

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT

School Safety Programs



- School Resource Officers (SROs) – There are officers assigned to Investigations who are full-time School Resource Officers at Hersey High School, Timber Ridge School and Forest View Educational Center. There is a fourth SRO assigned to Community Services Bureau responsible for South and Thomas Middle Schools and all of the elementary schools, including parochial schools. These SROs are armed personnel. The SROs are sent to numerous training classes to maintain or improve their ability to keep the schools safe.
- School Safety Advisory Task Force – SRO started the task force in 2001. There are 2-3 meetings each year attended by Police Department, Fire Department and School Personnel. School personnel includes principals and school district representatives. Safety issues are discussed and plans are made to address them. Guest speakers are invited to speak on a variety of safety topics.
- School Tactical Mapping – SRO started the mapping in 2001 and update them yearly. The maps are available to the officers in a binder and on their in-squad computers. The maps include information which helps decrease response time.
- School Door Numbering – SRO started this project in 2001 and all exterior doors are numbered for a better response time. The numbers are updated as additions to the schools are finished.
- School Door Access – All on-duty patrol officers and supervisors have key fob access to the exterior school doors for immediate response.
- Direct Connect Panic Buttons – most schools have panic buttons directly connected to Northwest Central Dispatch (NWCD). In the past, if a panic button was pushed the alarm would go to a third party center before being sent to NWCD to dispatch to officers. This

process could take 3-5 minutes. The direct connect takes seconds, which is a substantial improvement.

- Lockdown Drills – some schools started conducting drills in 2000. The SRO began working on getting all schools to conduct lockdown drills in 2001. Now all schools, including parochial schools, conduct at least one drill (required by law). There are schools that conduct one in the spring and one in the fall. In the beginning, the staff was notified of the day and time. Now they are unannounced and often conducted during passing periods and during lunch. There is a debriefing after the drill so any issues are identified and fixed. Over the last several years, patrol officers are invited to the drills and walk the school checking for issues. Several school districts have adopted the same lockdown protocols so police response from other jurisdictions is consistent. Lockdown is not the only strategy. More recently, some of the School Districts have adopted the concept of Run/Hide/Fight. This gives school staff some options depending on the circumstances.
- School Crisis Manuals – School Districts have Crisis Manuals, which address a variety of school safety issues, including lockdowns. The Police Department maintains copies of the manuals. The manuals are updated with new policies and school contact information.
- School Staff Training and Presentations – the SRO will instruct the staff about their responsibilities and the Police Department response during an active school shooting.
- Rapid Deployment Training – Police officers receive active shooter/rapid deployment training yearly. As response strategies change, the training changes. School staff have attended/observed officer training.
- School Shooting Scenarios – the Police Department has conducted several full scenarios since around 2005. We recently held two at South Middle School, which included the Police Department, Fire Department, Northwest Central Dispatch, Public Works and School District personnel. A full Command Post was set-up to test communications. School personnel were either active participants or observers. The training was very successful for all involved.

- Student/Staff Presentations – the SRO, Crime Prevention Officer and Problem Oriented Police Coordinator conduct over 200 presentations on a variety of safety topics.
- Patrol Alerts – the Community Services and Patrol Bureaus will create Patrol Alerts for reported suspicious persons around the schools. These alerts are read during all patrol roll calls.