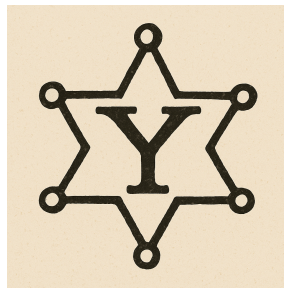


Cop Talk with the SRO

In law enforcement perhaps the most profoundly and equally important phrase consists of three simple letters...why. It is the foundation of all good reports (who, what, when, where, how and why). It is also one of the most common questions. "Why can't I drive down this closed roadway? Why are you arresting him? Why did you stop me? Why do I have to wear pants? (Yes I worked that call!). Three magical letters. But as with all law enforcement terminology, we can shorten it further to a simple "Y". My goal is to provide the "Y" to much of what you see on a regular basis, as understanding the why makes collaboration far easier to achieve.



Why are cars motioned past the front of the school at pickup?

Our school was built with the intention of most students being bus riders. We now have 420 students being picked up by individual vehicles. As a result, our pickup practice effectively shut down GA 85 connector creating an unsafe concern for the town of Brooks. LTCS, in conjunction with the Sheriff's Office and Town of Brooks created the following traffic plan to assist in getting students safely picked up while reducing traffic congestion:

Parents are allowed to arrive for lower school (K-5) before the 2:55 end of school day. The parking lot is typically full by 2:30. Once the parking lot is full, traffic lines up on the Cemetery side of the school in a single line. This prevents 85 Connector from becoming a parking lot before students have finished the school day. Any vehicles approaching from 85 Connector must drive past the school, make a u turn, and get in line. Prior to the end of the school day all the cars in the parking lot are scanned.

Once lower school releases, the scanned vehicles have their children escorted to the proper vehicle. Those vehicles are directed out of the parking lot. Simultaneously vehicles lined up on the cemetery side are scanned. Once the lot empties they are directed into the parking lot. When the cemetery side has been cleared, traffic that began forming on the 85 connector side (in front of the school) is provided access into the parking lot, alternating with new arrivals from the cemetery side.

Vehicles picking up a child from upper school (6-8) can enter the parking lot after 3:13 pm. As the upper school doesn't get out of class until 3:15, coming prior to this time only results in creating traffic jams.

Pick up is typically completed by 3:30. If you have not arrived by 3:30 you must pick up your child at the front office. Should there still be a line being scanned (not waiting on student arrival) obviously we will continue scanning from the parking lot until completed. The start of the year tends to run later. Once the club schedule starts up, traffic runs far quicker.

Pro tip- Based on the current traffic, traffic surges are heavy early and late. For lower school if you come in the back way to avoid the u turn and arrive at 2:50 ish, you are in and out with little wait. For upper school the back way still is the best bet. Arrive just before 3:10 and wait on the shoulder for 3:13.

Why can't I pass slow cars in front of the school during drop off?

In an ideal world every child would exit on the passenger side. Except we have vehicles with broken doors or infant car seats blocking the passenger exit. As a result some children regularly exit on the driver side. Additionally we have some children that can be a bit emotional during drop off. Big feelings and logic don't really go together, often resulting in surprise exits. The single lane is a safety measure.

Pro tip- The big orange safety barrier at the front entrance is filled with over 500 lbs of water. Hitting it will probably deploy an airbag.

Why should my child put on their backpack after exiting the vehicle?

Often backpacks can hang up on seats, resulting in nasty falls. The concrete has yet to provide a cushioned landing. Additional trip hazards are often on the floor of the vehicle. Toys, cups, fast food containers, and extra water bottles often cause children to lose footing. Another concern created has been instances of parents attempting to pull off while a child is recovering dropped items next to/under the vehicle.

Pro tip- Having kids of my own...they are quick to make slip/trip hazards in the backseat. By having them clean their mess each day it gives them ownership of their own safety.

Why is my child tardy if I pull up at 8:00 am?

All students are expected to be in their seats in the homeroom by 8:00 am. Just as educational instruction is important, so too is the value of timeliness. If you are not dropping your child off by 7:58, they are highly unlikely to arrive at their class on time.

