

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
Augusta County Public Schools
and
Augusta County Sheriff's Office
July 1, 2023 – August 31, 2023
(Extension)

This MOU is established between the Augusta County Sheriff's Office and the Augusta County School Board. It serves as a guideline for the School Resource Officers (SROs) who have been assigned to the County's High, Middle, and Elementary Schools and the school administrators. The mission of the Sheriff's Office is to provide necessary services to the schools that have been or will be identified by various sources. It is not the intention of the Sheriff's Office to interfere with school administration or mandate policy. The main objective of the Sheriff's Office personnel is to be a resource, bearing in mind that they are law enforcement officers who must enforce the Code of Virginia as prescribed on major violations that are brought to their attention. Officers will exercise their best discretion in all matters giving due consideration to developmentally appropriate options available to them after conferring with school officials, and as needed also with other law enforcement officials, juvenile court services personnel, the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office and other involved parties. Those options are, but not limited to:

- Available and applicable school treatment of rehabilitation programs;
- Referrals to community treatment or rehabilitation services;
- School discipline;
- Counseling; and
- Criminal prosecution.

The Sheriff's Office commits and obligates designated officers to:

- Serve as a liaison between the schools and the legal justice system;
- Serve as resource for school officials in matters dealing with offenses committed and incidents occurring on school grounds;
- Serve as a resource for the community for school—related concerns;
- Serve as an advisor to school officials on matters dealing with school safety and security and violations of the law;
- Serve as an instructor in classes, teaching on matters that need attention that have been identified by school staff and/or students; and
- Work cooperatively with the Virginia State Police in efforts to improve student driving habits.

The School Board and the individual school administrators agree to:

- Advise the SRO of all violations required by law, whether or not they deem that action by the SRO is required;
- Advise the SRO of all known safety or security concerns;

- Support and assist the SRO program by making all school staff aware of the SRO program;
- Cooperate with the SRO in bringing known problems and concerns to a resolution by using acceptable measures available to either; and
- Provide adequate supplies and space (both physical and virtual) necessary for the SRO to perform his or her duties under this MOU.

Chain of Command

The Law Enforcement Officer(s) assigned to the Augusta County High, Middle and Elementary Schools will be hired by the Sheriff and work for the Sheriff as a Law Enforcement Officer. The Chain of Command is as follows: SROs report to the Sergeant in charge of the unit and the Sergeant reports directly to the Sheriff or Designee.

Responsibilities and Expectations of SRO

- A. Enforce any local, state and federal laws.
- B. Interface with juvenile court officials concerning juvenile offenders or on matters pertaining to the general well being of juveniles and their respective families.
- C. Compile and maintain all juvenile records generated by the Augusta County Sheriff's Office and law enforcement records created for the Augusta County School System, oversee the integrity of those records, and share as necessary those law enforcement records that are created or used for both law enforcement and internal disciplinary matters. Surveillance records will be shared only with school building administrators, athletic directors, Central Office employees and information technology staff. Such individuals will be permitted to view surveillance as necessary and will be permitted to take notes but may not obtain, store or make copies of the footage. Surveillance that is not transferred to a law enforcement case file will be available for review for a maximum of fourteen (14) days after the surveillance record is created. Surveillance that is transferred to a law enforcement case file will be available for a longer period, but appropriate school personnel are encouraged to view surveillance as soon as possible after an incident.
- D. Consistent with the limitations imposed under FERPA, provide information and assistance to other law enforcement members concerning juveniles in Augusta County.
- E. Responsible for the following while on school property:
 - 1. Maintain a safe, secure and orderly school/student community;
 - 2. Provide technical assistance to the faculty, students and parents in the area of crime prevention and other law enforcement related work;
 - 3. Patrol and observe hallways, cafeterias, break areas, parking lots and other areas on, adjacent to or near school property where students frequent; and, create, maintain and review video surveillance footage;

4. Assist school administrators with the general supervision of the student body and all persons coming onto school property;
5. Exercise police authority in criminal situations which require immediate action and serve as Augusta County's law enforcement representative in non-emergency matters;
6. Refer matters of normal school discipline to the principal or his/her designee;
7. Proactively assist the school administration in the formulation and implementation of security practices and crime prevention measures that address trends in the school and community; and
8. Develop and maintain a positive and open relationship with students while providing informal counseling to students upon the student's request or making referrals to the guidance department.

