

Keeping Students Safe: Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocol

The Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) is committed to promoting student safety by building a culture of caring and taking meaningful, culturally responsive and consistent action to prevent and respond to issues of student safety. We will work to protect students with specific attention and focus on vulnerable, at-risk and marginalized students by empowering school communities to play a key role in fighting sex trafficking and keeping children and youth safe from sexual exploitation.

Due to almost daily contact with students, teachers and other education workers are well placed to educate on prevention and promote healthy relationships, notice troubling changes in behaviour, and connect with students as caring adults. By training staff to recognize the signs of sex trafficking, they will be better equipped to identify the cues and safely intervene if they suspect a student is being trafficked or involved in trafficking. 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.

1. Application

Sex trafficking is a form of sexual exploitation that 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 and/or deception. Most individuals who are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation are women and girls, but any person may be targeted. Indigenous and racialized individuals are especially vulnerable to experiencing sex trafficking. The intersections of colonization, intergenerational trauma, systemic discrimination, and barriers to accessing services compound, which increases the vulnerability of being targeted by traffickers for Indigenous women and girls – of whom comprise a disproportionate number of trafficked persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation, in Canada.

2. Raising Awareness and Preventing Sex Trafficking

Schools are an important partner in raising awareness and responding to sex trafficking and supporting students with prevention and healing.

- a) Information will be posted on the board's website. It will include, at a minimum:
 - i. This protocol
 - ii. Resources on cyber-safety
 - iii. Signs of being targeted, lured, groomed, trafficked, or is trafficking another student
 - iv. Information on how to seek help or report concerns
 - v. Culturally safe supports for vulnerable students and families including those who identify as Indigenous, Black, racialized, 2SLGBTQQIA+ and newcomers
 - vi. How to file a report, including anonymous reports
 - vii. A plan for preventing the sex trafficking of students
- b) In addition to the content contained in the Health and Physical Education curriculum and the information on the website, educators and administrators will identify opportunities to raise awareness among students and families on the signs of sex trafficking and create a safe

environment for those who may be experiencing or aware of such activities to seek help or support.

- c) Technology may be used to monitor for online threats and notify administration of threats or students at risk of sex trafficking.
- d) Parents, guardians, and caregivers will be key partners in this protocol. The LKDSB will work to identify best strategies to build awareness of human trafficking with parents, guardians and caregivers. It is essential to recognize parents and caregivers have different levels of knowledge and comfort regarding the topic of human trafficking. Involvement should be engaged via their peer groups such as parent involvement committees.
- e) Student groups will be provided opportunities to offer feedback. Feedback will be sought to further enhance the protocol to ensure youth can also support one another if they believe a peer is being exploited or trafficked. While some students may not feel like they have a safe adult to speak to in the school community, they likely will share with a friend, who can in turn offer support and encourage disclosure. Anti-bullying, mental health, Equity, and inclusivity initiatives developed and lead by students in their classes and schools can help to reduce the risk factors.
- f) The LKDSB will lean on its existing relationships with local and regional community organizations, including mental health agencies, child welfare agencies, women's centres, Indigenous and social justice organizations as well as Police and Children's Aid Society. Building relationships with community agencies that address gender-based violence, sexual assault and anti-human trafficking will be crucial to support schools in implementing the protocol using trauma-informed and culturally sensitive approaches.

3. Reporting and Response Procedures

The Superintendent of Education responsible for Safe Schools and the System Coordinator of Safe Schools will be the designated contacts at the school board for the anti-sex trafficking protocol and can support school board employees with response procedures. The following processes are to be used by staff using a trauma-informed and culturally responsive approach. Any actions should consider unique individual needs of students, including, but not limited to special education, mental health, social/emotional, cultural and/or language needs. Staff supports, families and community resources may be engaged to ensure a safety/re-entry plan is developed to meet the individual needs of the student.

Students are encouraged to report any concerns of, or involvement in, sex trafficking to any staff member they trust. Anonymous reports may be sent to the [Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocols website](#).

When a student discloses or shares suspicion of sex trafficking:

- i. Listen without judgement and support the student's immediate physical and emotional safety. Making a disclosure is a vulnerable experience.
- ii. Ensure the student remains supervised and is not re-victimized by having to repeat the story.
- iii. Advise the student you are required to share information about illegal activities with the Police and Child Protection Agency. Where applicable, advise the principal and/or superintendent.
- iv. Contact the Safe Schools Department for guidance and to initiate culturally trauma-informed and culturally responsive supports and safety plan for the student(s).

