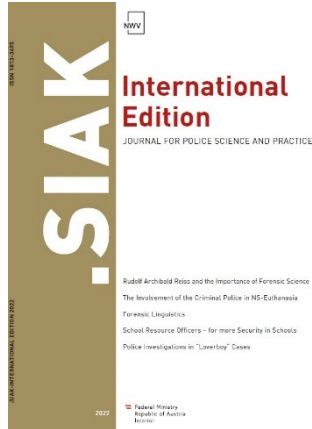


**SIAK-Journal – Journal for Police Science and Practice**



Ehlert, Cindy (2022):

## **School Resource Officers – for more Security in Schools**

SIAK-Journal – Journal for Police Science and Practice (International Edition Vol. 12), 64-76.

doi: 10.7396/IE\_2022\_F

*Please cite this article as follows:*

Ehlert, Cindy (2022). School Resource Officers – for more Security in Schools, SIAK-Journal – Journal for Police Science and Practice (International Edition Vol. 12), 64-76,  
Online: [http://dx.doi.org/10.7396/IE\\_2022\\_F](http://dx.doi.org/10.7396/IE_2022_F).

© Federal Ministry of the Interior – Sicherheitsakademie / Verlag Österreich, 2022

Note: A hard copy of the article is available through the printed version of the SIAK-Journal published by Verlag Österreich (<https://www.verlagoesterreich.at/>).

published online: 09/2022

# School Resource Officers – for more Security in Schools



**CINDY EHLERT,**  
*Lecturer in Criminology at the  
Brandenburg Police University.*

Minors spend a large part of their life at school, so it can be assumed that this time shapes not only their legal conduct, but also how they behave generally at work and in social settings. Teachers are therefore accorded a special role within this setting. They should convey knowledge in a way appropriate to the target group and ideally also work towards every single pupil conducting themselves in a positive, socially adequate manner overall. In a world of constantly new, criminologically relevant phenomena and associated harmful influences and dangers, the latter appears to be a task that could and should be shared amongst broader shoulders. This is where the school and policing system in the USA recognises the concept of a School Resource Officer (SRO), i.e. a policeman or policewoman who is based permanently in schools and who acts, amongst other things, as a point of contact for the schoolchildren. More intensive contact between school and police can be entirely beneficial in a preventive sense and goes beyond the scope of regular contact with police officers, e.g. at prevention events held in schools. This contact could contribute to the better and faster identification of risks (e.g. agreement on 24-hour challenges (tz online 2019)) in the school environment, in particular for explaining criminal matters or facts harmful to young people, and for using them as an approach to sensitising all target groups in the educational sector and thus, in the best case scenario, ensuring an increase in security. The concept of the SRO as practised in the USA (Minnehaha County 2019; NASRO 2019) with a direct uniformed police presence as school police officer, could help reach this objective from a criminological perspective. This article discusses the question of whether such a staffing concept could also be of value for the German school system and focuses primarily on the example of the federal state of Brandenburg.

## INTRODUCTION

In American schools, he is an everyday hero. For the schoolchildren a friend who knows the law and takes care of order on campus, a friendly sort who can also help with the everyday problems of the youngsters. Dressed in uniform, he can be seen inside the school building, on the school premises and in its surrounding area.

Because the danger to the school or to schoolchildren often also emanates from people or groups of people in the immediate – locally analogue or digital – environment (Kopietz 2019). The members of the same-aged group, the so-called peer group, can experience both a positive impact – because it is stabilising for values-based education – and a negative impact –

because socially deviant behaviour can be seen, learned and carried out (Neubacher 2020, 71).

For the teachers, this law enforcement officer provides additional staffing support, in some ways like another responsible person in the school context. He should take a preventive stance wherever possible, but in his function as an expert in the law is also in a position to quickly recognise threats and proceed against them (Shihovec 2020). We are talking about the School Resource Officer (SRO), a kind of school police officer who operates beyond the normal scope of school prevention officers as they are usually found in Germany (NASRO 2019). The aim of this article is to discuss whether the deployment of an SRO or at least an increased police presence in schools could have a preventive character, also in German schools. However, before we look at the tasks of the SRO, we first have to clarify which risks or even crimes exist at German schools which can be dangerous for schoolchildren and teachers and possibly incompatible with the work tasks of the teaching staff.

### **DEVIATIONS FROM THE NORM AT GERMAN SCHOOLS**

The media regularly report on the supposed increase in criminal acts, particularly violent offences and sexual offences, in schools (Kopietz 2019; MAZonline 2018b). This trend can initially be understood by comparing the media reports with the actually reported cases in the police crime statistics of the state of Brandenburg. At least in the brightfield of police work, it is to be noted that there was a general increase of 32% in (violent) crimes at schools in the years from 2014 to 2018, thus, for example, intentional simple bodily injury (Art. 223 German Penal Code [deutsches Strafgesetzbuch, StGB]) (Polizeipräsidium Land Brandenburg

2018, 219). The form in which violence is manifested must also be differentiated between the physical and the mental (ibid., 218). Amongst the physical attacks in school settings, offences against sexual self-determination, robberies and physical assaults are usually represented (ibid., 218–220). Deviant actions in the mental area extend to insults, threats or acts of coercion (MAZonline 2018a; News4teachers 2019; Polizeipräsidium Land Brandenburg 2018, 218–222).

