

Hudson City School District

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▶ Home of the Bluehawks ◀
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May 25, 2021

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians,

This letter is to notify you of a new policy related to our School Resource Deputy (“SRD”) from the Columbia County Sheriff’s Department (the “Department”). Effective immediately, Deputy Sohotra will be wearing a body camera while on campus in accordance with the Department’s new body camera policy. This change was initiated by the Department as a result of recent Police Reform Committee meetings. The body cameras are intended for general law enforcement needs outside of school; however, as a deputy in the Department, Deputy Sohotra (or another assigned SRD) is required to wear one while on duty.

The purpose of body cameras is to monitor police activity, not to spy on students and teachers. The body camera will be turned off most of the time and will be activated by Deputy Sohotra (or another assigned SRD) only if there is an incident in which law enforcement action is required. Examples of situations in which Deputy Sohotra (or another assigned SRD) may need to switch on their body camera include a physical altercation between students/staff or while investigating an incident such as a potential threat or illegal activity on campus.

In the event the SRD’s body camera is activated, the video recording would be retained by the Columbia County Sheriff’s Department in a secure cloud server. The video recordings will not be retained by the District, although the District may request a copy when needed as an education record (e.g., disciplinary matters).

The Department’s new body camera policy primarily impacts Hudson Junior/Senior High School as Deputy Sohotra is assigned to these buildings. Occasionally, Deputy Sohotra visits M.C. Smith Elementary School so it is possible he or another SRD may activate their body camera if they are at MCSES and a law enforcement incident arises. The School Resource Officer at MCSES, Officer Rowe, is employed by the Hudson Police Department and will not be required to wear a body camera.

Please be assured that student safety and privacy are of the utmost importance. If you have questions or concerns about the Department’s new body camera policy, please contact Sheriff David Bartlett at david.bartlett@columbiacountysheriff.us.

Sincerely,



Dr. Maria Lagana Suttmeier, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

