

Title: **ANTI SEX TRAFFICKING**

Adopted: February 2022

Revised:

Related Documents: Policy SHSM 012 Anti Sex Trafficking
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/anti-human-trafficking-services-and-supports#section-1>
Human Trafficking: Foundational Information for School Boards (Appendix B)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide details on actions to be taken regarding awareness, training and response to suspected occurrences of sex trafficking.

BACKGROUND

Sex trafficking is a form of sexual exploitation and is a crime in Canada. It can include recruiting, harbouring, transporting, obtaining or providing a person for the purpose of sex. It involves the use of force, physical or psychological manipulation or deception. Most individuals who are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation are women and girls, but all genders may be targeted.

PROCEDURES

- 1) The Authority has developed materials (both physical and on-line) which outline processes to raise awareness among staff, students, parents and caregivers about:
 - The signs that a student is being targeted, lured, groomed, trafficked or is trafficking another student
 - How a student who is targeted, lured, groomed or trafficked can get help safely (for example, through the school Principal/Vice Principal, community providers and/or support hotline)
 - How students can report concerns to the Principal/Vice Principal (including anonymous reporting)
 - The Authority's process for responding to concerns
 - Information on culturally responsive and trauma-informed personal supports available to school board employees responding to sex trafficking situations.

- 2) The Authority staff has incorporated into the program activities developed 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.

- 3) Consideration is also given regarding the use of 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.
- 4) Awareness strategies could include:
 - Sending letters or emails,
 - Providing information in a parent handbook
 - Displaying posters,
 - Posting on the school social media accounts,
 - and/or posting information on the school board website.
 - Posting the phone number for the [Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline](#) to raise awareness about the supports and referrals it offers.

Response procedures

- 1) All Authority employees must act accordingly and immediately in any situations where:
 - They are concerned that a student may be at risk of or is being sex trafficked
 - They are concerned that a student may be targeting, luring, grooming or recruiting children and youth for the purpose of sex trafficking
 - A student is returning to school after they have been trafficked or involved in trafficking others
- 2) Responses must address the needs of, among others:
 - 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
 - Parents, including those who may live overseas and/or may not speak English or French
 - Students 18 years or older or who are 16 or 17 years old and have withdrawn from parental control
- 3) Response procedures must be trauma-informed and culturally responsive
- 4) For any situation in which a response is required (see #2 above) Authority staff members must:
 - Inform the Principal or Vice-Principal as the designated contact person. They are familiar with the Authority's anti-sex trafficking procedures and can support school board employees with response procedures.
 - Inform the Principal or Vice-Principal of any situations where a student may be at risk of or is being sex trafficked. The discussion should include steps for safely reporting concerns, responding to disclosures and supporting the student's immediate physical and emotional safety.

- Inform Principal or Vice-Principal of any situations where a student may be engaged in the trafficking of others. The discussion should include steps for safely reporting concerns, responding to disclosures and supporting students' immediate physical and emotional safety.
- The Principal or Vice-Principal shall develop a plan, as needed, for responding to and supporting students re-entering school after they have been involved in a trafficking situation, including efforts to ensure that adequate safety and security needs are being met to support re-integration into school.
- All staff involved in these situations shall be advised of the legislated privacy and confidentiality requirements when responding to a suspected or confirmed instance of sex trafficking.
- For any of the above situations, the Principal or Vice-Principal shall be informed both verbally and in writing (using the Health and Safety Concern Form). The Parents/guardians will be informed by the Principal or Vice-Principal as appropriate.
- The Principal or Vice-Principal will communicate and collaborate 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.
- The Principal or Vice-Principal will refer all affected students (including those indirectly affected, as needed) to supports which are available.
- The Principal or Vice-Principal will provide direction on the approach to responding to possible sex trafficking recruitment by a student within the school, including appropriate interventions, supports and/or consequences, as applicable. Expectations should be consistent with the school board policy on progressive discipline and the mitigating circumstances that must be considered when determining the intervention, consequences or supports. Information in the student's Individual Education Plan must be considered.
- The Principal or Vice-Principal will provide direction on monitoring and following-up on incidents reported (for example, check-ins with affected students).
- The Principal or Vice-Principal will maintain all documentation on suspected or reported sex trafficking situations and response procedures that were implemented.