Overall, the actions aimed at the mental health of schoolchildren have increased – also and in particular due to the increased reliance on and mobile access to digital media and social media in the lives of minors (Feierabend et al. 2018a, 2018b) (Rüdiger 2020a, 119–126). For example, looking at the basic investigation into the media use of 6 to 13 year-olds, the so-called KIM Study, it can be ascertained that, on average, 21% of this age group uses a computer, mobile phone or smartphone at least once per week in school lessons. “Use of the various digital devices differs clearly by age (and thus indirectly by class grade); the older the schoolchildren are, the more frequently digital devices are used” (Feierabend et al. 2018b, 50). Moreover, 51% of children already have their own mobile phone (ibid., 16).

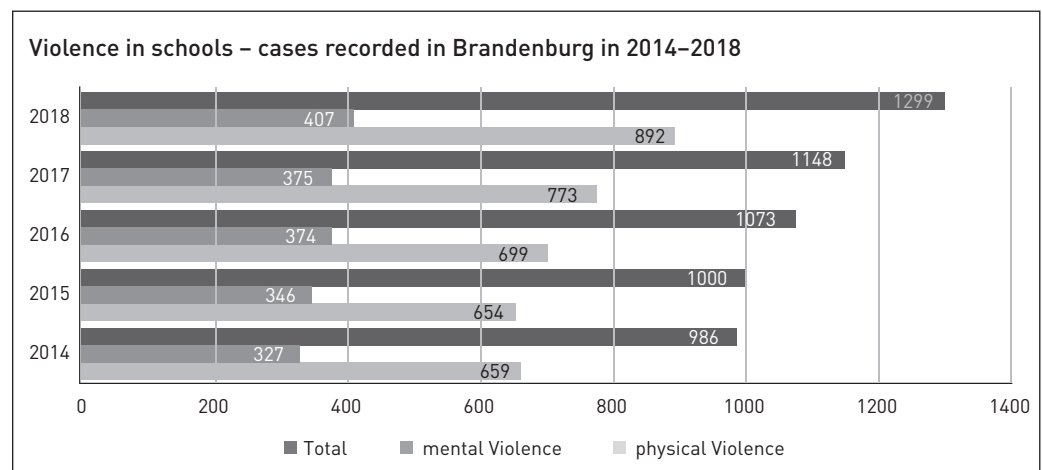
If we look at the basic investigation of media use in 12 to 19 year-olds, the so-called JIM Study, it can be ascertained that online activities occupy far more of their lives than is the case with younger children. For example, 95% of all young people own a smartphone (Feierabend et al. 2019, 23). They use their smartphones to go online for an average of 205 minutes a day, spending 33% of the time on communication, 30% on entertainment and 26% playing games (ibid., 25). This digital use of time can essentially be both at school and in their free time. In Branden-

burg, for example, there is no general ban on the use of mobile phones in schools (Bade 2018), in contrast to Bavaria, where there is a legal ban on their use in principle (Jiménez 2018). Accordingly, the house rules established by the school management could ban the carrying of smartphones on school premises – which de facto also means constant internet access, i.e. schoolchildren could theoretically use the internet in a non-school context at any time while at school, at least during the breaks. Depending on the extent to which any house rules are actually used, the risk of schoolchildren – with a view to possible risks in the digital space – becoming perpetrators as well as victims of crimes could increase.

With a share of 64 %, assault offences in Brandenburg account for the lion’s share of all crimes committed in schools (Polizeipräsidium Land Brandenburg 2018, 219). However, 31 % of all reported crimes were recorded in relation to violations of a mental nature, including insults, threats or acts of coercion (ibid., 218–220). It could be assumed that, for example, falling victim to classic school bullying also has an impact on falling victim in the digital space, i.e. to cyberbullying.

The range of actions associated with cyberbullying ranges from being annoyed by mean messages, pretending to be someone else, passing around photos, spreading rumours, through to starting arguments, hurling abuse, insulting or threatening others” (Marx 2017, 60). A survey of 1,700 schoolchildren in North Rhine-Westphalia, for example, revealed a relationship between school bullying and cyberbullying (Katzer et al. 2009). Katzer and colleagues assume that a tendency towards socially deviant, aggressive behaviour is not automatically cast off by switching from the real (analogue) to the digital space, and that these very same behaviours could also be expressed in the virtual world (ibid., 34). Even though the aforementioned study is over ten years old, the author believes it has lost none of its validity; indeed, the situation has probably worsened somewhat due to the constantly increasing intensity and quantity of use and the so far largely absent – but entirely necessary – strategies for dealing with these crimes. The aforementioned researchers thus found out that 67 % of school bullies<sup>1</sup> go on to become active cyberbullies<sup>2</sup> (ibid., 39). The consequences for the victims could, however, be more devastating

Source: Ehlert



Brightfield presentation – Rise in violent offences at Brandenburg schools in the period 2014–2018

because harmful content can last longer than when presented in reality.

The reasons for the increased reporting rates in the figure (see page 66) could lie in the actual increase in socially deviant behaviour in schools. Up to 80% of the suspects are children and young people. A further 4% of perpetrators are adolescents and 16% adults (Polizeipräsidium Land Brandenburg 2018, 220).

On the other hand, it could be suspected that the rise in brightfield numbers is due to an additional obligation of the schools – and thus a handing over of difficult incidents to the law enforcement agencies. In fact there would then be no real rise in crime in this area, rather only a brightening of the darkfield due to increased reporting of possible offences, instead of pure regulations within schools. Thus there would be no constant relationship between the offences in the brightfield and darkfield, but only a brightening of the offences (cf. Schwind 2016, 41; Wallner et al. 2019). The task of inclusion – meaning the creation and implementation of the most unforced, non-discriminatory, target group-appropriate education, training and teaching system possible (Feuser 2019) –, the growing demands on schoolchildren and teachers, as well as an increased sensitivity of school administrators or education providers could be the cause of a shift of criminal offences in the school context from the darkfield to the brightfield (Schubarth et al. 2017, 22; Schubarth 2018, 19).

