

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF POLICE PROVISION OF A SAFE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN UKRAINE UNDER CONDITIONS OF ARMED CONFLICT: LEGAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

Oleksandr Dzhuzha¹, Dmytro Tychyna², Valerii Siuravchyk³

Abstract. The relevance of the article is substantiated by the need to study the role of the police in ensuring a safe educational environment under conditions of armed conflict. The stable functioning of educational institutions is important not only for the protection of children's rights and the maintenance of public safety, but also for the preservation of human capital, social stability, and the economic security of the state. The objective of the present article is to conduct a comprehensive study of international experience in police provision of a safe educational environment and to determine the possibilities for its implementation in Ukraine under martial law, taking into account security, legal, and socio-economic factors. In accordance with the stated purpose, the article employs general and special methods of scientific inquiry, in particular the methods of analysis, synthesis, classification, and grouping, which made it possible to examine a wide range of scholarly approaches to understanding the role of the police in shaping a safe educational environment. A review of the extant literature reveals a paucity of research on the issue of police provision of a safe educational environment, particularly in terms of an interdisciplinary understanding of its significance for educational security, social resilience, and the economic security of the state. A systematic review of scholarly studies has established that developing an effective strategy for involving the police in ensuring a safe educational environment should be a priority task for the state. This strategy should take into account international standards and national security challenges, as well as the need to preserve educational potential and minimise socio-economic losses caused by war. The findings of the study could be used by the National Police of Ukraine, public authorities and educational institutions to improve mechanisms for ensuring a safe educational environment, which is an important part of Ukraine's national and economic security.

Keywords: security, safe educational environment, educational institutions, educational security, economy, economic security, socio-economic stability, human capital, legal support, law enforcement agency, police, police officer, National Police of Ukraine, juvenile prevention, armed conflict, martial law.

JEL Classification: H56, D74, K42, I25, J24, P48

1. Introduction

Creating a safe educational environment is a priority for all educational institutions, especially General Secondary Education Institutions (GSEIs), which are responsible for providing a safe and complete general secondary education. Fulfilling this task upholds students' right to safe and conducive learning and

development conditions. Indeed, security within the educational space is directly linked to the absence of all forms of violence for all participants in the learning environment (Methodological Recommendations, 2025, 5–6).

The issue of ensuring a safe living environment for humanity has always been, and will continue to be,

¹ National Academy of Internal Affairs, Ukraine (*corresponding author*)

E-mail: adzuzha@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1347-4937>

² National Academy of Internal Affairs, Ukraine

E-mail: ddt0099@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9430-6101>

³ National Academy of Internal Affairs, Ukraine

E-mail: swg@ukr.net

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6376-779X>



This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 4.0

relevant. The contemporary security environment is characterised by a high degree of volatility and unpredictability. The dramatic events currently unfolding worldwide, particularly those related to Russia's military aggression and occupation of Ukrainian territories, are testing the strength and viability of existing peace and security mechanisms. These events are prompting the search for new frameworks to ensure security at national, regional and local levels (Methodological Recommendations, 2024, 7–8).

The safety of the educational environment is of paramount importance to society. The establishment of a safe educational environment is a subject of ongoing scholarly discourse and strategic focus for international organisations, as well as Ukrainian researchers, educators, psychologists, and policymakers (Garuk 2024, 63-64).

2. Bibliometric Analysis

Data collection. Various dimensions of educational security have been extensively researched by international scholars, including Bauer E., Benitez I., Canady M., Carroll M., Cooper C., Coyle S., Crosse S., Deakin J., Devlin D., Earl K., Fisher B., Fronius T., Goodman N., Gottfredson D., Green J., Greene A., Guckenbug S., Hagen C., Harmon M., Hirschfield P., Homer, Hong MY, Jackson D., James B., Jiyeon J Goo, Jordan H., Kaler L., Kupchik A., Lanciani J., Lincoln E., Mann A., McDevitt J., Mi Yung Goo, Morabito M., Morton M., Muller R., Na C., Nease J., Norton M., Panniello J., Petrosino A., Raymond B., Savage J., Sun W., Sutherland H., Tang Z., Taylor E., Torres-Gullien S., Vasquez G., Whitaker A. and others. The body of work produced by these scholars collectively addresses the complex challenges of maintaining safety within academic institutions.

Moreover, Ukrainian scholars have made significant contributions to the study of the National Police of Ukraine's (NPU) preventive measures involving minors. Specifically, the provision of a safe educational environment has been explored in the works of Andriyashavska M. S., Bandurka I. O., Berendieieva A. I., Blaga A. B., Bogdanovych V. Yu., Bratel S. G., Bocharnikov V. P., Garuk I. V., Gorbach-Kudrya I. A., Ilyashov O. A., Ishchenko I. V., Zelenskyi Ye. S., Karpenko O. M., Komarov V. S., Nazymko Ye. S., Oleksiuk V. V., Pohorylets O. V., Ponomaryova T. I., Reznikova O. O., Svieshnikov S. V., Televna V. O., Yuzikova N. S., and several other prominent researchers.

