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Superintendent
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BROOKLINE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Brookline Massachusetts

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

OVERVIEW

The Brookline Police Department has a long history of working with the Public Schools of Brookline to support students and to work collaboratively to ensure positive outcomes for our youth. From the early days of the DARE program to the BHS Citizen Police Academy to coaching sports and teaching in Health classes, the BPD has been an important part of educating students and other youth in Brookline for decades.

There are eight elementary schools in Brookline and Brookline High School (BHS). Brookline Public Schools report that there are 1,781 students enrolled in the middle school grades for 2019-2020 school year and 2,083 students enrolled at Brookline High School.

The Brookline Police Department currently has three school resource officers (SROs) assigned to work with the eight elementary schools in Brookline and one SRO for Brookline High School. The SROs work in conjunction with school administration and guidance staff, including counselors and social workers, to support students and provide appropriate direction. They often work to connect the school and students (and their families) to services and resources in the community. They do not serve as disciplinarians nor do they enforce school regulations.

Middle School SRO Officers:

- Katie McCabe (& Bear, the Comfort Dog)
- Donal Kerrigan
- Joe Amendola

High School SRO:

- Kaitlin Conneely

IMPORTANCE OF SROs

While many of the activities of the SROs in the schools may appear to be activities that can be undertaken by non-uniformed personnel, such as social workers or counselors, there are good reasons for the SROs to be involved.

Some activities are better performed by uniformed officers for the protection of the students and the community because of their training or the unique relationships the police have with other law enforcement agencies and the courts, schools, and social service agencies. Some examples are: (i) relationships with students, parents, schools, and the courts give the police, including the SROs, the



ability to divert juveniles involved in minor law-breaking from the criminal justice system; (ii) using the police department's knowledge of and engagement with criminal activity that targets youth, such as cyber-crime, predatory stalking of students, sales or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol, gang activities, and other criminal undertakings, is only possible if police are taking the lead role and have relationships with students before problems arise; (iii) police have relationships with social service, mental health, and medical agencies and can identify and respond to minor problems early before they become significant law enforcement problems; (iv) police are uniquely positioned to provide safety and security teachings and trainings in anticipation of possible active shooter or other safety risks in the schools; and (v) police officers at school dances and other activities provide protection to students if there are problems from other students or other persons.

Non-uniform personnel, such as social workers or counselors, may be appropriate for certain other tasks now performed by uniformed officers, but only after careful review of the support needs and resources currently provided to such personnel, including police backup.

Finally, most activities of SRO officers help to develop relationships between schools, students and parents and the police department that serve general Town-wide purposes. It is a benefit to the community for students from the elementary years through high school to know and understand the work of law enforcement and develop relationships with police officers that can provide guidance and support for positive behavior.

SROs IN THE SCHOOLS

All SRO officers are National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate Active Shooter Training for Schools) & CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) trained:

- SROs are trained and follow up on juvenile CIT clients
- SROs continue to work with the schools, families and the Brookline Center to offer services and support for their students

School Resource Officers - Enforcement, Diversion and Arrests:

- Middle Schools – NO arrests have been made of elementary/middle school students by the SROs and two middle schoolers have been entered into the Diversion Program in the last year
- BHS – NO arrests, three youth summonsed to court and ten youth diverted from the criminal justice system into the Diversion Program since March 2019 when the HS SRO Program began

MIDDLE SCHOOL SROs

The Middle School SROs taught roughly 210 Aware Classes to middle schoolers last year. These classes consisted of:

- Cyber-Awareness
- Substance Use & Addiction
- Healthy Relationships



Other Middle School SRO-School involvement:

- SROs attend the Raft dances that are held once a month during the school year
- SROs participate in gym classes where they interact with students and participate in activities
- SROs attend open houses during and at the beginning of the school year
- SROs assist with the end of the year school graduations
- SROs participate in open discussion groups with families regarding vaping
- SROs have been asked to assist with grief counseling following various tragedies
- SROs are a resource for school guidance counselors and administration who have concerns about students
- SROs coordinated and delivered safety and security trainings (i.e., active shooter) for all BPS schools
- SROs have been instrumental in assisting schools with locating students who have eloped from the school campus
- SROs assist the schools with shelter in place incidents and evacuations (drills and actual)
- SROs staff the morning and afternoon traffic posts for various schools
- SROs are asked to provide assistance and support to families whose students have an aversion to attending school

Out of School Involvement:

- SROs coordinate and run an annual Summer Program
- SROs teach safety classes at daycare centers around Town
- SROs assist with Special Olympics and Recreation Department programs
- SROs have been a part of meet and greets with several programs in town including BEEP, the Rise Program, the therapeutic and adaptive learning centers
- SROs have taught classes at several religious schools in Town
- SROs have assisted staff and students at the Bay Cove Academy with several classes and behavioral issues
- SROs attend out of school events in support of their students, such as the annual Spelling Bee, Brookline Day, sporting events, student rallies, Boy/Girl Scouts, bike parades and school fun runs, etc.
- During COVID, SROs have continued to support students and their families and have worked with school counselors and administrators to address concerns they have about students

BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL SRO

SRO Kaitlin Conneely has been assigned to the BHS since March 2019. She has established very close relationships with students and faculty and has continued to support both during COVID. SRO Conneely's role at BHS is to work with students and staff to ensure the most positive outcomes for youth at BHS. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Public Schools of Brookline and the Brookline Police Department is attached.

BHS SRO-School Involvement:

- Coordinating the annual BHS Citizen Police Academy
- Attending school events and activities in support of students, such as the Powder Puff game, graduation, the Lunar New Year celebration, student rallies, sporting events, etc.



- Morning and afternoon traffic posts
- Participates in regular meetings with Deans and the weekly Roundtable (a meeting of key BHS stakeholders to address emerging issues/concerns)
- Meets with students and parents/guardians to assist with concerns that they or the school may have
- Assisting with the BPD Summer Program
- Assisting with Special Olympics events and supporting athletes
- Assisting with the planning and implementation of the 2020 BHS Graduation Ceremony

STATE LAW RELATED TO SROs

Under MGL Chapter 71 Section 37P:

- The chief of police in consultation with the school superintendent shall assign at least one SRO to serve the city/town
- The chief of police and school superintendent shall enter into an MOU
- The SRO shall be assigned based on who the chief of police believes would strive to foster an optimal learning environment and educational community. The chief of police shall give preference to candidates who demonstrate the requisite personality and character to work with children and educators in a school environment and who have received specialized training relating to working with adolescents and children, including cognitive development, de-escalation techniques, and alternatives to arrest and diversion strategies
- The MOU states that the SRO shall not serve as school disciplinarian, as enforcers of school regulations or in place of licensed school psychologists, psychiatrists or counselors and that SROs shall not use police powers to address traditional school discipline issues, including non-violent disruptive behavior