Despite the increase, however, it is assumed that, for a wide range of reasons, a majority of violent or other cases of criminal relevance is not even reported. Such reasons could be shame, fear of being prosecuted, causes that are based in the socialisation process, or a lack of knowledge of criminal law. The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education

and Cultural Affairs calls on teachers to continue training themselves as standard. In its remarks, it redefined and affirmed the requirements for further education and training and also referred to the challenge of digitalisation. The framework of further development, which on a positive note seems very broadly couched, here encompasses the development of existing professional, primarily pedagogical, e.g. digital, competences associated with learning (Kultusministerkonferenz 2019, 4). An explicit component for developing the recognition or even training of criminal phenomena remains extensively unmentioned. This task would seem to be mainly reserved for preventive police work in schools. This requirement has already been surveyed to some extent.

Rüdiger therefore sees the need to establish a kind of behavioural law from the perspective of criminal law. This could actually represent an first important pillar for ongoing and current training, both for teaching staff and for schoolchildren (Rüdiger 2020b). This requirement can also be understood in criminological terms. Looking at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Periodic Safety Report of the Federal Government, a data survey by Heinz from 1997 (population of all people residing in Germany who had at least turned 16 years of age at the time of the survey) showed the reasons for the fundamental non-reporting of offences as being 26.8% in the category “the police couldn’t have done anything/there was no evidence”, 20.1% in the category “was not especially serious/was no damage/children’s pranks” and in third place with 15.8% the respondents indicated that “the police [...] did [would have done] nothing about it” (Bundesministerium des Innern 2006, 19). Even though this investigation concerns a study from 2006, it is entirely transferable to the subject at hand. On the one hand, a German population was

surveyed, which thus also included teachers and parents, and on the other, because the reasons given could also have been mentioned in a survey held in a purely school setting. Moreover, many schools attempt to directly solve disputes internally with the aid of school psychologists, without immediately resorting to prosecution. On the one hand, that saves them unnecessary administrative effort, on the other, they often assume that they will not receive any further help or support even if they do make a report (Vieth-Entus 2019).

This is also an entirely sensible measure for spoiling young people's whole future, including their professional one, due to one-off wrongdoings and possibly creating negative "turning points" (Schwind 2016, 164). It could also be the case that schools – given their primary activity as educational institutions – are first and foremost not in a position to actually prosecute wrongdoings. Of course, the primary mission of the school has always been and remains to impart knowledge, which to a certain extent naturally also includes the mediation of non-compliant behaviour, but not, of course, its prosecution. Thus, for example, Art. 4 (1) of the Brandenburg School Act (BbgSchulG) states: "The school, as a place of learning, life and activity of children and young people, contributes to respecting and realising the values of the Basic Law and of the constitution of the state of Brandenburg and fulfils the [...] task of upbringing and education." According to a Germany-wide survey, 86% of respondents – 1,400 people, of whom 650 were parents of schoolchildren – indicated the imparting of knowledge when asked about the school's most important task (Statista 2010). One could even go so far as to assert that the school administration and teaching staff do not have sufficient knowledge of criminal law to be able to recognise all wrongdoings committed

by schoolchildren and to classify them under criminal law.

A number of recent investigations have tended to note a real increase in physical violence among youths. It was initially determined in investigations by Baier and others – for which the Police Crime Statistics, self-disclosures by adolescents on their violent behaviour, and data of the German Social Accident Insurance on accidents caused by scuffles in schools were collected in a database – that there has been a decline in violent actions by adolescents since 2008 (Baier et al. 2017). Since 2017, however, a different, increased picture of violent incidents can generally be seen in the brightfield. This development is also due not least to the arrival of refugees (cf. Baier et al. 2017; Baier/Kliem 2019, 15–17). A kind of change in the form of violent actions from physical to more and more mental assaults (see figure on page 66), such as, for example, bullying or cyberbullying, can generally be observed, the consequences of which are no less serious for those involved (Vieth-Entus 2019). Regardless of this, the ways in which socially deviant behaviour is perpetrated in the school setting, in particular with regard to the physical and mental harm, are broad-based and in the worst case scenario jeopardise the undisturbed development and hence also the mental health of minors (Bergmann et al. 2017, 102–106). In the school context, it seems essential to recognise socially deviant behaviour – which in the context of developmental crime can be described as normal, but already goes beyond this – in order to be able to take appropriate preventive and, if necessary, repressive measures. This is not least due to increased support on the part of external pedagogical staff and the law enforcement agencies.

In the school context, there often seems to be a kind of grey area between



a pedagogical and a school-based approach to the transgression of norms and such offences that definitely require prosecution.

In this grey area between actions, where pedagogical measures are obviously no longer sufficient, but prosecution should not or even cannot be easily initiated, an SRO could play a decisive role.

### **WHAT MAKES A SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER?**

In the USA, there are law enforcement officers who have undergone a form of specialist training as school police and then cooperate with one or more schools in their area of responsibility in order to prevent or clear up offences in schools (cf. Barnes 2008, 2–3; NASRO 2019; Theriot 2016). These police officers are deployed as SROs. As they perform the tasks in schools in exercise of their sovereign police duties, the officers also overwhelmingly, including at the school, carry the usual command and operation resources, i.e. items of police equipment that are available to the individual police officers within the scope of situation management and deployment support (Kubera/Thielmann n.y.). Accordingly, this also includes a personal weapon (Geiger 2018). The task of the SRO is also extremely varied. On the one hand, the mere presence of the SRO – as a general preventive symbol – is intended to create a safe learning environment in schools. At the same time, problems should be detected early on and solution-orientated strategies for the most positive development possible created in collaboration with the teaching staff. A close and trusting cooperation with the teaching staff – also on safety-related issues – is thus envisaged as a third task (NASRO 2019).