The scientific works of Berendieieva A. I. (2024), Ishchenko I. V. (2018), Zelenskyi Ye. S. (2024), and V. O. Televna (2025) focus directly on addressing the issues of safeguarding children's rights and freedoms by the NPU.

Data analysis. However, in the current context, there is an urgent need for scientific research into the

activities of newly established police units, specifically the Educational Safety Service Management (ESSM) of the National Police of Ukraine (NPU) and its structural ESS units. Moreover, it is imperative to assess their collaboration with juvenile prevention units to ensure a secure environment within General Secondary Education Institutions (GSEIs).

Turning to **international experience** regarding police provision of safe educational environments in educational institutions, it is worth emphasising that the concept of a "School Police Officer" or "School Resource Officer" (SRO) first emerged in Flint, Michigan (USA) in the 1950s, as part of community policing implementation. The concept emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, primarily in Florida, but did not spread nationwide until the mid-1990s, when legislative acts such as the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 and the 1998 amendment to the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 encouraged partnerships between schools and law enforcement agencies. The US Department of Justice's "Cops in Schools" grant programme then drastically increased the use of SROs in schools from 1999 onwards (Na & Gottfredson, 2013, 620–621).

3. Results

SROs are usually sworn, armed law enforcement officers who have received specialised training to carry out their duties in educational settings. They are responsible for patrolling school grounds, investigating criminal complaints and mitigating disciplinary infractions or legal violations among students. They also often participate in educational and preventive programmes, such as providing counselling to students and delivering briefings on security and their rights. However, the specific goals of SRO programmes are not static; they evolve over time and vary significantly across different jurisdictions. Accordingly, the federal "Cops in Schools" programme has two primary objectives:

1) With a view to fostering co-operation between the police and schools, thereby enabling the principles and philosophy of community policing to be directly implemented within the school environment.

2) To help communities focus their leadership efforts and resources on issues related to creating and maintaining a safe school environment (Na & Gottfredson, 2013, 621–622).

Although the School Resource Officer (SRO) programme originated in Flint, Michigan in 1953, it was not widely discussed or effectively implemented until 1968. At that time, the Fresno Police Department in California adopted the programme as a strategy to improve the police's image among children. As part of this early implementation, plainclothes officers were deployed within middle and elementary schools to

build rapport and foster positive interactions between the local police department and young people. In the 1980s and 1990s, crime prevention programmes such as "Drug Abuse Resistance Education" and "Gang Resistance Education and Training" were introduced under the school police officer programme (Police Foundation, *Defining the role of school-based police officers* 2018, 2–3).

From the mid-1970s to 2008, the proportion of schools with active school police officers increased from around 1% to 40%. In many states, these officers are the primary law enforcement agents responsible for determining whether laws are being violated in schools (*Criminalizing Children at School* 2017, 3–4).

The programme in Fresno evolved to reflect the standard seen in most contemporary communities, with a local police officer responsible for school safety maintaining a presence within the educational environment. This followed Congress's passage of the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 in response to fears regarding violence against minors. Consequently, schools introduced widespread "zero tolerance" policies, including the presence of a police officer in all educational institutions (*A Brief History of School-Based Law Enforcement*, 2018, 2–3).

The presence of school police officers increased again in the late 1990s after the Department of Justice created a 750 million USD grant programme called "Cops in Schools" to hire over 6,500 officers. During the 2015/16 academic year, the following percentages of schools reported having a school officer present at least once a week: 77% of schools with 1,000 or more pupils, 47% of those with 500–999 pupils, 36% of those with 300–499 pupils, and 24% of those with fewer than 300 pupils. As of 2016, overall, 42% of public institutions and 10.9% of private institutions co-operated with a law enforcement officer (Na & Gottfredson, 2013, 622–623).

SROs are becoming increasingly common in US schools as part of a trend towards criminalisation in education. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, during the 2019–2020 academic year, over half (51.4%) of public schools employed a law enforcement officer who regularly carried a firearm and was present on campus for at least one day per week (U.S. Department of Education) (Green J. G. et al., 2021). The extent to which American young people interact with the police at school is a matter of significant concern for educators, researchers and policymakers (Homer & Fisher, 2020; Whitaker et al., 2019). Encounters with school-based police have been linked to negative educational outcomes and detrimental effects on children's mental health (Jackson et al., 2019; Jackson, Testa et al., 2021).

4. Discussion

As Homer and Fisher (2019) rightly point out, placing police officers in schools is a widespread strategy for ensuring school safety. However, it is unclear to what extent their presence affects crime rates and student disciplinary actions.