Training for school board employees

- 1) Annually a PD Day, early in the school year, will include the provision of training for all school staff. Such training shall include the following elements:
 - a. Key definitions, common misconceptions and myths about sex trafficking, including tactics used for online luring, grooming and recruitment.
 - b. Learning about human rights-based approaches to combatting sex trafficking, including the application of an equity lens, anti-racism, a gender-based lens, trauma-informed approaches and Indigenous cultural competencies.
 - c. Information on protective factors and prevention-focused supports and resources
 - d. Information on risk factors and signs that a student is at risk, being lured, groomed or trafficked
 - e. Signs that a student is or involved in luring, grooming or trafficking others
 - f. 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.
- g. Supports available to students and affected staff, including culturally responsive supports.
 - h. Additional training resources to support staff to understand and safely respond to sex trafficking.
 - i. Roles and responsibilities of Authority staff in raising awareness, identifying and responding to sex trafficking
- 2) The training must be tracked and be available throughout the year to all new and existing school board employees.
 - 3) The training must be updated and delivered regularly to stay current with emerging issues relating to trafficking and changes in community services and response.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Progressive discipline - The goal of these procedures, with respect to progressive discipline, is to support a safe learning and teaching environment in which every pupil can reach his or her full potential. It should be noted that all students at Bloorview School should be considered as experiencing mitigating circumstances.
- “Progressive discipline is a whole-school approach that utilizes a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour and to build upon strategies that promote and foster positive behaviours. When inappropriate behaviour occurs, disciplinary measures should be applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive. Schools should utilize a range of interventions, supports, and consequences that are developmentally and socio-emotionally appropriate and include learning opportunities for reinforcing positive behaviour while helping students to make better choices.” (PPM 145).
- Policy SHSM (12 Anti Sex trafficking) and these related procedures must publicly available and accessible on the Authority’s website.
- All processes shall include approaches to overcome barriers to participation that Indigenous, Black, newcomer and other parents/guardians may face
- 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, 2017* and under *Policy/Program Memorandum 9: Duty to Report Children in Need of Protection*.

Appendix A
INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Recruiting

- Trafficker’s approach and groom vulnerable children and youth by fulfilling their unmet needs – such as love, affection, a sense of belonging and other basic needs like housing or food security – and/or by using threats, physical violence and control
- Traffickers can use different ways such as becoming friends with youth online and luring/hooking them through promises of love, friendship, money, fame and more
- Youth can come from rural communities to bigger cities, or can be trafficked within their own cities.
- Many youth are lured in with false promises of security, love and acceptance.
- Many victims do not have prior addictions, nor are they working in the sex industry prior to exploitation.
- Trafficking affects more females, but boys and men are also trafficked
- Although males make up the larger part of traffickers, 30 per cent of offenders have been found to be women
- It is not true that only females are trafficked nor is it true that only men can be traffickers.
- It is not true that sex trafficking only happens in less developed countries. Sex trafficking happens in most major cities in Canada. Ontario is a hub
- Children and youth are among those most at risk of being targeted by sex traffickers. The average age of recruitment into sex trafficking in Canada is just 13 years old.

How Sex Traffickers Target People

Traffickers target people who are vulnerable and marginalized, although anyone can be a victim.

People who are at higher risk of being sex trafficked are

- Women and girls (though boys, men and people who identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+ are also targeted) - Students who are 2SLGBTQ+ experience high rates of bullying, assaults and sexual abuse, and they may face isolation and experience homelessness if they are rejected from their family or the community.
- Homeless and/or marginalized youth
- Youth who struggle with self-esteem, and/or are experiencing bullying, discrimination, poverty, abuse, isolation and other social or family issues
- Indigenous and racialized women and girls - Indigenous peoples are especially vulnerable to sex trafficking due to historic and ongoing systemic discrimination, including intergenerational trauma resulting from residential schools.
- People with addictions or mental illness
- Poverty
- Involvement in the child welfare system, or transitioning out of care
- Physical or developmental disability - Students with disabilities may experience bullying and isolation in addition to having difficulty understanding the intentions of others.
- History of childhood physical or sexual abuse, trauma
- Addiction(s)

- Family conflict
- Lack of self-esteem or sense of belonging
- Systemic discrimination - Systemic racism and discrimination have led to a higher number of Indigenous and Black children and youth in care than other populations being targeted.
- Language barriers, isolation, economic disadvantage, or a lack of community and social supports may leave newcomer youth with increased vulnerability to trafficking.

How recruitment into sex trafficking can happen

Sex traffickers purposely develop a bond with the person they are trafficking and manipulate them by making them believe they are better off staying than leaving. This bond is developed in stages, over time.