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) accords the SRO a “triadic function”, as he or she

acts in the school context as a kind of associate educator and points out mere breaches of the rules, but can also praise schoolchildren for behaviour that follows the rules, whereby the SRO de facto also influences the formation of identity and the development of self-esteem in young people and can thus represent a high preventive factor in the school setting. Furthermore, the SRO represents an informal adviser or mentor for the teaching staff, and can and must fulfil his or her function as a law enforcement officer at the same time (NASRO 2019). It must also be said that the SRO can work much more flexibly because he or she is not subject to the same or similar mandatory regulations of a legality principle pursuant to Article 152 (2) in conjunction with 163 (1) (1) StPO (German Code of Criminal Procedure [Deutsche Strafprozessordnung, StPO]), in combination with the sword of Damocles of law enforcement in office (Art. 258a German Penal Code [Deutsches Strafgesetzbuch, StGB]), which is imposed on German police officers. In the USA, law enforcement by the police tends to be based on the principle of opportunity and less on the principle of legality, so that the officers have more discretion available to them (Geisler 1998, 15–18).

There are no exact figures available for the numbers of SROs in the USA, as police stations are not required to report these to any agency or body. A survey by the National Center for Education Statistics (a part of the US Department of Education) revealed that 34–42% of public schools in school year 2015–2016 had at least one so-called Sworn Law Enforcement Officer – a police officer who is not specifically a school police officer, i.e. not an SRO – or an SRO in service at the school on at least one day per week (Diliberti et al. 2017, 14; Jackson et al. 2018; NASRO 2019; National Center for Education

Statistics 2016, 2018). According to estimates of the NASRO, this would mean that approximately 20% of all US schools – private and public schools, because private schools tend not to have an SRO – are supported by school police officers. If the additional presence of Sworn Law Enforcement Officers is included, the percentage share could be much higher (Geiger 2018; NASRO 2019).

### **SRO AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO HAZARD PREVENTION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ALSO IN GERMAN SCHOOLS**

There is no equivalent of the SRO in Brandenburg. However, there are close collaborative relationships, if only on the basis of the agreement “Police and School Partnerships – Cooperating on the Prevention and Combating of Criminality and Traffic Accidents and Emergency Planning”. At state level (strategy level), specifically with the police headquarters and the state school offices as contact partners, also at the regional (conceptual) level, here between the police stations and the state school offices, through to the areas of prevention/community police service and the school administrations as contact partners at local (implementation) level (MIK and MBJS 2018). Through this agreement, among other things, parents, teachers and schoolchildren are informed about and sensitised to the risks in school and non-school settings at a range of different events (Ministerium des Innern und für Kommunales Brandenburg 2018).

However, one could speculate that the possibility of being able to exercise social control in schools is far from being demonstrated in the form of cooperation that the SRO is capable of. The close personal relationship with the school – on site for one to as many as three days per week – combined with the function of exercising

sovereign tasks, being able to become active on a preventive and repressive level, or even only being able to emphatically implement in-school measures, could contribute to increased compliance with the rules. In his or her position, the SRO can react directly to breaches of standards of any kind and, possibly or indeed because of the effect of the uniform, is accepted better by schoolchildren than teaching staff performing the same function. They accompany the schoolchildren a bit in their everyday life and therefore have a similarly good approach as, for example, teachers. Incidents are spotted faster and effective measures can therefore be taken more quickly. This is only possible to a limited extent with the German police officers, e.g. the responsible community police officer. The so-called community police service, whose tasks are set by the internal police service regulations for the Brandenburg State Security Service (PDV 350 BB), maintains intensive contact with the population, e.g. through local public relations work of the police in places such as kindergartens, schools and senior homes. It is also responsible for safeguarding the school route, monitoring traffic and for receiving reports from the population, holding consultations for citizens, cooperating on opinions on regulatory issues or collecting findings on various phenomena of relevance to the police (Hylla/Jankowski 2011).

Community police officers and those responsible for prevention at police stations may have a similar task as an SRO because they are also in contact with the schools or support them within their scope of responsibility (MIK and MBJS 2018, point 5.3). In reality, however, there are many other tasks for them to perform, meaning that providing the kind of support that an SRO is capable of seems de facto impossible due to time and staffing constraints.



German officers could also face problems if deployed to a greater extent in schools due to the obligations arising from the principle of legality. In schools in particular, trusting contact with the police can make a big contribution to general acceptance or even to increasing acceptance of the rule of law. The question must therefore be asked about what impact the principle of legality has on the preventive effect of police officers within the scope of the deployment (e.g. of seminars, training measures or also simply the time an SRO spends on site). Accordingly, when talking to or conversing with schoolchildren and the school management, the police officer should always have facts reported in the conditional form or purely hypothetically – and warn about this beforehand – or speak about such facts on a purely hypothetical basis. This is to avoid making themselves liable to prosecution or to instantly obligating themselves to pursue criminal prosecution. That would pose a big problem, especially when it comes to combating the phenomenon of child pornography and youth pornography. After all, there are still cases where young people could become liable for prosecution out of ignorance, e.g. if a 14 year-old boy is given a masturbation video by his 13 year-old girlfriend, he is de facto in possession of child pornography (Rüdiger 2020a, 299–315). If this were to be raised during a prevention talk, the officer would have to report it. It cannot be ruled out that the principle of legality gets in the way of the purpose of creating a more sustainable relationship of trust and cooperation between the police, school, schoolchildren and the school environment, whereby consideration could be given to waiving part or all of the prosecution obligation for staff assigned to this function or freeing up special officers for deployment in schools, or even redefining the scope of discretion.