Using nationwide data from the Civil Rights Data Collection, this study examines whether the presence of police correlates with student disciplinary rates, and whether these patterns vary by race, ethnicity and gender. Path and propensity score matching models indicate that the correlation between police presence and student disciplinary actions was stronger in schools with a police presence than in those without, particularly for Black and male students. These findings support the theory of criminalisation, which suggests that the presence of police leads to an increase in the formal processing of students.

At the same time, the results of the study by Gottfredson et al. (2020) indicate that increasing the number of SROs fails to improve school safety. Instead, escalating discriminatory measures regarding school discipline incidents leads to the criminalisation of school discipline. The researchers recommended that educational administrators seeking to enhance school safety consider alternatives to programmes requiring a regular police presence in schools (Gottfredson et al., 2020).

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) developed the Triad Model of school resource officer responsibility, which delineates three primary roles for school resource officers (SROs) within schools: educator, informal counsellor, and law enforcement officer (Canady, James, & Nease, 2012). The function of school resource officers as "informal counsellors" may include activities such as maintaining an "open-door" policy for students; participating in counselling sessions; referring students to social services, legal aid, community services, and healthcare agencies; and establishing rapport with students (Canady et al. 2012, 9–10).

SROs have the capacity to educate students, faculty, and parents on a variety of subjects, including alcohol and drug awareness, as well as child pedestrian and traffic safety. The law enforcement responsibilities of school resource officers may include patrolling schools, responding to police calls, making arrests, issuing citations, and developing emergency response plans (Raymond 2010, 4–5).

As Devlin and Gottfredson (2018) pertinently observe, the deployment of school resource officers gives rise to questions regarding potential role conflict, as officers fulfil the dual roles of counsellor/teacher and law enforcement officer. In response to these concerns, many school districts have recently

begun to limit the discretionary authority of SROs (Hirschfield 2018, 209-210).

The extensive presence of School Resource Officers (SROs) in educational institutions is a highly controversial issue. Supporters argue that SROs enhance school safety by fostering strong relationships with students, as well as through surveillance and law enforcement. These relationships encourage the disclosure of information regarding potential safety threats (McDevitt & Panniello, 2005). Furthermore, the presence of SROs ensures that first responders are immediately accessible during critical incidents, such as school shootings (Na & Gottfredson, 2013, 623–624). Finally, advocates argue that SROs are an invaluable resource, helping school administrations to distinguish between minor infractions and formal violations of the law (Crosse, 2020).

According to Fisher et al. (2023), School-Based Law Enforcement (SBLE) has become a common intervention to secure educational environments. Although these programmes are intended to enhance school safety, critics argue that they may not only fail to achieve their primary objectives, but also trigger unintended negative consequences. These include exacerbated discriminatory disciplinary practices and increased student contact with the criminal justice system. Furthermore, secondary effects may influence students' perceptions of the school climate and their academic performance overall. Despite the steady global increase in the presence of sworn SBLE officers in recent decades, the field lacks a standardised definition, uniform training protocols or a consistent chain of command. In the United States, two main models prevail: hiring officers from local law enforcement agencies or setting up independent school district police departments, where the district employs its own sworn force (Fisher et al., 2023, 7–8).

Canada. Similarly to the United States, many Canadian schools have employed police officers to enhance the safety of staff and pupils. In Toronto, for example, school systems have placed armed police officers in schools throughout the day. In 2008, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) collaborated with the Toronto Police Service to develop the "School Resource Officer" (SRO) programme, which involved permanently assigning armed police officers to secondary schools. However, in November 2017, the TDSB voted to eliminate the district's programme (Trustees Vote to End School Resource Officer Program at TDSB 2018, 4–5).

Korea. The need for effective anti-bullying programmes in schools is greater than ever. In Korea, the Youth Police Academy (YPA) has been operational since 2014 to combat school bullying. Adopted as part of the "2014 Field-Oriented School Bullying Countermeasure Plan" (Hong MY et al., 2024), it is an

experiential school bullying prevention programme. As part of the YPA programme, School Police Officers (SPOs), who are active-duty officers responsible for addressing school violence in Korea, deliver hands-on legal education and anti-bullying activities at various regional centres. The programme aims to inspire a sense of purpose in students by combining practical experience with police simulations.

The current state of security in **Ukraine** is influenced by numerous threats, primarily martial law, resulting in the deterioration of living conditions. Armed conflicts have had a significant impact on education, giving rise to a wide range of humanitarian and social challenges. Globally, schools and universities have been subjected to bombings, shelling and arson (Pogorilets, 2024, 115–116).

