

Ontario North East Region Safe Schools Protocol

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1. SIGNATORIES TO THE PROTOCOL

Police Services

Anishinabek Police Service

Greater Sudbury Police Service

Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service

North Bay Police Service

His Majesty the King in right of Ontario as represented by the Solicitor General, operating as the Ontario Provincial Police, Northeast Region

Sault Ste Marie Police Service

Timmins Police Service

United Chiefs and Council of Manitoulin Anishnaabe

Wikwemikong Tribal Police Service

School Boards or Authorities

Algoma District School Board

Conseil scolaire catholique du district des Grandes Rivières

Conseil scolaire catholique Franco-Nord

Conseil scolaire du district catholique du Nouvel Ontario

Conseil scolaire public du Grand Nord de l'Ontario

Conseil scolaire public du Nord-Est de l'Ontario

District School Board Ontario North East

Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board

Near North District School Board

Northeastern Catholic District School Board

Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic School Board

Rainbow District School Board

Sudbury Catholic District School Board

Moosonee District School Area Board

Moose Factory Island District School Area Board

James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board

Nipissing First Nation Administration


POLICE SIGNATORIES

Approved by:


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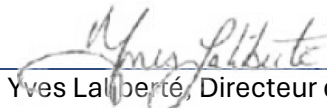


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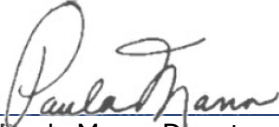
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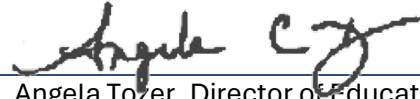
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SCHOOL AUTHORITIES' SIGNATORIES



Angela Tozer, Director of Education
Moosonee District School Area Board

Jennifer Knight-Blackned, Supervisory Officer
Moose Factory Island District School Area Board



Angela Tozer, Director of Education
James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board

Daniel Stevens, Director of Education
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2. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The following protocol aims to ensure a safe and non-threatening environment for students, staff, and community members within all Northeastern Ontario school board jurisdictions. It outlines effective measures for addressing student behavior at school, during school-related activities, and in other situations that impact the school climate. These measures include establishing preventative procedures, providing appropriate early interventions, and administering disciplinary actions in accordance with the *Education Act*, pertinent board policies, the *Criminal Code of Canada*, and other applicable legislation.

This protocol supports and reflects the principles of community policing and ensures a consistent approach to the way police and schools respond to school-related incidents of violence and/or criminal behavior.

All members of the school community must:

- respect and comply with all applicable laws;
- demonstrate honesty and integrity;
- respect differences in people;
- treat others fairly with dignity and respect;
- respect the rights of others; and
- demonstrate proper care and regard for school and others' property.

3. INTRODUCTION

It is the policy direction of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Solicitor General that school boards and police services establish and follow a protocol for the investigation of school-related occurrences.

This document has been prepared to:

- ensure a coordinated approach between school boards and police services;
- promote dialogue and establish effective relationships between schools and police based on cooperation and shared understandings; and
- address unique factors and/or considerations that may affect individual jurisdictions and negotiate service-delivery arrangements accordingly.

This document outlines the common principles, the varied resources, and certain obligations and procedures that are required by provincial and federal legislation (e.g., the *Education Act*, the *Child, Youth, and Family Services Act*, the *Criminal Code of Canada*, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, etc.) and by case law.

It is important for schools and police to respect the human rights of students under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (the *Code*) in the context of this document. For more information, see www.ohrc.on.ca.

PURPOSE

Schools must provide safe, inclusive, and equitable environments for learning and teaching, fostering the ongoing development of respect, responsibility, civility, and other positive behaviors and characteristics.

At the root of effective school-police partnerships is a common understanding of each partner's roles and responsibilities, as well as agreed-upon procedures and clearly delineated decision-making authority. Providing the best possible education for students in a safe school community is a shared responsibility which requires a commitment to collaboration, cooperation, and effective communication.

Making our schools safer requires a comprehensive strategy that includes:

- the opportunities for staff to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to maintain a school environment in which conflict and differences can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility;
- the implementation of strategies for the prevention of violent and/or antisocial behaviour, and use of intervention and supports for those who are at risk of, or have already engaged in, violent or antisocial behaviour;
- an understanding of and commitment to human rights principles; and
- an effective and timely response to incidents as they arise, ensuring that the rights of victims, witnesses, and alleged offenders are respected throughout the process.

The Ministry of the Solicitor General's guideline on youth crime indicates that every police service's procedure on the investigation of offences committed by young persons should include the steps to be taken by officers in accordance with the local Safe Schools Protocol when responding to school-related occurrences. The guideline also states that every Chief of Police, and the Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), should work, where possible, with local school boards to develop programs for safe schools. Every Chief of Police and the OPP Commissioner should consider the need for a multi-agency strategy to prevent or counter the activities of youth gangs in the community, including working with school boards, municipalities, youth and other community organizations, business, and the Crown, where possible.