- **Luring** -The sex trafficker can be a stranger, someone connected to the victim through social media or someone they know personally. The trafficker may suddenly be very interested in the victim, say nice things, take them out and spend money on them.
- **Grooming** - The sex trafficker may act like a generous boyfriend or friend, make the victim feel adored and spend money on things like lingerie, accessories and new clothes. They may also try to get the victim to look older or sexier and push their boundaries by trying out risky behaviours, such as trying drugs or alcohol, missing school or other extracurricular activities and taking sexually explicit photos.
- **Isolation** - The sex trafficker may try to distance the victim from friends and family, and make the victim feel like they are the only person who cares about them. This helps the trafficker assert control.
- **Manipulation** - At some point the sex trafficker will ask the victim to do sexual things with them or others to “repay” them for the money that has been spent on them, to maintain their new lifestyle or to earn money for their future together. The sex trafficker may also tell the victim that the victim owes someone money and something bad will happen to them if they don’t do what the trafficker wants.
- **Threats** - The sex trafficker may try to coerce the victim into sex by threatening to expose the things (e.g., explicit photographs) that they’ve done to others. They may also threaten to hurt the victim or someone they care about.
- **Exploitation** - The sex trafficker’s main goal is to control and exploit the victim by forcing them to have sex in exchange for things they need, want or for money. Traffickers may abuse a relationship of trust, authority or dependency with the victim in order to exploit them. If the victim tries to say no, the trafficker may threaten to harm them or someone they care about. Often times the victim is not fully aware that coercion and threatening behaviour is happening because they are communicated in covert ways.

When someone is being trafficked, their traffickers often control every aspect of their life, including when they eat and sleep, what they wear and who they talk to. People who are being trafficked and people who come into contact with them, may not know or understand that a crime is taking place.

Warning Signs

Early intervention is critical in preventing sex trafficking before it happens. Changes in behaviour, physical appearance, belongings and relationships with family and friends can be signs that someone might be a victim of sex trafficking. Warning signs to watch for include:

a) Behaviours and activities:

- Are repeatedly missing from home and/or have been frequently reported missing to police
- Are being secretive about their activities
- Begin staying out more often and later
- Are absent from school or there is a decline in school performance
- Use new or increased methods of transportation, such as taxis, ride-hailing or sharing applications
- Are not allowed to speak for themselves and their activities are controlled by someone else
- Seem fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, nervous or paranoid (they may avoid eye contact or seem fearful around police)
- Move frequently and may not know their surroundings well
- Are repaying a large debt through sex (including sexual imagery/filming)
- Withdrawal from social activities
- A noticeable change in behaviour (i.e., Is tense/hyper vigilant, nervous or anxious)
- Change in lingo i.e., 'telly time' or 'being in the game'
- Makes references to boyfriend (often older) as "daddy" or self as "mama or baby"
- Increased drug/alcohol use

b) Relationships with family or friends:

- Are withdrawing or isolating from family and friends
- Have a new boyfriend, girlfriend or friend who they won't introduce to friends and family
- Suddenly spend time with an older person or people

c) Physical appearance and belongings:

- Begin wearing more sexualized clothing
- Have new clothing and jewelry that they can't afford to buy
- Show signs of physical abuse, such as bruising, cigarette burns or fractures
- Have tattooing or branding symbols, particularly names
- Don't have their own belongings or money, and don't control their own passport or other documents
- Seem malnourished or lack medical care
- Carries one or more cell phones with blocked/private phone numbers

Cyber Safety

Cyber-safety is about setting clear expectations with your child around online use. Students need to be made aware of the risks of certain apps and how to protect themselves from unwanted contact, as well, as who to turn to when they suspect they may be at risk.

Families and schools are encouraged to continue to work together to educate students about both the positive and negative potentials of the internet, including the harmful effects of violent sexually explicit images.

Popular social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, POF, sugar daddy websites) are new ways traffickers target their victims.

Responding to a Concern.

Experts advise the following:

- Listen to your child/student without judgement or blame.
- Try to understand some of the choices your child makes and the pressures they are experiencing, even if you don't understand them.
- Be aware of and softening your body language
- Use their language e.g., if they say “boyfriend,” use this term.
- Let them take the lead in sharing, avoid leading the conversation.
- Contact the child’s/student’s principal with your concerns.
- Look for organizations in your community that have outreach programs.

Resources

[Boost Child and Youth Advocacy Centre](#)

[Covenant House](#)

[Strides Toronto](#)

[Elspeth Heyworth Centre for Women](#)

[FCJ Refugee Centre](#)

[Montage Support Services](#)

[Project iRise](#)

[SickKids Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Program](#)

[Native Child and Family Services of Toronto](#)