Throughout the full-scale armed aggression, Russia has targeted Ukrainian educational institutions with shells. These actions have caused significant harm to students and educational staff alike, depriving countless children and young people of their right to an education and undermining the foundations on which communities build their future. During the conflict and for a considerable time afterwards, Ukrainian educational institutions will have to operate under new requirements to ensure a safe learning environment. One of the most critical tasks for a principal is equipping shelters and organising a secure educational space within the school. Therefore, countering Russia's military aggression makes forming a safe educational space a formidable challenge for everyone involved in education.

Notably, the Safe Schools Declaration (GCPEA, 2015)– endorsed by the UN – highlights that armed conflicts destroy educational infrastructure and the aspirations of entire generations. While 109 countries had signed the document by 2022, Russia was notably absent. Conversely, Ukraine became the 100th nation to endorse the Declaration, reaffirming its commitment to protecting education during conflict.

The Declaration sets out a series of core commitments aimed at preventing and responding to attacks on education, and at prohibiting the military use of educational institutions during armed conflict. Those who signed the Declaration early on have already established robust implementation frameworks and successfully integrated its principles into their national security and educational strategies. Within four years of the Declaration being opened for signature, many signatory states had implemented significant policy changes regarding education during armed conflict. This experience could be essential for Ukraine. Key benefits of joining the Declaration include the restoration of educational infrastructure, the provision of psychological rehabilitation for students, parents and teachers, and the facilitation of safety and health training.

On August 4, 2021, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration on School Safety (The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On the Approval of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration on School Safety"). This document sets out the conditions for ensuring the right to education and fostering a safe educational environment in the context of the ongoing armed conflict in eastern Ukraine.

The plan is structured around **six key pillars**: 1) effective monitoring of attacks on educational institutions (establishing a systematic monitoring system and training local administrators in how to use it); 2) protection and restoration of educational establishments (taking measures to prevent attacks and ensuring restoration through state and local funding); 3) ensuring the continuity of learning (supporting the stability of the educational process by expanding opportunities for distance learning, particularly in the areas of digital literacy, internet access and the provision of technical resources); 4) the integration of methodologies that take conflict-related aspects into account into education policy (incorporating approaches that take conflict-related aspects into account into curricula and providing specialised professional development for teachers); 5) systemic approaches to safeguarding education during armed conflicts (establishing an inter-agency working group to ensure inter-agency coordination with a view to implementing the Declaration); 6) communication and advocacy support (organising information and awareness-raising events on the provisions of the Declaration and keeping international partners informed of Ukraine's progress).

In line with the World Health Organization's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016–2030) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989; updated 2023), Ukraine has strengthened its legal framework for educational security. Specifically, Presidential Decree No. 195/2020 established the "National Strategy for Building a Safe and Healthy Educational Environment in the New Ukrainian School". This strategy provides a comprehensive approach to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by fostering secure and healthy learning environments for pupils. The National Strategy is driven by the imperative to foster a safe and healthy environment within the New Ukrainian School, thereby upholding children's rights and ensuring access to high-quality educational and healthcare services. The establishment of a secure and conducive learning environment is imperative for the intellectual, physical, social and emotional development of students, thereby facilitating the realisation of their full potential. Moreover, it is anticipated that these enhancements will engender a favourable influence on

public health, economic resilience, and demographic trends throughout Ukraine.

In the context of armed conflict, the economic dimension of police provision of a safe educational environment assumes particular importance, given the direct connection between education and the preservation of human capital, labour-market potential, demographic stability, and the long-term economic security of the state. In this regard, a safe educational environment should not be understood exclusively as a legal or organisational category. Furthermore, it fulfils an economic function, in that the continuity of education serves to reduce the risks of learning losses, social exclusion, juvenile delinquency, forced migration of families, and future unemployment among young people. Consequently, investment in school safety, incorporating the deployment of specially trained police officers, may be regarded as a preventative economic measure aimed at reducing future public expenditures on social protection, criminal justice, psychological rehabilitation, and post-war recovery.

For Ukraine, this issue has acquired special significance due to the destruction of educational infrastructure, internal displacement of children and teachers, the militarisation of risks around schools, and the need to maintain the educational process during martial law. Attacks on educational institutions generate not only humanitarian and legal consequences, but also substantial socio-economic losses. These include the costs of reconstruction, the need to equip shelters and safe spaces, additional expenditures on digital education, psychological support, transportation, and security measures, as well as the indirect loss of educational outcomes and professional skills. In this context, the role of law enforcement in educational institutions is instrumental in mitigating these losses by preventing criminal activity, ensuring prompt response to security threats, fortifying access control measures, fostering emergency preparedness, and engaging in preventive communication with students, parents, and teaching staff.