In the development of this protocol, the school boards and police services have considered all relevant legislation and government policies, including, but not limited to:

- *Youth Criminal Justice Act;*
- *Criminal Code of Canada;*
- *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019 (CSPA);*
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code;*
- *Provincial Offences Act (specifically Part VI, "Young Persons");*
- *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA);*
- *Freedom of Information and Protection of*
- *Privacy Act (FIPPA);*
- *Child, Youth and Family Services Act;*
- *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004;*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA);*
- *Victims' Bill of Rights;*
- *Education Act; and*
- *Equity and Inclusive Education Policy.*

DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS OF TERMS

Enclosed within this document is a concise glossary aimed at clarifying essential terminology for individuals overseeing local protocols. For a comprehensive compilation of Definitions and Explanations of Terms, refer to [Appendix A](#).

4. ROLES AND MANDATES

POLICE SERVICES

In cases of exigent circumstances, police will assume primary responsibility as may be necessary to ensure school safety.

In partnership with school boards, police are committed to protecting life and property in accordance with the *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019 (CSPA)* and to serving the school community.

Police may be involved with the school in three basic ways:

- community policing services and projects;
- police responses and interventions as incidents occur; and
- police involvement after an incident.

Police will engage and work proactively in partnership with school officials to ensure the effectiveness of this protocol.

Police are further committed to enforcing the *Criminal Code of Canada* and the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, and other federal, provincial, and municipal legislation and related regulations.

Legislation under the *CSPA* includes:

- crime prevention;
- law enforcement;
- maintaining the public peace;
- emergency response;
- assistance to victims of crime; and
- any other prescribed policing functions.

In accordance with the regulations, each police service has prepared and adopted a strategic plan for the provision of policing, which includes the following items:

- provision by police service to ensure adequate and effective policing in accordance with the needs of the population of the area;
- objectives, priorities, and core functions of the police service;
- quantitative and qualitative performance objectives and indicators of outcomes relating to:
 - community-based crime prevention initiatives, community patrol, and criminal investigation services;
 - community satisfaction with the policing provided;
 - emergency calls for service;
 - violent crime and clearance rates for violent crime;
 - property crime and clearance rates for property crime;
 - youth crime and clearance rates for youth crime;
 - police assistance to victims of crime and re-victimization rates;
 - interactions with persons described in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this list;

- road safety; and
- any other prescribed matters; and
- interactions with:
 - youths;
 - members of racialized groups;
 - members of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities; and
 - persons who appear to have a mental illness or a neurodevelopmental disability.

The contents of these police services strategic plans are available by contacting the local police service.

Police officers serve as a visible and positive representation of law enforcement, offering confidential counseling resources to students facing various challenges. They bring valuable expertise into schools, aiding young people in making positive life choices. Additionally, they work diligently to safeguard the school environment, ensuring a safe atmosphere where teachers can teach and students can learn without fear.

Police will continue to work within the school community in developing, implementing, and delivering prevention and education programs in their respective jurisdictions.

All police services should keep track of statistics relating to school violence in their respective areas.

SCHOOL BOARDS

School boards have a responsibility to develop preventative and effective measures to ensure safe school environments.

The specific roles and responsibilities of the school boards include, but are not limited to:

- clearly explaining the board’s *Code of Conduct* to students and their families, including details such as the definition of the term “weapon” and the potential reach of school discipline with respect to behaviours taking place outside of school that have a negative impact on school climate;
- engaging and working proactively in partnership with police to ensure the effectiveness of this protocol;
- ensuring that all staff, including occasional, part-time, or itinerant staff have the means, training, and resources to implement the provisions of this protocol that may apply to them, including the ability to lock their classroom doors during a lockdown ([see Appendix B](#));
- complying with the requirements related to the duties of principals, vice-principals, designates and teachers under the *Education Act* and regulations;
- complying with the requirements legislated under the *Child, Youth, and Family Services Act* (e.g., Duty to Report (s. 125));
- supporting a progressive discipline approach to choose the appropriate course of action to address inappropriate behaviour, including suspensions and expulsions;
- more effectively combining discipline with opportunities for students to continue their education;

- maintaining the *Code of Conduct* as required under current legislation;
- ensuring that resources (e.g., on drug awareness, on conflict resolution, on bullying prevention, etc.) are accessible to assist school staff in promoting a positive school environment;
- developing policies on how to respond to crises, including a *Communication Plan*;
- ensuring that prevention and intervention strategies are available;
- providing staff with opportunities for acquiring skills necessary to promote positive school environments; and
- developing an effective consultation mechanism for soliciting input from staff, students, parents and school councils, and special education advisory committees in the development of local protocols.

All school boards must provide complete cooperation to ensure that these measures are fully communicated and implemented in their respective schools and that students, parents, teachers, and staff are aware of this protocol.

Additionally, school principals, vice-principals, or designates have roles and responsibilities to conduct investigations of incidents for which suspensions or expulsions must be considered under the *Education Act*, including the responsibility to take mitigating and other factors into account, as set out in *Ontario Regulation 472*.

5. A COORDINATED APPROACH TO VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Staff and students, under the leadership of the principal, will design activities to promote a positive environment and pride in the school, including the development of strategies to improve individual self-esteem and encourage of student participation in co-curricular activities. School staff and student representatives will encourage participation in activities that will promote an image of their school as having a safe environment.

