit bias ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Disparities in use of force and arrest ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

3 Has the officer been asked to demonstrate knowledge of these topics? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

## Evaluation

1 Whom should a parent contact when they want to discuss an officer's conduct?

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2 Are there periodic performance reviews of school resource officers? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

3 On what criteria is performance measured? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

4 Who is involved in the periodic performance reviews?

- School Administrators ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Police ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Teachers ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Parents ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Students ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

# Use of Force and Restraints



## Law Enforcement Agency Policies for Restraints and Use of Force

- 1 Is there a written policy for use of force? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No  
Is it publically available on the school's website? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2 For what student conduct may officers use restraints?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 What kind of restraints may be used? In what situations?  
☐ Cuffs / Plastic Cuffs \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Restraint Chairs \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Shackles \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Are there written guidelines to guide officers' use of force and restraints? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No  
Are the guidelines for SROs publicly available on the school's website? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 5 For what student conduct may officers use force? In what situations? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6 What kind of force may be used?  

Batons <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Arm Bar <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Tasers <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Pain Compliance <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Chemical Sprays <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Pressure Point Control <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
- 7 How is information about use of restraints and use of force policies conveyed to:  
☐ Teachers and school administrators? \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Parents? \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Students? \_\_\_\_\_

# Use of Force and Restraints (CONTINUED)

8 For SROs deployed by a municipal police department, what is the use of force policy?

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- Does it distinguish between use of force for adults and youth? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is it made publicly available? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

9 What student behavior will be deemed non-compliant, resisting and justify use of force?

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## Reporting Obligations for Restraints and Use of Force

1 Is data on each use of force documented and reported to law enforcement and school authorities? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

- How is this data collected and presented? \_\_\_\_\_
- At what intervals is it reported? ..... ☐ Daily ☐ Monthly
- How is it conveyed to parents and the community? \_\_\_\_\_

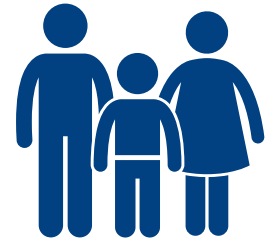
2 Who reviews officers' use of force?

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3 How are the results of a reivew of use of force shared with parents?

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# Parent and Student Notifications



## How are Parents Notified of Discipline/Arrest of Your Child?

- 1 What is the process? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 When are parents called? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Who must call parents to report use of force or restraints on students?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Are parents allowed in the room when their child is interviewed/interrogated by SROs? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - For what issues? \_\_\_\_\_
  - At what point? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What is the process for notification? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 How is custody defined? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 When are students' *Miranda* rights provided? \_\_\_\_\_

## How do Parents Know What's Happening?

- 1 Is each arrest counted? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2 Data on arrests: How, when and where is school-based information disclosed?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Is data on arrests and use of force compiled?
  - How? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Is it compiled by school? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Is it compiled by SRO? Law enforcement agency? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Is it compiled at the district level? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 4 Is data disaggregated by race, age, gender and special education status for:
  - Each school? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Each district? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

# Parent and Student Notifications (CONTINUED)

- 5 Is this information made public? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- If yes, where? .....
  - If not, why not? .....
  - Is it obtainable by public records request? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

## How are Students Told of the Role of SROs?

- 1 Is the school code of conduct reviewed with students? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2 Are students informed what behavior will lead to arrest? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- How and when is the information conveyed? .....
- 3 Are students told about how they may respond when questioned by SROs regarding conduct that could lead to arrest? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- How is this information conveyed? .....

## Where Do Parents Go to File Complaints & Compliments about SROs?

- 1 Is there a system in place to receive complaints? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2 How are parents notified of that process? .....
- 3 Once a complaint is received,
- Who investigates it? .....
  - How is it investigated? .....
  - What are the potential outcomes? .....
  - What is the appeals process for the SRO or parent? .....

# Special Education Needs

## Do you have a child with special education needs?

- 1 Do SROs receive training on working with students with disabilities? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2 Are SROs given directives from the principal or school superintendent about arresting students with special education needs? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 3 If your child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), have the SROs been informed by the special education team what the agreed-upon response will be when your child's behaviors manifests their disability? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 4 Have SROs been invited to attend your child's IEP meeting? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 5 Are SROs aware of the process by which stay-put provisions work and will be implemented? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No

# Children with Immigrant Status



The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1982 that public schools cannot deny children access to education on account of their immigrant status. Today both immigration law, enforcement and schools' implementation of the law are in flux. Ask your school district what policies are in place for dealing with immigrant youth and youth of undocumented status.

- 1 Has the school issued policies about its policies towards immigrant and undocumented youth? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Does the school ask you to declare your child's legal status? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - What is the school's policy regarding disclosure of children's status to Immigrant and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other public safety authorities including the Department of Homeland Security?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Does the school exclude students who cannot provide a social security number or American birth certificate? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - If yes, what is the process for appeal? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Does your school system have a policy for visits by ICE agents? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Has the school informed immigrant students that they have the right to request an attorney before answering questions of an ICE agent or police officer? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Will your school system permit ICE agents to interview students on campus? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Will parents be notified before an interview may proceed? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Will the school provide staff to witness the student's interview? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Will the district provide students attorneys when ICE agents question them? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
  - Does your school provide interpretation services for students questioned by ICE? .. ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 4 Does the school district have a policy regarding ICE agents conducting searches of the school or issuing warrants for students? ..... ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 5 What is the district's policy when ICE agents arrest or take a student in custody? What process has the school developed to:
  - Inform the student's parents? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Document where the student is being taken? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Document which authorities may be contacted to ascertain the location and status of the student? \_\_\_\_\_

# StrategiesforYouth

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