The economic effectiveness of such police activity should be evaluated not solely in terms of the number of detected offences or security incidents, but also in relation to its broader preventive impact. The provision of a stable and safe school environment is conducive to the continuation of children's learning, the maintenance of parents' economic activity, the performance of teachers' professional duties, and the maintenance of social cohesion within local communities. Consequently, the Educational Safety Service of the National Police of Ukraine may be regarded as an institutional mechanism that not only supports public order and children's rights, but also the resilience of local economies affected by war. The presence of police officers in schools, provided that their role is clearly preventive, educational, and rights-oriented, has the

potential to reduce the probability of costly crisis situations and assist public authorities in more rational allocation of limited budgetary resources.

Concurrently, the economic component necessitates meticulous balancing. The securitization of schools, when excessive, has the potential to engender administrative and financial burdens without engendering a proportional improvement in educational safety. The effectiveness of school-based policing is contingent on a number of factors, as demonstrated by international experience. These include the clarity of officers' functions, specialised training, inter-agency co-operation, and the avoidance of unnecessary criminalisation of student behaviour. Consequently, within the Ukrainian context, the implementation of foreign models should be predicated on cost-effectiveness, proportionality, and measurable social outcomes. It is imperative that priority is given to those forms of police participation that simultaneously protect children, preserve access to education, reduce socio-economic risks, and strengthen the capacity of the state to recover after the war. Therefore, the provision of a safe educational environment by police forces should be interpreted as an element of national resilience and economic security, since it protects the educational potential of the younger generation as one of the key resources for Ukraine's post-war reconstruction.

It is imperative to acknowledge that Clause 1, Article 1 of the Law of Ukraine "On Comprehensive Secondary Education" dated January 16, 2020, No. 463-IX (The Law of Ukraine "On Comprehensive Secondary Education") delineates a safe educational environment as a series of conditions within an educational institution that prevent physical, property, and/or moral harm to participants in the educational process. This encompasses harm resulting from non-compliance with sanitary, fire safety, and/or building codes and regulations; legislation on cybersecurity and personal data protection; food safety standards and/or the provision of substandard catering services. Furthermore, it is argued that the document prevents harm through physical and/or psychological violence, exploitation, discrimination on any grounds, and the violation of honor, dignity, or professional reputation (including bullying, the dissemination of false information, etc.), as well as propaganda and/or agitation, including via cyberspace. Furthermore, it is imperative that these conditions preclude the consumption of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, narcotic drugs, and psychotropic substances on the premises of the educational institution.

Concurrently, the notion of a "security environment" is conceptualised in diverse ways within the domain of scientific research. Specifically: "A security environment encompasses geopolitical, politico-diplomatic, military, information, and other spheres where favorable

conditions or dangerous phenomena, as well as potential and real threats to national interests, emerge, exist, escalate, or manifest. Within these spheres, the state implements its national security policy and interacts with international security structures, strategic partners, allies, and military-political or other institutions and organizations to ensure its sustainable development within a specified timeframe" (Bogdanovich et al. 2021, 34–35); "A security environment is the totality of external and internal relations between forces operating in all spheres of national security, as well as the conditions, factors, and circumstances that influence or may influence these relations in a certain way" (Bocharnikov & Sveshnikov 2019, 6-7); "A security environment is a set of factors relevant to a specific territory or the territory of Ukraine as a whole, which affect the level of protection of the civilian population, state authorities, local self-government bodies, and business entities in that territory" (Reznikova 2022, 15-16).

It is the contention of the present study that a **security environment** is constituted by a comprehensive array of objective and subjective factors that guarantee a stable state of protection for the individual, society and the state against actual and potential threats. Such an environment establishes the fundamental conditions for safe daily activities, learning, socialisation, and sustainable development.

Expanding upon this notion, a **safe educational environment** can be conceptualised as a specialised framework within the educational sphere. The framework encompasses objective and subjective factors that ensure the consistent protection of all participants from physical, psychological, social, and informational threats. Consequently, this fosters the necessary conditions for safe learning, upbringing, and holistic personality development.

The **police play a key role** in fostering a safe educational environment. They do this by implementing preventive, protective and educational measures designed to safeguard the lives, health and rights of everyone involved. The activities of the National Police of Ukraine (NPU) in this area are currently regulated by the Instruction on the Organisation of National Police Units to Ensure a Safe Educational Environment in General Secondary Education Institutions (GSEIs), which was approved by Order No. 663 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on October 1, 2024. The Instruction sets out the specific responsibilities of NPU units charged with implementing state school safety policies and protecting the legitimate interests of pupils and staff in general secondary education institutions.

Academic consensus identifies prevention as the cornerstone of the NPU's school-based operations. Currently, these duties are carried out jointly by juvenile prevention officers and NPU Educational Safety

Service Management (ESSM) personnel (Pogorilets, 2024, 116).