However, the notion that the initiation or expansion of numbers of special school police officers is a panacea in the area of prevention should not arise. The deployment could also pose dangers, particularly due to the increased imbalance in authority between police and school staff, as well as schoolchildren. Thus, for example, the position of power, especially in respect of vulnerable individuals, could be exploited depending on which function the police officer actually exercises in the school context. Moreover, the presence of weapons in the school presents an additional risk of injuries or even people running amok. It is also difficult to make statements about whether the presence of an SRO actually has an effect on the detection of offences. In a study at Kentucky High School, there was, for example, no statistically significant relationship between reported offences at the schools that were supported by an SRO and schools that did not experience any support (Sullivan/Hausmann 2017, 901).

## CONCLUSION

What is questionable and needs clarifying or investigating in this context, however, is the actual acceptance of uniformed officers in a school setting. It is also questionable whether such a deep intervention in the right to education in a democratic constitutional state, similar to what is being discussed at full-day schools, is even desirable (Geis-Schroer 2019, 233–234). It must also be remembered that police officers in Germany are not trained pedagogues or taught pronounced pedagogical content during their training or studies (cf. Der Polizeipräsident in Berlin 2020), which can reduce their effectiveness in schools, above all when attempting to build trust with schoolchildren. The risks of such concepts must not be left undiscussed. A society must therefore negotiate whether

it actually wants to integrate professional arms bearers into schools or educational settings and thus have them there or not. In the USA in particular, this topic cannot be underestimated, as assaults on minorities as well as sexual acts can also occur within the security agencies. Such stories are not unheard of in Germany either and illustrate how important the selection and training of any officers is (Hartmann 2020; Legal Tribute Online 2018).

It is also questionable whether a possible deployment and the faster – also criminal justice – response to violations of norms would actually lead to a reduction in criminal behaviour in schools. It is possible that there could also be a presumably unwanted shift into the public space. First, therefore, the effectiveness of the deployment of the aforementioned prevention officers or the more intensive deployment of an SRO must be investigated. In this context, it should be mentioned that there is a certain need to study the effect of a police presence in public. The perceptibility – depending on the quality, i.e. appearance, also verbal and non-verbal behaviour – can generally invoke in the population positive or negative effects on the image of the police, and even on the demonstrated willingness to commit violence (cf. Hermanutz 2013). Whether and what influence the perceptibility actually has on the behaviour of minors, including in the protected school setting, remains virtually unresearched. The deployment of civil officers, e.g. from the criminal police, could also be discussed here. Nevertheless, police prevention events are held, both in uniform and in civilian clothing. From experience, the events at which the police also have to and should be perceptible in public for minors, e.g. as part of traffic education, are held in uniform (cf. Gawande 2019). The focus here is on attentiveness as well as authority and a certain link between seeing the

uniform and fearing being punished for non-compliance simply cannot be rejected out of hand. Other events such as, for example, informational or sensitising events on the topic of the dangers posed by drugs or new media, could also – due to a more offensive conversational attitude on the part of the participants – be held out of uniform (Oeder 2015, 17).

On the other hand, it would also be worth considering increasing the skills of the teaching staff and broadening the legal topics dealt with as part of the teacher training course, and thus teaching or sensitising teachers to phenomenon-specific details, in order to ensure that they recognise issues sooner (Rüdiger 2020b). According to a Germany-wide study by the insurance firm ARAG on the topic of cyberbullying, about 60 % of surveyed teaching staff indicated that they had already noticed cases of cyberbullying amongst schoolchildren, but that they lacked the specialist knowledge to appropriately deal with these facts or the sources of danger posed by the internet (Schneider et al. 2013, 8). It is questionable here whether expanding the task description of the education body in this way goes too far. On the other hand, private security companies working in schools can also have an impact on ensuring the smooth running of the school day. For example, entry checks, including for weapons, are already in place in some Berlin schools (Bub 2020). What is uncertain, however, is what this kind of permanent check actually means when it comes to influencing the behaviour of minors.

In this regard, a qualified, more intensive engagement with and the integration of digital media into everyday school life seems desirable with regard to its usefulness for identifying and preventing potential minors with perpetrator or victim status for preventive purposes, e.g. offences under the Sexual Offences Act, cases

involving bullying, as well as instances of extremism and, of course, violence. Further findings could be obtained in this regard by surveying schoolchildren for their basic understanding of the law, also with regard to phenomena in the digital space. These could, if necessary, form the basis for dealing more strongly with the incorporation of fundamental issues of criminal law, combined with the teaching of the respective socially deviant character and the negative consequences for deviants and victims, as well as better media competence in school lessons (Zschocher 2020). Overall, a lot more research needs to be done in order to be able to ensure more effective crime prevention in schools. For example, it was not possible to mention any relevant study on the question about what effects a visible perception of uniformed police officers in schools has and could have. From a criminological perspective, such a perception could have an impact on the development of criminal behaviour. For example, it could result in an increase in crime figures if schoolchildren are in regular contact with police officers or at least see these as being integrated into their school setting.

