



HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC

District School Board

Anti-Sex Trafficking

Adopted:	August 28, 2023	Policy #:	P 2.1.11.
Revised:		Policy Category:	2.1. School Operations

BELIEF STATEMENT:

The Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board believes that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and are to be treated with dignity and respect. Consistent with the Catholic world-view to act morally and legally (formed in Catholic traditions), we commit ourselves to practices that help to ensure the safety of our students.

“It is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ. It is a crime against humanity”. Pope Francis

POLICY STATEMENT:

It is the policy of the Board to raise awareness and endeavour to protect children from sex trafficking. It is the policy of the Board that procedures be set out to help create conditions to ensure the safety of our students from sex trafficking that include training, response plans and opportunities to measure success.

PROCEDURE:

1.0 STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS & TRAINING FOR SCHOOL BOARD EMPLOYEES

1.1 District

The district shall:

- Post this protocol on the Board’s website;
- Provide resources to schools and Regional Parent Involvement Council to use in order to raise awareness (Section 1.2 & 1.3);
- Provide schools with resources for use with staff and students to help prevent recruitment of students for sex trafficking, including through curriculum-based learning about healthy relationships, consent, mental health and well-being, coping skills, personal safety and online safety, as well as through work with local community-based organizations and survivors; and
- Use available technology and tools to identify and deter potential situations involving students who could be at risk of sex trafficking and other online threats, while using school board-provided technology.

The district shall develop training for employees that includes:

- Key definitions, common misconceptions and myths about sex trafficking, including tactics used for online luring, grooming and recruitment;

- Learning about human rights-based approaches to combating sex trafficking, including the application of an equity lens, anti-racism, a gender-based lens, trauma-informed approaches and Indigenous cultural competencies;
- Information on protective factors and prevention-focused supports and resources;
- Information on risk factors and signs that a student is at risk, being lured, groomed or trafficked;
- Signs that a student is or involved in luring, grooming or trafficking others;
- Response procedures, including the duty to report, how to handle disclosures to support students' safety, how to support students impacted by sex trafficking and how to share information to ensure privacy and confidentiality;
- Supports available to students and affected staff, including culturally responsive supports;
- Additional training resources to support staff to understand and safely respond to sex trafficking;
- Roles and responsibilities of school board employees in raising awareness, identifying and responding to sex trafficking;
- Tracking throughout the year to all new and existing school board employees; and
- Regular updates to stay current with emerging issues relating to trafficking and changes in community services and response.

1.2 Regional Parent Involvement Council

Regional Parent Involvement Council shall develop and implement a plan to raise awareness among parents through local Catholic School Advisory Councils about:

- Cyber-safety (as it relates to sex trafficking);
- The signs that a student is being targeted, lured, groomed, trafficked or is trafficking another student; how to get help safely (for example, through the school board, community providers and/or support hotline); and
- How they can report concerns to the school board (including anonymous reporting) and the school board's process for responding to concerns.

1.3 Schools (Intermediate/Senior Division)

Schools shall:

- Raise awareness among students on the signs a student is being targeted, lured, groomed, trafficked or is trafficking another student. Awareness strategies could involve sending letters or emails, providing information in a student handbook, displaying posters, hosting information sessions, posting on the school/school board social media accounts, and/or posting information on the school board website. Schools may want to include the phone number for the [Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline](#) to raise awareness about the supports and referrals it offers; and
- Implement a mechanism for students to bring concerns about luring, grooming, recruitment or exiting sex trafficking to the school without fear of reprisal. The process should allow for concerns to be brought forward anonymously.

2.0 RESPONSE PROCEDURES

2.1 Identification and Referral

When an employee believes that a student may be at risk of, or is being sex trafficked or may be targeting, luring, grooming or recruiting children and youth for the purpose of sex trafficking they shall report the matter to the school principal.³ The school principal shall, upon receiving the information convene a meeting of the school team (see Definitions) to develop and implement a Response Plan (Appendix B).⁴ The

Principal shall report these matters to Child and Youth Family Services in accordance with the [Child, Youth and Family Services Act](#).⁵

2.2 Elements of the Response Plan

2.2.1 Elements of the response plan (Appendix B) shall consider the needs of the following students:

- Students with special education needs, mental health needs, social or emotional needs or language/cultural barriers, and international students;
- Students who are in care, receiving care or in customary care arrangements;
- Students who are being trafficked and who may be involved in the recruiting of other victims, including students who are returning to school after they have been involved in a trafficking situation;
- Students whose parents, including those who may live overseas and/or may not speak English or French; and
- Students 18 years or older, or who are 16 or 17 years old and have withdrawn from parental control.

2.2.2 The Response Plan (Appendix B) shall consider the following elements:

- Integration of the Statement of Principles (Appendix A) where applicable;
- Support for all affected students (including those indirectly affected, as needed);
- Supports that are trauma-informed and culturally responsive;
- Communication and collaboration with community-based service providers, local police services, local Children's Aid Societies and Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agencies, as applicable and/or required by law, in responding to situations of suspected or confirmed sex trafficking of students;
- Consideration of sex trafficking recruitment by a student within the school, including appropriate interventions, supports and/or consequences, as applicable;
- Monitoring and follow-up on incidents reported (for example, check-ins with affected students); and
- Documentation of suspected or reported sex trafficking situations and response procedures that were implemented.