According to the Security Concept for Educational Institutions (enacted by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on April 7, 2023), (The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On the Approval of the Security Concept for Educational Institutions"), the cultivation of safety-related competencies among educational stakeholders is achieved through:

- Updating and refining the health and safety, civil protection and first aid curricula, as well as the education on citizens' rights, freedoms and duties. Implementing Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and integrating mental health awareness into the educational process and academic activities. The primary responsibility for these measures lies with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MESU), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and the National Police of Ukraine (NPU), in conjunction with educational institutions.
- The implementation of institutional programmes is designed to foster a culture of lawfulness among students, prevent conflicts and offences, and develop essential cyber safety skills. These initiatives are the responsibility of the MESU, MIA, NPU, regional and Kyiv City State (Military) Administrations, and educational institutions (by mutual agreement).

Furthermore, the implementation of the Concept (The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On the Approval of the Security Concept for Educational Institutions") will enhance the effectiveness of preventive measures to deter and mitigate offences within the educational environment. It will establish secure learning and teaching conditions, fostering a constructive interpersonal climate and contributing to the socio-emotional well-being of all those involved in the educational process. This approach aims to create a violence-free environment by implementing comprehensive prevention mechanisms and maintaining rigorous physical, psychological, informational and social safety standards for all participants.

Implementing the measures set out in the Concept (4. The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On the Approval of the Security Concept for Educational Institutions") will protect those involved in the educational process from threats resulting from Russia's armed aggression. Furthermore, it will guarantee the unhindered enjoyment of the right to education by providing safe and conducive conditions for learning and teaching.

In January 2024, training commenced for active-duty law enforcement officers assigned to serve in General Secondary Education Institutions (GSEIs) as part of the Educational Safety Service (ESS) Officers project. Following an official recruitment drive, dedicated ESS personnel underwent a rigorous selection process and intensive specialised training, and subsequently replaced these officers. The project is being implemented

at the initiative of the state leadership, in collaboration with Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the National Police. Its primary objective is to protect children in schools in the event of a full-scale war, and to create a secure environment for the post-war period (Police security guards will be deployed in 400 educational institutions. National Police of Ukraine 2024). The primary responsibility of an ESS officer is to ensure a secure educational environment within their established mandate. Their core functions include preventing emergencies proactively, managing access control protocols and engaging continuously with educational stakeholders. Officers also coordinate with emergency services, intervene personally in offences and escalate critical incidents to the National Police as necessary. Walk-through metal detectors will be installed in many schools to aid the detection of weapons and other prohibited items. Such measures are vital given that Ukraine currently has some of the highest levels of landmine and unexploded ordnance contamination in the world.

Furthermore, there is a significant presence of ammunition residue and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) in border regions and territories near the frontline. ESS officers engage continuously with all educational stakeholders and have the authority to propose strategic initiatives to reinforce the security framework of educational institutions. One of the most critical aspects of their work is communicating with children and conducting crime prevention activities (School safety officer – responsibilities and specifics of cooperation. Education Ombudsman 2024).

It is therefore the opinion of the authors that the strategic directions of NPU activity in ensuring a safe educational environment are as follows:

1. **Crime and offence prevention** (conducting preventive counseling and awareness sessions with students; providing educational outreach regarding the consequences of unlawful conduct; and identifying and mitigating environmental or social factors that may lead to offences within the institution).
2. **Incident response** (providing immediate intervention in instances of bullying, physical violence, or safety threats; liaising with the institution's administration to de-escalate and contain conflicts; and processing offence-related documentation in accordance with legal protocols).
3. **Ensuring physical security** (conducting perimeter patrols of the institution and its adjacent areas; enforcing access control measures to mitigate unauthorised entry; and contributing to the formulation of evacuation plans and emergency response protocols).
4. **Multi-agency co-operation** (maintaining a professional liaison with instructional staff, psychologists, and social services; coordinating efforts with parent-teacher associations; and participating in

“School and Police” partnership programmes to foster a collaborative safety culture).

5. Educational and instructional outreach (conducting safety seminars and workshops focused on preventing violence, substance abuse, and cyber threats; cultivating legal literacy and fostering a culture of social responsibility among students).

6. Conclusions

This study is based on a systematic review of scholarly literature and identifies the main ways in which police units ensure a safe educational environment.

1. The study shows that providing a safe educational environment in situations of armed conflict is a complex security task that goes beyond traditional law enforcement. This requires robust inter-agency coordination, given that martial law fundamentally redefines the nature, scope and strategic priorities of these police-led initiatives.

2. The analysis reveals that international models of school-based policing are highly diverse and multifaceted. While they encompass effective criminological practices, they also pose the risk of the disproportionate criminalisation of the school environment. This necessitates a critical appraisal and

adaptation of foreign frameworks to suit the unique context of armed conflict.

