



Title: **ANTI-SEX TRAFFICKING**

Adopted: February 2022

Reviewed:

Revised:

Authorization: PPM 166

Related: Procedure HS #6 Anti Sex Trafficking
Policy SHSM 001 Dealing With Abuse and Neglect
Procedure HS #1 Abuse and Neglect of Students
Workplace Harassment Policy (HR.001)

POLICY

It is the policy of the Bloorview School Authority that all staff and volunteers will respond immediately to any suspected occurrence of sex trafficking in keeping with the plans described in this policy and accompanying procedures. The core components of this plan are in place to protect students and empower the school community to play a key role in fighting sex trafficking and keeping children and youth safe from sexual exploitation.

The Authority is committed to the implementation of measures and procedures for the prevention and elimination of sex trafficking.

Instruction or training about this policy and the accompanying procedures will occur annually. Such training will include a review of these materials and will make reference to any available on-line modules or references.

BACKGROUND

1. Sex trafficking is one of the fastest growing and most lucrative crimes worldwide. It is predatory and devastatingly damaging to victims, survivors, their families and communities. Sex trafficking can include recruiting, harbouring or controlling a person's movements using force, physical or psychological coercion or deception.
2. Sex trafficking is a form of sexual exploitation and is a crime under the *Criminal Code of 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 coercion or deception. Most individuals who are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation are women and girls, but all people may be targeted.

3. School-aged children and youth are prime targets for traffickers for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Students face a multitude of diverse and intersecting factors that increase their vulnerability to violence and harm. They may have difficulty identifying warning signs of sex trafficking, recognizing when they may be in danger and knowing how to seek help.
4. Due to almost daily contact with students, teachers and other education staff are well placed to educate on prevention and promote healthy relationships, notice troubling changes in behaviour, and connect with students as caring adults. Trained staff will be better equipped to identify the cues and safely intervene if they suspect a student is being trafficked or involved in trafficking.
5. Education can also serve as a key factor in helping survivors of trafficking heal and rebuild their lives, helping to prevent re-victimization and resetting students on a healing trajectory towards positive outcomes.
6. Education staff can spot the warning signs and safely connect those who are, have been or are at risk of being trafficked to the appropriate supports and culturally responsive community programs and services.
7. The Ministry of Education's policy framework builds on the updated Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum for Grades 1 to 8. In grades 1 to 3, students start to learn skills to identify, develop and maintain healthy relationships, to identify and respond to exploitative and coercive behaviour, and how to seek help as needed. These skills help protect students from sex trafficking by teaching them to identify when they are in an unsafe situation. In Grades 4 to 8 students continue to develop the skills they need to stay safe (in person and online), and how to help themselves and others. Students also learn about the impacts of sexually explicit media, including pornography. In every grade, students learn about consent, healthy relationships, and online safety, building foundational skills that support safe, healthy relationships throughout their lives.
8. Technology and the internet are increasingly playing a role in the practices and processes that enable sex trafficking. With students spending more unsupervised time online, social media platforms, applications and other online tools are increasingly being used by traffickers and other sexual predators to lure, groom, and recruit young for the purposes of sexual exploitation.
9. Some groups are at increased risk of being trafficked.
 - Systemic racism and discrimination have led to a disproportionate number of Indigenous and Black children and youth in care, which can lead to a lack of consistent relationships with caring adults and peers in schools.
 - Indigenous peoples are especially vulnerable to sex trafficking due to historic and ongoing systemic discrimination, First Nation youth transitioning from remote Northern communities to schools in urban centres can also face increased safety risks.
 - Language barriers, isolation, economic disadvantage or a lack of community and social supports may leave newcomer youth with increased vulnerability to trafficking.

- Students with disabilities may experience bullying and isolation in addition to having difficulty understanding the intentions of others.
- Students who are 2SLGBTQQA experience high rates of bullying, assaults and sexual abuse, and they may face isolation or displacement if they experience rejection from their family or the community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Parents, guardians and caregivers are key partners in the development, implementation and review of the Authority's anti-sex trafficking protocols. Care must be given when reaching out to parents, families and caregivers to ensure they are safe adults prior to engaging with them on matters regarding the students.
2. School-aged children and youth will benefit from early intervention to reduce their vulnerability to sex trafficking and from connections to supports and help to rebuild their lives.
3. The Authority and its employees recognize that the best way to protect students from exposure to sex trafficking is to reduce the threat and to increase the vigilance
4. There is a shared responsibility for the prevention of sex trafficking. Every Authority employee regardless of job title has a direct responsibility and accountability for violence prevention as an essential part of his or her job.
5. Students are at the centre of this work and should be involved in efforts to develop actions against sex trafficking.
6. Ongoing consultation and engagement with community groups/agencies that support members of the school community is essential to supporting anti-sex trafficking approaches that are responsive to diverse students and the needs of local school communities.
7. This policy and the accompanying procedures will complement existing prevention efforts in schools, including the teaching of consent, healthy relationships and healthy sexuality.
8. The development of procedures must respect confidentiality and ensure that the student fully understands 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*.

9. This policy and the accompanying procedures demonstrate a human rights-based, non-judgmental, culturally responsive, survivor-centered and trauma-informed approach to raising awareness, preventing, identifying and responding to sex trafficking

Additional Notes

1. Historical and ongoing trauma with the education system can be a barrier to the meaningful participation of Indigenous parents, caregivers, and communities. The Authority will consider specific outreach and supports to Indigenous parents and caregivers, as well as groups that are disproportionately impacted by trafficking, to build their awareness and participation.
2. The Authority will collaborate with local school boards, the hospital, community groups and local police services, in order to facilitate information-sharing and a coordinated response. safe and equitable approach to the protocol.
3. The Authority staff should build on existing local multi-sectoral processes that may have been established to respond to sex trafficking. This might include local anti sex trafficking committees, local situation tables and processes with victim services, sexual assault centres, youth shelters, public health units and other community-based organizations.
4. Consideration may also be given to aligning with and leveraging local community safety and well-being planning efforts, such as community consultations, planning advisory committees or action teams, as well as sex trafficking strategies or programs that have been identified and/or implemented through a local community safety and well-being plan.

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

2SLGBTQQIA: Refers to two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual.

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.

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.

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.”

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.”

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.”

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.

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.

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.”

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.