- v. File a report with Sarnia-Lambton Children's Aide Society or Chatham Kent Children's Services in accordance with the [Child, Youth and Family Services Act](#).
 - vi. Contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) unless that would put the student in further danger.
 - vii. Engage local Police, for advice or to file a report, in accordance with the LKDSB Police Protocol.
 - viii. Develop a safety plan for the student in collaboration with relevant staff, the student, family members and community partners, as applicable. The safety plan should include, at a minimum; immediate interventions and trauma-informed and culturally responsive resources, supports and/or accommodations.
 - ix. Maintain confidentiality in accordance with relevant legislation and Board procedures.
 - x. Regularly monitor and check-in with the student as outlined in the safety plan.
- a) Responding to disclosure of a student who is thought to be targeting, luring, grooming or recruiting children and youth for the purpose of sex trafficking:
- i. Listen without judgement and support the student's immediate physical and emotional safety. Making a disclosure is a vulnerable experience.
 - ii. Identify and reach out to any other student(s) who may be involved and ensure they remain supervised. Ensure students are not re-victimized by having to repeat the story or be further targeted.
 - iii. Advise the student(s) you are required to share information about illegal activities with the Police and Child Protection Agency. Where applicable, advise the principal and/or superintendent.
 - iv. Contact the Safe Schools Department for guidance and to initiate culturally trauma-informed and culturally responsive supports and safety plan for the student(s).
 - v. File a report with Sarnia-Lambton Children's Aide Society or Chatham Kent Children's Services in accordance with the [Child, Youth and Family Services Act](#).
 - vi. Contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) unless that would put the student in further danger.
 - vii. Engage local Police, for advice or to file a report, in accordance with the LKDSB Police Protocol.
 - viii. Develop a safety plan for the student in collaboration with relevant staff, the student, family members and community partners, as applicable. The safety plan should include, at a minimum; immediate interventions and trauma-informed and culturally responsive resources, supports and/or accommodations.
 - ix. Maintain confidentiality in accordance with relevant legislation and Board procedures.
 - x. Regularly monitor and check-in with the student(s) as outlined in the safety plan(s).
- b) Supporting student re-entry into school after they have been involved in a trafficking situation:
- i. If not already done, develop a safety/re-entry plan for each student in collaboration with relevant staff, the student(s), family members and community partners, as applicable, to support re-integration into school. The safety/re-entry plan should include, at a minimum; ongoing interventions, trauma-informed and culturally responsive resources, supports and/or accommodations and provisions to protect student privacy and safety.
 - ii. Maintain confidentiality in accordance with relevant legislation and Board procedures.
 - iii. Regularly monitor and check-in with the student(s) as outlined in the safety/re-entry plan(s).
- c) Supporting students who may be indirectly impacted:

While maintaining confidentiality, ensure students who may be indirectly impacted are aware of supports and services to support their personal mental health and wellbeing. This may

include engaging 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.

d) Supporting staff who may be impacted:

While maintaining confidentiality, ensure staff who may be indirectly impacted are aware of supports and services to support their personal mental health and wellbeing. This may include employee assistance programs, staff resources and/or community-based service providers.

The Safe Schools Department is available to provide advice and/or support in the application of this protocol.

4. Confidentiality, Reporting and Record Keeping

- a) All information related to incidents of sex trafficking must remain confidential and only disclosed to staff who are required to administer resources and/or supports to students.
- b) All incidents of sex trafficking must be reported under the Child, Youth and Family Services Act. Illegal activities must also be reported to the local police.
- c) Confidential records must be kept secure and maintained in accordance with the Board's record keeping procedures.

5. Training for School Board Employees

Training will be provided as part of the Board's annual compliance training, early in the school year for school-based staff, including teachers and administrators. This training will also be provided for any staff member who works directly with students or who support anti-sex trafficking initiatives.

- a) Training will include:
 - i. Key definitions, common misconceptions and myths about sex trafficking, including tactics used for online luring, grooming and recruitment
 - ii. 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
 - iii. Information on protective factors and prevention-focused supports and resources
 - iv. Information on risk factors and signs that a student is at risk, being lured, groomed or trafficked
 - v. Signs that a student is or involved in luring, grooming or trafficking others
 - vi. 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
 - vii. Supports available to students and affected staff, including culturally responsive supports
 - viii. Additional training resources to support staff to understand and safely respond to sex trafficking
 - ix. Roles and responsibilities of school board employees in raising awareness, identifying and responding to sex trafficking

Training will be updated, as required, to ensure it remains relevant. Completion of training will be tracked as part of the annual compliance training process. New employees who are required to engage in this training will complete it as part of the onboarding process.

6. Accountability and Evaluation

Data will be collected, as required by the Ministry of Education, to monitor the effectiveness of training and whether the protocols respond to the needs of students. Community partners will be invited to participate in the reporting process to determine how the protocols have helped children and youth in care.

7. Definitions

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 individual who are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation are women and girls, but all people may be targeted.

Indigenous and racialized individuals are especially vulnerable to experiencing sex trafficking. The intersections of colonization, intergenerational trauma, systemic discrimination and barriers to accessing service compound, which increases the vulnerability of being targeted by traffickers for Indigenous women and girls – of whom comprise a disproportionate number of trafficked persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation, in Canada.

2SLGBTQQA+ refers to two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual.

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.

Board refers to the Lambton Kent District School Board, which is also referred to as the “LKDSB”.

Cultural responsiveness refers to and 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 refers to and involves strategically, intentionally and holistically examining the impact of an issue, protocol or proposed solution on underserved and historically marginalized communities and population subgroups, with the goal of leveraging research findings to inform protocol.

Human rights-based approach refers to 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 refers 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 trafficked. 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. LKDSB employees should confirm how an individual impacted by trafficking prefers to be referenced.

Tactics refers to methods traffickers may use 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 refers to 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 refers 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. LKDSB employees should confirm how an individual impacted by trafficking prefers to be referenced.

8. Build Multi-Sectoral Relationships with Community Organizations

Ongoing consultation and engagement with community groups/agencies that support members of the school community are essential to supporting anti-sex trafficking approaches that are responsive to diverse students and the needs of local school communities.

9. Resources

- a) [Policy/Program Memorandum 166, Keeping Students Safe: Policy Framework for School Board Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocols](#)
- b) [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
- c) [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- d) [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)
- e) [Education Act](#)
- f) [Child, Youth and Family Services Act](#)
- g) [Criminal Code of Canada](#)
- h) [Policy/Program Memorandum 9: Duty to Report Children in Need of Protection](#)

10. History and Review

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