3. The study concludes that the national system for ensuring educational security is currently in the process of being formed institutionally, primarily characterised by the establishment of the Educational Safety Service and the formalisation of its regulatory framework. However, scholarly grounding remains fragmented, particularly with regard to the victimological and human rights dimensions of this security model.

4. In conclusion, ensuring a safe educational environment in Ukraine requires ongoing criminological, legal and economic research to balance security needs, children's rights, preventative measures and preserving human capital. Police participation in ensuring school safety should be viewed not only as a law enforcement activity, but also as a component of Ukraine's economic security. This is because it helps minimise socio-economic losses caused by war, supports the continuity of education and contributes to the resilience of local communities and the state's post-war recovery.

Acknowledgements. We thank all scholars and practitioners for their contributions to research in the field.

References:

- A Brief History of School-Based Law Enforcement. Texas School Safety Center. 31 March. 2018. <https://txssc.txstate.edu/>
- Berendeeva, A. I. (2024). Preventive activities of the National Police of Ukraine in educational institutions. *Legal Scientific Electronic Journal*, 2, 679–682. <https://doi.org/10.32782/2524-0374/2024-2/168>
- Bocharnikov, V. P., & Sveshnikov, S. V. (2019). Security environment 2030: monograph. Kyiv: Master of Books, 76 p.
- Bogdanovich, V. Yu., Ilyashov, O. A., Komarov, V. S., & Oleksiuk, V. V. (2021). Approach to assessing the security environment in the current conditions of armed conflict. *Collection of scientific works of the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies of the Ivan Chernyakhovsky National Defence University of Ukraine*, 2 (72), 33–38.
- Canady, M., James B., & Nease, J. (2012). To protect and educate the school resource officer and the prevention of violence in schools. Hoover, AL: National Association of School Resource Officers. <https://www.nasro.org/clientuploads/resources/NASRO-Protect-and-Educate.pdf>
- Chongmin Na & Denise C. Gottfredson (2013). Police Officers in Schools: Effects on School Crime and the Processing of Offending Behaviors. *Justice Quarterly*, 30(4), 619–650. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2011.615754>
- Criminalizing Children at School (2017). The New York Times. 2017. November 5. Retrieved April 16, 2018.
- Declaration on School Safety. GCPEA (2015). <https://is.gd/U2xCfd>
- Declaration on School Safety (2015). <https://mon.gov.ua/ministerstvo-2/diyalnist/mizhnarodna-spivpratsya-2/deklaratsiya-pro-bezpeku-shkil>
- Development of a model for assessing the effectiveness of the National Police of Ukraine in ensuring a secure environment at the national, regional and local levels: methodological recommendations / V. L. Kostyuk, A. O. Shapovalova, V. G. Syravchik et al. Kyiv: National Academy of Internal Affairs, 2024. 70 p.
- Devlin, D. N., & Gottfredson, D. C. (2018a). The roles of police officers in schools: Effects on the recording and reporting of crime. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 16(2), 208–223.
- Fisher, B., Petrosino, A., Sutherland, H., Guckenburger, S., Fronius, T., Benitez, I., & Earl, K. (2023). School-based law enforcement strategies to reduce crime, increase perceptions of safety, and improve learning outcomes in primary and secondary schools. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 19(4). November. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1360>
- Garuk, I. (2024). Creating a safe space for participants in the educational process as a top priority in wartime. Education in conditions of martial law in Ukraine: psychological and pedagogical aspects: collection of materials