Pro tip- Staff will not allow students to run inside the school like a delayed passenger trying to catch a connecting flight. If it is after the first bell, you need to check them in.

Why do I have to have a car tag to pick up a child?

The car tag let's staff know that you as a parent have authorized that person to pick up your child (meaning you need to be careful who you give your tag to). We can issue a temp tag, but the person must be on the approved pickup list. If you have something going on (plans to let a friend of your child's parent pick them up) you need to contact the office in advance to make sure the paperwork is in order.

Pro tip- Don't try hanging your car tag in the seal of the driver's door window. Far too many are "eaten" by the door. With side airbags, this could be a challenge to remove.

Why can't I load 8 kids into a Volkswagon Bug?

You can...provided the bug has seatbelts for all 8 children plus the driver. Yes, this is a state law. If your vehicle was manufactured before 1968, you might have an exemption as this was the year Federal Law mandated seat belts in vehicles.

Why can't I smoke/vape in the parking lot?

The parking lot is considered school grounds. There isn't a designated smoking area and your vehicle doesn't obtain exempt status. Please refrain from smoking/vaping on school grounds.

Pro tip- Should "someone" have smoked a substance in your vehicle that was not a tobacco product, you might want to air that out before coming to pick up a child brought to your vehicle by mandated reporters.

Why can't I park in the cemetery during school events?

The Town of Brooks lost patience with the cemetery being used for overflow parking when several of our parents parked on top of graves (you know that could get your car haunted right??). They have requested parents not park there out of respect for families of the deceased. They also added a chain and will lock your vehicle in until the next day. Please do not park in the cemetery.

Why did the SRO close off Lane 2 during event parking?

By leaving lane 2 open, lanes 1, 3, and 4 have the ability to let parents exit and use either lane 2 or the marked off loading area next to 4 to drive out irrespective of whether a parent parked in front of them.

Pro tip- If you park on the grass shoulder of Price Rd, consider having the driver side wheels on the pavement during wet conditions. I'm great in my four wheel drive truck. Your Tesla, Honda, Caddy...saw that rodeo!

Why isn't the traffic direction conducted in a fair manner? The other side had more cars let into the parking lot?

Fair is always a lofty goal. The reality is another four letter f word takes priority...flow. While there is always an attempt to make traffic run in a "fair" manner, flow is the overwhelming interest. Counting cars is done when conditions allow, but by keeping both sides running as smoothly as possible, our overall speed is improved.

Pro tip- The SRO appreciates cars that divert off the 85 Connector. The cemetery side can be reached easily using Lester Rd or Morgan Mill. This side usually has less waiting, and goes first!

Why did the administration search a book bag instead of the SRO?

The administration can search any bag whenever they have reasonable suspicion that it might contain contraband. As a law enforcement officer, the SRO must have probable cause to conduct the search, which is a far higher standard.

Why does the SRO and staff refer to FERPA instead of telling me about another child's punishment?

FERPA is a federal law known as Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. In accordance with this federal law, staff will not discuss another child with you. This includes instances where two children are disciplined. You will be advised of a sanction with your child, but not the other party.

Pro tip- While staff are prohibited from discussing disciplinary actions, our kids are quick to bring home all the salacious details. Unfortunately the middle school rumor mill has a long track record of misinformation.

Why was DFACs notified instead of just calling a parent?

All staff at LTCS are mandated reporters. Instances involving suspected abuse or neglect have a legal responsibility to report. The goal of these reports is the prevention of further abuse or maltreatment from occurring.

Why is the SRO involved in my child's attendance?

Under the Official Code of Georgia 20-2-690 children between the ages of 6 and 16 are mandated to attend a public school, private school, or home school program. If your child

exceeds the maximum number of unexcused absences (11), a report will be filed with Juvenile Court in accordance with State law. Prior to this filing you will be notified of attendance concerns. Staff compile these reports and make notifications. Should someone exceed the number of unexcused absences, the referral paperwork is filled out by the SRO to turn over to the court.

Pro tip- Make sure you turn in doctor notes and parental medical notifications to the front office in accordance with school policy. Good communication can resolve these situations before they turn into a referral...unless you take a two week trip to Disney during instructional times.