F. Take incident reports on all matters pertaining to school property at any time while on Duty and conduct follow-up investigations on those incidents.

G. Coordinate with other Sheriff's Office personnel having business at any of the High, Middle, or Elementary Schools and provide assistance for school matters as well as matters concerning juvenile offenses in the community.

H. Serve as a repository for students with information regarding criminal activity in the Schools and the community and refer any pertinent information to the respective law enforcement member.

I. Attend school and evening school events as time permits and security requires.

J. Coordinate with Sheriff's Office personnel concerning security needs at special school events.

K. Abide applicable laws that govern school operations and School Board policies, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act's limits on access to and disclosure and redisclosure of student records.

L. Threat Assessment Threat assessments shall be conducted in accordance with local school board policies adopted as required by §22.1-79.4., Code of Virginia and consistent with model procedures and guidelines published by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. SROs may serve as members of threat assessment teams and assist in monitoring of subject students as well as determining the need, if any, for law enforcement action.

M. School Safety Audits School safety audits will be conducted annually as required by law to assess school safety conditions in schools. SROs, in collaboration with school administrators, may assist in conducting school inspection walkthroughs using a prescribed checklist and may collaborate in other school safety audit mandates including school crisis and emergency management and response planning and preparation.

N. Physical Restraint by School Personnel:

1. Physical restraint is a personal restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of a student to move his or her torso, arms, legs, or head freely. The term physical restraint does

not include a physical escort. Physical escort means a temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location. Physical restraint by school personnel is used in accordance with Virginia Board of Education policies and guidelines on seclusion and restraint and related local school board policies. Every effort should be made by school personnel to prevent the need for the use of restraint. School staff will act to de-escalate situations that are, or have the potential to cause, disruptions to the school environment and are violations of the student code of conduct. If physical intervention is necessary, the action should be reported promptly to the school administrator and the rationale for the action must be fully documented.

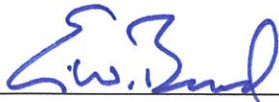
O. Physical Intervention by School Resource Officers:

1. An SRO should not be involved in the physical restraint of a student unless there is imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others. As sworn law enforcement officers, SROs may intervene to de-escalate situations. Physical intervention by SROs is undertaken in accordance with policies and operational procedures of their local law enforcement agency. If an SRO is involved in the use of restraint or physical intervention, the action must be reported to the school principal and the SRO's supervisor and the rationale for the action must be fully documented. SROs should be aware of the Virginia Board of Education's policies and guidelines on seclusion and restraint and related local school board policies and will attend training offered by the local school system on their use of seclusion and restraint by school employees. SROs, however, must continue to operate by their own department's policies and state law regarding physical intervention and use of force. Additionally, the SD and PD/SRO will coordinate to ensure that reasonable effort is made to inform the parents on the day of the incident.

The purpose of this program is to enhance cooperative efforts between education, law enforcement and the community. As a result of this effort, we anticipate effective communication between youth and police. The outcome should be a more positive attitude towards rules, laws, authority, and conflict resolution and citizenship responsibilities. This will be accomplished by teaching young people the concepts of the criminal justice system, objectives of law enforcement and everyone's responsibility for public and individual safety. Misconceptions about police and society will be dispelled as the officers will "be there for them" in a different role than ever before. The end result will be a safer school environment and a reduction of delinquency and crime among youth.

Prior to a school year, this MOU will be reviewed and revised as needed yearly.

Effective July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025



Dr. Eric W. Bond, Superintendent
Augusta County School Board



Donald L. Smith, Sheriff
Augusta County Sheriff's Office