



Truro Talks

TRURO'S OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

January 2023 Edition

School Resource Officer

Truro Police Department, Chief Jamie Calise

At the 2023 Annual Town Meeting, Truro residents will be asked to consider the addition of one police officer, who would serve as a School Resource Officer (SRO) at the Truro Central School.

While not mandated by law, most police agencies in Massachusetts have SROs assigned to their schools. These critical positions are codified in Massachusetts law, and certification as a School Resource Officer requires specialized training and local appointment. Some areas of focused training for an SRO include child cognitive development, de-escalation techniques, and diversion strategies. The primary role of an SRO is to promote school safety and a positive climate for all students, families, and staff. Importantly, under the law, an SRO cannot serve as a school disciplinarian or an enforcer of school regulations. Rather, their role is one of collaboration and support.

Establishing an SRO program in Truro will enhance the strong partnerships shared among the students, families, and staff of the Truro Central School, the police department, and the whole of the Truro community. School resource positions require a memorandum of understanding between the police department and the school, and regular reviews of the program are required. These collaborative reviews include critical input from the school community.

Regrettably, there is a national trend toward increased school violence. In response, SROs have become commonplace in schools. As of 2022, SROs made up approximately 3 percent of the sworn officers in the United States. According to the latest governmental data on school shootings, there have been 678 school shootings with casualties at elementary and secondary schools in the United States since 2000. For the period of 2019-20, nearly one-third of school shootings reported had occurred at the elementary level.

While the national catalyst for resource programs has, to some degree, been a response to school violence, SRO programs have been shown to have many other benefits. In studies on the impacts of SRO programs, there have been correlations between the presence of resource officers and students and staff experiencing increased feelings of safety. Likewise, officers have been able to facilitate connections with available resources, such as social service support and other state agencies. There are also documented impacts on a reduced need for schools to make emergency calls to the police, as well as many other benefits.

If you have any questions or comments about the role of SRO, please contact Truro Police Department Chief, Jamie Calise at (508) 487-8730 or by email at jcalise@truro-ma.gov.