This could be explained by the fact that the inhibition threshold for reporting facts of relevance under criminal law falls. An example would be phenomena such as cases of abuse, which are considered somewhat taboo. This arrangement would possibly mean more police work and lead to a rise in cases of crime in schools, but could in terms of crime policy also be of great relevance with a view to the protection of minors – with early recognition of criminologically significant phenomena.

Even if the geographical, educational and security policy circumstances in the USA cannot be fully compared with those in the German-speaking countries, it nevertheless seems entirely sensible to at least debate the concept of a special school police officer, an SRO, for his or her added value for school-based prevention in Germany as a means of crime policy. Whether an increased police presence in schools is desirable would also require an in-depth societal and educational policy discussion and debate, as it also deals with an ethical and constitutional question. However, rejecting any discussions entirely out of hand does not seem to do the subject justice.

<sup>1</sup> *Bullying at school covers harmful actions at school as the specific place of victimisation. This need not take place digitally, but it can. The individuals performing these actions can be described as school bullies (Menesini/Salmivalli 2017).*  
<sup>2</sup> *Cyberbullying can be understood as “[...] any behaviour performed through electronic or digital media by individuals or groups that repeatedly communicate hostile or aggressive messages intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others”. The individuals performing these actions can be described as cyberbullies (Tokunaga 2010).*

#### **Sources of information**

Bade, Diana (2018). *Ministerin: „Handys sind an Schulen erlaubt“*, 13.09.2018, Online: <https://www.maz-online.de/Brandenburg/Ministerin-Handys-sind-an-Schulen-erlaubt> (29.10.2019).  
 Baier, Dirk/Kliem, Sören (2019). *Jugendliche als Opfer und Täter von Gewalt*, *Public Health Forum* (27), 15–17, Online: [10.1515/pubhef2018-0125](https://doi.org/10.1515/pubhef2018-0125) (26.06.2020).  
 Baier, Dirk et al. (2017). *Zur Entwicklung der Gewalt in Deutschland. Schwerpunkt: Jugendliche und Flücht-*

*linge*, ZHAW – Züricher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften, Winterthur.  
 Barnes, Lynnette M. (2008). *Policing the schools: An evaluation of the North Carolina School Resource Officer Program*, ProQuest, Online: <https://search.proquest.com/openview/345cf618bb3809fbc398fedc15f1f01/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y> (27.04.2020).  
 Bergmann, Marie Christine et al. (2017). *Jugendliche in Niedersachsen. Ergebnisse des Niedersachsensurveys 2013 und 2015*, Hannover.  
 Bub, Uwe (2020). *Berlin-Neukölln:*

- Private Sicherheitskräfte beschützen Schüler*, Online: <https://www.gsd-sicherheit.de/wachschutz-wachdienst-security-sicherheitsdienst-news/berlin-neukoelln-private-sicherheitskraefte-beschuetzen-schueler.php> (07.05.2020).
- Bundesministerium des Innern (2006). *Zweiter Periodischer Sicherheitsbericht*, Online: <https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/JahresberichteUndLagebilder/PeriodischerSicherheitsbericht/psb02Lang.html;jsessionid=C86C362BC26136039440A1B069243526.live2291?nn=28302> (02.06.2021).
- Der Polizeipräsident in Berlin* (2020). *Studium – Gehobener Dienst Schutzpolizei/Kriminalpolizei*, Online: <https://www.berlin.de/polizei/beruf/polizist-polizistin-werden/ausbildung-studium/gehobener-dienst-schutzpolizei-kriminalpolizei/> (22.05.2020).
- Diliberti, Melissa et al. (2017). *Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools Findings From the School Survey on Crime and Safety: 2015–16 First Look*, Washington DC.
- Feierabend, Sabine et al. (2018a). *JIM-Studie 2018. Jugend, Information, Medien. Basisuntersuchung zum Medienumgang 12- bis 19-Jähriger*, Stuttgart.
- Feierabend, Sabine et al. (2018b). *KIM-Studie 2018. Kindheit, Internet, Medien. Basisuntersuchung zum Medienumgang 6- bis 13-Jähriger*, Stuttgart.
- Feierabend, Sabine et al. (2019). *JIM-Studie 2019. Jugend, Information, Medien. Basisuntersuchung zum Medienumgang 12- bis 19-Jähriger*, Stuttgart.
- Feuser, Georg (2019). *Schulisch-unterrichtliche Inklusion-eine-Frage-der-Didaktik*, Online: <https://www.georg-feuser.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Feuser-G.-Schulisch-unterrichtliche-Inklusion-eine-Frage-der-Didaktik-Uni-M%C3%BCnster-20-05-2019.pdf> (18.05.2020).
- Gawande, Ulrike (2019). *Polizei: Spielerische Verkehrserziehung*, Online: <https://www.maz-online.de/Lokales/Oberhavel/Oranienburg/Polizei-Spielerische-Verkehrserziehung> (18.06.2020).
- Geiger, Abigail W. (2018). *Sworn officers at primary schools grow more common*, Online: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/05/15/rising-share-of-u-s-primary-schools-have-sworn-officers-on-the-premises/> (27.04.2020).
- Geisler, Markus (1998). *Die Ausgestaltung des Anklageprinzips nach amerikanischem Strafverfahrens- und Verfassungsrecht (= Schriften zum Internationalen Recht, Bd. 110)*, Berlin.
- Geis-Schroer, Uwe (2019). *Die verpflichtende Ganztagschule – elterliche Erziehung vs. staatliche Aufsicht*, *Fachzeitschrift der Witelon-Fachhochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaft*, 31(2), 233–246.
- Hartmann, Cornelia (2020). *Thüringer Polizisten wegen Vergewaltigung angeklagt – Opfer nicht auffindbar*, Online: <https://www.mdr.de/thueringen/mitte-west-thueringen/arnstadt-ilmkreis/prozess-polizisten-vergewaltigung-100.html> (28.05.2020).
- Hermanutz, Max (2013). *Polizeiliches Auftreten – Respekt und Gewalt. Eine empirische Untersuchung zum Einfluss verbaler Kommunikation und äußerem Erscheinungsbild von Polizeibeamten auf die Gewaltbereitschaft von Jugendlichen und jungen Erwachsenen*, Frankfurt a. M.
- Hirsch, Stefan (2016). *Jugendstrafrecht anschaulich unterrichten. Praxisorientierte Materialien zu Rechten, Delikten und Strafverfahren: 8.–10. Klasse*, Hamburg.
- Hylla, Christian/Jankowski, Detlef (2011). *Zeitung der Polizei Brandenburg – Info 110 01/2011*, 14–15.
- Jackson, Michael et al. (2018). *2015–16 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS)*, Online: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018107.pdf> (02.06.2021).
- Jiménez, Fanny (2018). *Ein Smartphone-Verbot in Schulen ist einfach – aber nicht klug*, 31.07.2018, Online: <https://www.welt.de/wissenschaft/article141084460/Smartphones-verbannen-ist-einfach-aber-nicht-klug.html> (29.10.2019).
- Katzer, Catarina et al. (2009). *Cyberbullying in Internet-Chatrooms – Wer sind die Täter? Zeit-*