2.3 Re-entering School

When an employee believes that a student may be returning to school after they have been involved in a trafficking situation, they shall report the matter to the school principal who shall convene a meeting of the school team to develop a plan to support effective reintegration. The principal shall, in consultation with the school team, develop a Reintegration Plan (Appendix C).

2.3.1 Elements of the Reintegration Plan shall consider:

- Integration of the Statement of Principles (Appendix A) where applicable;
- Integration of Response Plans in place for the individual (s) involved;
- Adequate safety and security needs to support reintegration into school;
- Notifying appropriate school/school board contacts and parents/guardians, as applicable;
- Referring all affected students (including those indirectly affected, as needed) to support;
- Responding to possible sex trafficking recruitment by a student within the school, including appropriate interventions, supports and/or consequences, as applicable;

- Monitoring and following-up on incidents reported (for example, check-ins with affected students); and
- Culturally-responsive and trauma-informed support.

3.0 MEASURING SUCCESS,

- The Ministry of Education will provide support for the review of the school board's anti-sex trafficking protocol and offer advice and suggestions, as requested by individual boards.
- The Ministry of Education will facilitate a community of practice to support implementation and review of school board anti-sex trafficking protocols.
- The Ministry of Education will collaborate with school boards, as well as anti-human trafficking partners, to develop a performance measurement framework. This framework will monitor the effectiveness of training (for example, whether staff feel they are more aware and more able to safely identify and intervene in situations where a student is suspected of being trafficked or trafficking) and whether the protocols respond to the needs of students.

DEFINITIONS:

Anti-racism - Anti-racism is a process, a systematic method of analysis, and a proactive course of action rooted in the recognition of the existence of racism, including systemic racism. Anti-racism actively seeks to identify, remove, prevent and mitigate racially inequitable outcomes and power imbalances between groups and change the structures that sustain inequities.²

Cultural responsiveness - “Extends beyond language to include a much larger set of professional attitudes, knowledge, behaviours and practices, and organizational policies, standards and performance management mechanisms to ensure responsiveness to the diversity of [students] who walk through [schools’] doors.”²

Cultural safety - Refers to “an environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience of learning together.”²

Equity lens - Involves “strategically, intentionally and holistically examining the impact of an issue, policy or proposed solution on underserved and historically marginalized communities and population subgroups, with the goal of leveraging research findings to inform policy.”²

Human rights-based approach - A “conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyze inequalities which lie at the heart of development problems and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress.”²

Survivor - Used to refer to an individual who has escaped a trafficking situation, whereas victim is used to refer to an individual who is in the process of being recruited or is being trafficked. The term survivor may also be used to refer to an adult with lived experience of being trafficking. This approach is used for clarity and not intended to label or define an individual's experience. Individuals who have experienced sex trafficking may prefer one term over another in order to describe their experiences. School board employees should confirm how an individual impacted by trafficking prefers to be referenced.²

Tactics - Traffickers may use a range of tactics to target, recruit, manipulate and coerce victims. This can often involve a process of targeting an individual's vulnerabilities then luring, grooming, isolating, manipulating, controlling and exploiting a victim to then conduct sexual acts (for example, forcing a victim to have sex, to take images of child sexual abuse). Often, a victim may not be aware that exploitation is happening, and victims may be forced to recruit other victims.²

Trauma-informed approaches - Are “policies and practices that recognize the connections between violence, trauma, negative health outcomes and behaviours. These approaches increase safety, control and resilience for people who are seeking services in relation to experiences of violence and/or have a history of experiencing violence.” ²

Victim - Used to refer to an individual who is in the process of being recruited or is being trafficked, whereas survivor is used to refer to an individual who has escaped a trafficking situation. The term victim is often used to refer to a child who has experienced sexual exploitation. This approach is used for clarity and not intended to label or define an individual's experience. Individuals who have experienced sex trafficking may prefer one term over another in order to describe their experiences. School board employees should confirm how an individual impacted by trafficking prefers to be referenced.²

School Team - The school principal and any person deemed necessary to support the student. Team members shall include the Mental Health Lead and police services and may include Student Success Teachers, Guidance Teachers, Special Education Resource Teachers, Supervisory Officers, Mental Health and Wellness Coaches, SEL Coaches, Indigenous Education Resource Teachers, the Board Equity Lead and representatives from community services (e.g. Family and Children's Services).

REFERENCES:

- PPM 166 Ministry of Education accountability and evaluation commitments.
- PPM 166 definitions.
- Board employees shall respect confidentiality and ensure that the students fully understand how their information may be used or with whom it may be shared. It is key to develop referral relationships with community service organizations while adhering to applicable legal requirements, including those under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act; the Ontario Human Rights Code; the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005; the Education Act; and the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017.
- Guidance on the requirements related to the duty to report a child in need of protection under Section 125(1) of the [Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2021](#) and under [Policy/Program Memorandum 9: Duty to Report Children in Need of Protection](#).
- [Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2021](#)
 - Under the age of 16
 - There is a duty to report to the Children's Aid Society when a child under the age of 16 has been trafficked.
 - Over the age of 16
 - A person may, but is not required, to make a report to a Children's Aid Society if they suspect that a 16 or 17 year-old has been, or is at risk, of being trafficked. Consult with the Superintendent and the Mental Health Lead.

RESOURCES, APPENDICES AND FORMS:

- Appendix A - Integration of the Statement of Principles
- Appendix B - Response Plan
- Appendix C - Reintegration Plan