



Further information relating to the Campus Officer scheme can be obtained from the **Violence Reduction Unit, First Floor, Pegasus House, 375 West George Street, Glasgow G2 4LW. T: 0141 532 5847 or admin@vruscotland.pnn.police.uk. www.actiononviolence.org.uk.**

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Violence is preventable, not inevitable.

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Introduction

Building and strengthening links between the police and the community is a central tenet of modern policing strategies. One of the most difficult of these links to negotiate is that with young people.

Police contact with young people can often be perceived negatively on both sides and opportunities to develop a positive foundation on which to build constructive and mutually beneficial relationships are rare. While police officers engage in diversionary activities and have regular ties with youth and community groups, this is fairly arbitrary and only allows contact with a small minority of the youths in communities.

Schools therefore provide an opportunity for positive interaction. However, infrequent visits by community officers are not always effective. In order to develop a better level of mutual understanding a far more effective practice is to have a Campus Police Officer based permanently within a school, a situation which not only helps create better relationships between police and young people, but also with the community as a whole. In addition, it can be seen as key to aiding violence prevention and helping solve crimes.

This note provides a brief guide to the role of a Campus Officer and their work.

What is a Campus Officer?

Campus Officers are community police officers based full time within a single secondary school. They also carry out work with feeder and nursery schools in their local area. Their role is to help develop greater links with the community and in particular young people in order to promote acceptable and socially responsible behaviour through positive reinforcement. Developing and resourcing sustainable solutions to issues within schools can help bring about this long-term aim and, at the same time, contribute to effective and immediate resolutions to long standing community issues.

The school environment is a community within a community. It offers an insight into young people's circumstances and life opportunities well beyond the sphere of academia. It also provides an opportunity for agencies to work collaboratively to address complex and interrelated issues that may affect challenging and vulnerable young people. Campus Officers are ideally placed to facilitate communication, interaction and understanding between themselves and young people and also between young people and their peers.

Police Divisional Commanders have already recognised the positive potential of a dedicated Campus Officer whose role will help establish trust and encourage positive engagement. In some areas, a Campus Officer maybe the only positive role model some young people have in their lives.

Do you need a Campus Officer?

Not everyone is keen on having a police officer permanently based within a school and not every school needs one. The role should be seen as an extension of the good work police officers have performed in schools over the years and the adoption of a Campus Officer does not signal a failure on the part of the school or the police.

Those schools which stand to benefit most from having a Campus Officer will be:

- Schools located within areas defined as 'policing hotspots' with consideration given to the size of the school roll
- Areas with high levels of deprivation and inequality

Identification of the school must be based upon statistical evidence and not upon urban myth as many schools are labelled as troublesome and problematic purely on anecdotal evidence

Once the need for a Campus Officer is identified then the partnership (police and school) needs to adopt a strategy to introduce the idea to interested parties in order to

- Make known to the local community what its intentions are and why this has come about, in order to address any concerns
- Inform the 'learning community' and arrange a consultation meeting in order that those concerned have an opportunity to contribute towards shaping the project. This also provides a useful arena to address serious concerns or challenges that may have been overlooked

It is important to remember that all schools are different and what works in one will not necessarily work in another.

Establishing Roles & Responsibilities

Once all parties with a vested interest in the scheme (parents, teachers, police, local community etc) have concurred that the school should have a Campus Officer, then an agreement must be written up and accepted by the Head Teacher, the Divisional Commander and the officer who will undertake the role. Contained within this agreement will be issues such as:

- **Key aims and objectives of the role, eg:**
 - Helping pupils develop a respect for themselves, their fellow pupils and their community.
 - Targeting pupils with or at risk of having challenging behaviour
 - Engaging young pupils
 - Helping provide a safe and secure school community, in turn enhancing learning development.
 - Improving school and community links
 - Improving pupils' motivation
 - Reducing youth crime
- **Details relating directly related to the individual officer performing the role:**
 - Hours of Duty
 - Chain of Command/Supervision
 - Training
 - Dress code
 - I.T.

Funding

The funding of Campus Officers varies; some are wholly funded by the Police or Local Authority whilst others are jointly funded by both.

In addition to the salary of the officer, consideration should be given to the initial set up cost, i.e. installation of IT equipment and ongoing costs such as diversionary activities and travel.

What makes a good Campus Officer?

Getting the right person for the post is key to the project's success. There are a number of qualities a Campus Officer should possess in order to work in schools:

- A desire to work in an educational environment and the ability to adapt to and embrace the different culture, philosophy and ethos of the school
- A real concern for children
- Tolerance/patience, good listening skills, a good influencer and negotiator
- Excellent counselling skills
- Empathetic
- Approachable and friendly, yet authoritative and frank
- Integrity
- Intelligence

In addition to this, candidates would need to bring skills from their policing role into campus police work, such as:

- Having a solid grounding in policing and experience of a wide range of issues including domestic abuse, child protection, youth offending and working with children.
- An interest in proactive policing and experience of interagency working
- A good knowledge of the local area and an understanding of local issues.

Having an interest in extra curricular activities like football, basketball, cycling, music etc is viewed as important for maximising the benefits of the initiative.

The recruitment process should be a competitive one with potential candidates being interviewed jointly by the Head Teacher and Divisional Commander or their deputies.

Further Reading

Evaluation of Campus Police Officers in Scottish Schools,
www.scotland.gov.uk