- schrift für Entwicklungspsychologie und Pädagogische Psychologie*, 41 (1), 33–44, Online: 10.1026/0049-8637.41.1.33 (02.06.2021).
- Kopietz, Andreas (2019). *Gewalt an Schulen in Berlin: Berliner Senat hält Zahlen geheim*, 13.09.2019, Online: <https://www.berlinerzeitung.de/mensch-metropole/gewalt-an-schulen-in-berlin-berliner-senat-haelt-zahlen-geheim-li.19945> (14.04.2020).
- Kubera, Thomas/Thielmann, Gerd (Eds.), (n.y.). *Handbuch für Führung und Einsatz der Polizei. Kommentar zur PDV 100 VS-NfD*, Stuttgart.
- Kultusministerkonferenz (2019). *Standards für die Lehrerbildung: Bildungswissenschaften. Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 16.12.2004 i. d. F. vom 16.05.2019*, Berlin.
- Legal Tribute Online (2018). *VG Cottbus zu erkennungsdienstlicher Behandlung: Polizist muss sein Geschlechtsteil ablichten lassen*, Online: <https://www.lto.de/recht/nachrichten/n/vg-cottbus-3195-18-polizist-verdacht-sexual-straftat-erkennungsdienstliche-behandlung-geschlechtsteil-fotos/> (28.05.2020).
- Marx, Konstanze (2017). *Diskursphänomen Cybermobbing. Ein internetlinguistischer Zugang zu [digitaler] Gewalt*, Berlin/Boston.
- MAZonline (2018a). *So gewalttätig geht es an Brandenburger Schulen zu*, Online: <https://www.maz-online.de/Brandenburg/So-gewalttaetig-geht-es-an-Brandenburger-Schulen-zu> (23.10.2019).
- MAZonline (2018b). *Tatort Schule – Gewalt gegen Lehrer steigt*, Online: <https://www.maz-online.de/Brandenburg/Tatort-Schule-Gewalt-gegen-Lehrer-steigt> (25.02.2020).
- Menesini, Ersilia/Samivalli, Christina (2017). *Bullying in schools: the state of knowledge and effective interventions*, *Psychology, health & medicine*, 22 (1), 240–253, Online: 10.1080/13548506.2017.1279740 (02.06.2021).
- MIK und MBSJ [Ministerium des Innern und für Kommunales/Ministerium für Bildung, Jugend und Sport] (2018). *Partnerschaften Polizei und Schule. Kooperation bei der Prävention und Bekämpfung von Kriminalität und Verkehrsunfällen sowie der Notfallplanung. Gemeinsamer Runderlass des Ministeriums des Innern und für Kommunales des Landes Brandenburg und des Ministeriums für Bildung, Jugend und Sport des Landes Brandenburg vom 25. Juni 2018*, Potsdam.
- Ministerium des Innern und für Kommunales Brandenburg (2018). *Partnerschaften Polizei und Schule – Prävention und schnelle Krisenintervention im Notfall*, Online: <https://mik.brandenburg.de/cms/detail.php/bb1.c.600457.de> (23.10.2019).
- Minnehaha County (2019). *South Dakota Official Website – Sheriff’s Office*, Online: [https://www.minnehahacounty.org/dept/so/divisions/patrol/school\\_resource.php](https://www.minnehahacounty.org/dept/so/divisions/patrol/school_resource.php) (06.09.2019).
- NASRO [National Association of School Resource Officers] (2019), Online: <https://asoft200109.acrisoft.com/nasro/faq/> (06.09.2019).
- National Center for Education Statistics (2016). *Digest of Education Statistics 2016*, Online: [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16\\_233.70.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_233.70.asp) (27.01.2020).
- National Center for Education Statistics (2018). *Percentage of public schools with security staff present at least once a week, by full-time or part-time status and selected school characteristics: 2005–06 through 2015–16*, Online: [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d18/tables/dt18\\_233.70a.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d18/tables/dt18_233.70a.asp) (27.04.2020).
- Neubacher, Frank (2020). *Kriminologie*, Baden-Baden.
- News4teachers (2019). *Lehrerverband ist alarmiert: Jugendgewalt (auch Cybermobbing) nimmt zu – immer mehr Schüler sind mit Messer oder Reizgas unterwegs*, Online: <https://www.news4teachers.de/2019/04/lehrerverband-ist-alarmiert-jugendgewalt-und-cybermobbing-nehmen-zu-immer-mehr-schueler-sind-mit-messer-oder-reizgas-unterwegs/> (28.10.2019).
- Oeder, Klaus (2015). *Zeitung der Polizei Brandenburg – Info 110, 01/2015, 16–23*.
- Polizeipräsidium Land Brandenburg (2018). *Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik Brandenburg, Gesamtübersicht 2018, Fachdirektion Landes-kriminalamt, Eberswalde*.
- Rüdiger, Thomas-Gabriel (2020a). *Die online-basierte Anbahnung des sexuellen Missbrauchs*