- from a scientific and practical conference [ed. by V. I. Ocheretyanko (chief) et al.]. Khmelnytskyi: A. Nazarenko Khmelnytskyi Regional Institute of Postgraduate Education, 63–69. https://hoippo.km.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Збірник_конференція-психолого-педагогічна_7.12.2023.pdf
- Gottfredson, D. C., Crosse, S., Tang, Z., Bauer, E. L., Harmon, M. A., Hagen, C. A., & Greene, A. D. (2020). Effects of school resource officers on school crime and responses to school crime. Cutting-edge research in police policy and practice. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 1–36. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12512>
- Green, J. G., Morabito, M. S., Savage, J., Goodman, N., Lincoln, E., Lanciani, J., Carroll, M., Kaler, L., Cooper, C., Norton, M., Vasquez, G., & Muller, R. (2023). Reasons police respond in schools: An analysis of narrative data from police incident reports. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. Elsevier. October. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106350>
- Hirschfield, P. J., Deakin, J., Taylor, E., & Kupchik, A. (2018). Trends in school social control in the United States: Explaining patterns of decriminalization. *Handbook of school security, surveillance, and punishment*. P. 43–64.
- Homer & Fisher (2019). Police in schools and student arrest rates across the United States: Examining differences by race, ethnicity, and gender. *Journal of School Violence*, 19(4), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2019.1604377>
- Hong MY, Mi Yung Goo, J Goo Jiyeon (2024). The significance of school bullying prevention program: a narrative inquiry from the perspective of a school police officer at a Youth Police Academy in Korea. *Frontiers in education*. Vol. 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2024.1408275>
- Ischenko, I. V. (2018). Problems and achievements in the organisation of the work of the juvenile prevention units of the National Police of Ukraine. *Legal Journal of Donbas*, 3 (64), 94–99.
- Jackson, D. B. et al. (2019) Police stops among at-risk youth: Repercussions for mental health. *Journal of Adolescent Health*.
- Jackson, D. B. et al. (2021). Unpacking racial/ethnic disparities in emotional distress among adolescents during witnessed police stops. *Journal of Adolescent Health*.
- Mann, A., Whitaker, A., Torres-Gullien, S., Morton, M., Jordan, H., Coyle, S., & Sun, W. L. (2019). Cops & no counselors: How the lack of school mental health staff is harming students. <https://www.aclu.org/report/cops-and-no-counselors>
- McDevitt, J. & Panniello, J. (2005). National assessment of school resource officer programs: Survey of students in three large SRO programs. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/209270.pdf>
- Na, C. & Gottfredson, D. C. (2013). Police officers in schools: Effects on school crime and the processing of offending behaviors. *Justice Quarterly*, 30 (4), 619–650. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2011.615754>
- The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On the Approval of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Declaration on School Safety" of 04.08.2021, No. 898-p. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/898-2021-p#Text>
- The Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine "On the Approval of the Instructions on the Organisation of the Work of Units of the National Police of Ukraine to Ensure a Safe Educational Environment in General Secondary Education Institutions" of 01.10.2024, No. 663. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1590-24#Text>
- The Law of Ukraine "On Comprehensive Secondary Education" of January 16, 2020, No. 463-IX. Date of update: 16.03.2025. The Official Bulletin of the Verkhovna Rada (BVR), 2020, No. 31, Art. 226. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/463-20#Text>
- The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On the Approval of the Security Concept for Educational Institutions" dated 07.04.2023 No. 301-p. Date of update: 07.03.2025. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/301-2023-p#Text>
- The Decree of the President of Ukraine "On the National Strategy for the Development of a Safe and Healthy Educational Environment in the New Ukrainian School" of 25.04.2020, No. 195/2020. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/195/2020#Text>
- Participation of the National Police of Ukraine in ensuring a safe educational environment in general secondary education institutions: methodological recommendations / V. G. Syuravchik, S. G. Bratel, I. A. Gorbach-Kudria, I. D. Pastukh, O. V. Maksimenko. Kyiv: National Academy of Internal Affairs, 2025. 55 p. <https://elar.navs.edu.ua/handle/123456789/37139>
- Pogorilets, O. V. (2024). Implementation of the administrative and legal status of the National Police of Ukraine units in ensuring safety in the educational environment. *Knowledge, Education, Law, Management*, 2 (62), 115–120.
- Police Foundation. Defining the role of school-based police officers (pdf). Archive of the original (PDF) for February 13, 2018. https://www.policinginstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/PF_IssueBriefs_Defining-the-Role-of-School-Based-Police-Officers_FINAL.pdf
- Police security guards will be deployed in 400 educational institutions. National Police of Ukraine. Published on 16 January 2024. Government portal. <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/u-400-zakladakh-osvity-ziavytsia-politseiska-varta-bezpeky>
- Police security in schools – duties and features of cooperation. Education Ombudsman. 2024, 30 January. <https://eo.gov.ua/politseyskyy-bezpeky-u-shkoli-obov-iazky-ta-osoblyvosti-spivpratsi/2024/01/30/>

- Raymond, B. (2010). Assigning police officers to schools. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-p182-pub.pdf>
- Reznikova, O. O. (2022). National resilience in a changing security environment: monograph. Kyiv: NISD, p. 15.
- Televna, V. (2025). Administrative and legal status of the educational security service of the National Police of Ukraine. *Scientific Bulletin of the Dnipro State University of Internal Affairs*, 1, 331–336. <https://doi.org/10.32782/2078-3566-2025-1-42>
- Trustees Vote to End School Resource Officer Program at TDSB (2018). Toronto District School Board. 2018.
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: International document dated 20.11.1989. Date of update: 16.11.2023. https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_021#Text
- Zelensky, E. S. (2024). The role of the National Police in ensuring children's rights during the legal regime of martial law in Ukraine. *Analytical and Comparative Law*, 2, 452–456. <https://doi.org/10.24144/2788-6018.2024.02.76>
- Zelensky, E. S., Karpenko, O. M. (2021). Administrative and legal status of juvenile prevention units of the National Police of Ukraine. *Public Law*, 1 (41), 63–70.

Received on: 25th of February, 2026

Accepted on: 29th of April, 2026

Published on: 29th of May, 2026