- eines Kindes. Eine kriminologische und juristische Auseinandersetzung mit dem Phänomen Cybergrooming, Frankfurt a. M.
- Rüdiger, Thomas-Gabriel (2020b). Sexuelle Übergriffe im Internet: Verboten und trotzdem Alltag, *Zeit für die Schule*, Online: <https://service.zeit.de/schule/gesellschaft/sexuelle-uebergriffe-im-internet-verbotten-und-trotzdem-alltag/> (26.05.2020).
- Schneider, Christoph et al. (2013). Cyberlife – Spannungsfeld zwischen Faszination und Gefahr. Cybermobbing bei Schülerinnen und Schülern. Eine empirische Bestandsaufnahme bei Eltern, Lehrkräften und Schülern/innen in Deutschland, Online: [https://www.buendnis-gegen-cyber-mobbing.de/fileadmin/pdf/studien/cyber-mobbingstudie\\_2013.pdf](https://www.buendnis-gegen-cyber-mobbing.de/fileadmin/pdf/studien/cyber-mobbingstudie_2013.pdf) (02.06.2021).
- Schubarth, Wilfried (2018). Gewalt und Mobbing an Schulen. Möglichkeiten der Prävention und Intervention, Stuttgart.
- Schubarth, Wilfried et al. (2017). Werte machen Schule. Lernen für eine offene Gesellschaft, Stuttgart.
- Schulministerien der Bundesländer (2014). Infografik: Wo werden Lehrer verbeamtet?, Online: <https://magazin.sofatutor.com/lehrer/infografik-wo-werden-lehrer-verbeamtet/> (19.05.2020).
- Schwind, Hans-Dieter (2016). Kriminologie und Kriminalpolitik. Eine praxisorientierte Einführung mit Beispielen, Heidelberg.
- Shihovec, Travis (2020). Deputy Tommy' Face of Morton County Sheriff's New Program, U.S. News & World Report.
- Statista (2010). Was sind Ihrer Meinung nach die wichtigsten [sic!] Aufgaben der Schule?, Online: <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/160950/umfrage/wichtige-aufgaben-der-schule/> (13.02.2020).
- Sullivan, William J./Hausmann, Charles S. (2017). Kentucky High Schools with SRO's and Without: An Examination of Criminal Violation Rates, *Journal of School Leadership (JSL)*, 27 (6), 884–908.
- Theriot, Matthew T. (2016). The Impact of School Resource Officer Interaction on Students' Feelings About School and School Police, *Crime & Delinquency*, 62 (4), 446–469, Online: 10.1177/0011128713503526 (02.06.2021).
- Tokunaga, Robert S. (2010). Following you home from school: A critical review and synthesis of research on cyberbullying victimization, *Computers in Human Behavior* 26 (3), 277–287. Online: 10.1016/j.chb.2009.11.014 (02.06.2021).
- tz online (2019). Junge Frauen lassen sich nachts heimlich bei Kaufland einsperren – und filmen sich, Online: <https://www.tz.de/muenchen/stadt/muenchen-frauen-lassen-sich-nachts-bei-kauf-land-einsperren-und-filmen-sich-zr-12955275.html> (02.06.2021).
- Vieth-Entus, Susanne (2019). Gewalt an Berliner Schulen: Direktoren müssen Vorfälle bald nicht mehr faxen – Schule – Berlin, 14.05.2019, Online: <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/schule/gewalt-an-berliner-schulen-direktoren-muessen-vorfaelle-bald-nicht-mehr-faxen/24336656.html> (25.02.2020).
- Wallner, Susanne et al. (Eds.) (2019). Devianz und Delinquenz in Kindheit und Jugend. Neue Ansätze der kriminologischen Forschung, Wiesbaden.
- Zschocher, Andrea (2020). Cybergrooming: Online-Gefahr für unsere Kinder, Interview mit Dr. Thomas-Gabriel Rüdiger, Online: <https://www.familie.de/schulkind/cybergrooming-online-gefahr-fuer-unsere-kinder> (07.05.2020).

#### Further literature and links

- Lehramtsausbildung in den Bundesländern (2020). Lehramter – Lehramtsausbildung in den Bundesländern, Online: <https://studienwahl.de/studienfelder/lehraemter> (21.04.2020).
- Rüdiger, Thomas-Gabriel/Bayerl, Petra Saskia (2020). „Cyberkriminologie – Kriminologie für das digitale Zeitalter“, Wiesbaden.
- Schneider, Christoph et al. (2013). Cyberlife – Spannungsfeld zwischen Faszination und Gefahr. Cybermobbing bei Schülerinnen und Schülern. Eine empirische Bestandsaufnahme bei Eltern, Lehrkräften und Schülern/innen in Deutschland, Karlsruhe.