The principal, in co-operation with students, staff, parents, guardians and the school council, will develop a *School Code of Conduct*. This Code will be distributed annually to students and parents and guardians in September.

Schools will promote learning environments that are safe, orderly, nurturing, positive, and respectful. Such learning environments are to be peaceful and welcoming for all authorized individuals. Principals will encourage staff to be highly visible in the school and to engage in positive interactions with students, parents and guardians, and the school community.

Police will continue to pursue proactive crime prevention through the community and school programs. Police and school boards, in a coordinated and multifaceted approach, will promote positive behaviour and prevent school violence. Local police services, with the school community, will identify additional supports the police are prepared to offer with respect to implementing violence-prevention policies in schools.

School boards and principals are encouraged to cultivate robust partnerships with law enforcement agencies, leveraging their support for the effective implementation of violence-prevention policies within the school community. This collaboration is particularly valuable when addressing risk factors linked to anti-social behavior, gang-related activities, hate or bias related occurrences, or criminal conduct.

Through close cooperation, police can provide valuable guidance and consultation to school personnel, aid in the identification of appropriate responses to violent behavior, and clarify the procedures involved in police investigations.

Police will work in partnership with schools and other community agencies to administer crime-prevention programs that focus on areas such as peer mediation, conflict resolution, referral to appropriate community resources (e.g., those providing counselling or mentoring services, drug awareness and education programs, or support for seeking employment or housing), and Crime Stoppers.

From a crime-prevention perspective, police play a crucial role in the school community, offering ample opportunities for implementing various strategies, including but not limited to the strategy of *Crime Prevention through Social Development (CPSD)*. This approach aims to prevent and reduce crime by identifying and addressing associated risk factors. By employing proactive measures focused on the precursors of criminal and antisocial behavior, CPSD acknowledges the interplay of various social, economic, health, and environmental factors contributing to criminality. It emphasizes sustained, multi-agency actions targeting risk factors (e.g., mental health issues, certain behavioral problems, involvement in the criminal justice system, and victimization/abuse, etc.) that may steer young individuals toward criminal activity. Moreover, CPSD aims to cultivate protective factors (e.g., strong adult role models, enhanced self-esteem, and effective coping strategies, etc.) to mitigate these.

Strategies that schools can use to help prevent violence include:

- helping students develop social skills, including conflict-resolution skills;
- proactively identifying students at risk and giving them extra support;
- using progressive discipline to teach and encourage appropriate behavior in the school;
- viewing each student as an integral and contributing member of the school community;
- demonstrating, by example and leadership, that students' human rights are to be respected; and
- encouraging students to return to the school community after involvement with the criminal justice system and supporting them in the process.

Strategies that police can use to help prevent violence in schools include:

- developing positive partnerships with all members of the school community, including parents;
- being visible within the school community;
- being a positive adult role model for students;
- establishing positive relationships with children and youth;
- making referrals based on the best interest of the students;
- helping deliver educational sessions on crime and criminal justice issues;
- being part of an integrated, multi-agency team that can respond to children and youth at risk of conflict with the law;
- facilitating communication and cooperation with school officials, Youth Justice Services, other police officers, courts, and other social services; and
- supporting students as they return to the school community after involvement with the criminal justice system.

This protocol is one component of a broader partnership between schools and other essential community partners, including mental health providers, health care professionals, and Children’s Aid Societies, that is dedicated to violence prevention in Ontario schools.

6. NON-INCIDENT RELATED POLICE INVOLVEMENT

The following is a quotation from the National Association of School Resource Officers:

Police provide a visible and positive image for law enforcement. They serve as a confidential source of counseling to students concerning problems they face. They bring expertise into schools that will help young people make more positive choices in their lives. They also work to protect the school environment and to maintain an atmosphere where teachers feel safe to teach and students feel safe to learn.

Police involvement goes far beyond simply responding to incidents. Certain police services may:

- establish and developing partnerships with stakeholders including school staff, students, parents, and members of the school community;
- develop and delivering pro-active programs, within the school community;
- develop links with youth service agencies in the community;
- identify police issues and concerns and responding appropriately;
- provide lectures and presentations upon request;
- participate in special events and meetings within the school community;
- collaborate with schools to develop communication plans; and
- counsel and advise students on police related matters.

All police services involved offer valuable programs, lectures, displays, seminars, and safety tips to the school community.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAMS

Where a school decides to implement a restorative justice process to address incidents that do not require involvement of police, the school shall ensure that all parties are aware of the intervention process that will be used to resolve the matter for all intents and purposes.

In each instance where an intervention is being implemented, the school will notify their respective police service to protect the integrity of both the intervention strategy and a potential criminal investigation.

7. OCCURRENCES REQUIRING NOTIFICATION OF POLICE

MANDATORY NOTIFICATION OF POLICE

Note that mandatory police reporting does not imply that charges will be laid in every situation. However, for the incidents listed below, police notification is mandatory. These incidents encompass occurrences

within school premises, during school-related activities both on and off-campus, or in other circumstances where the incident adversely affects the school climate.

The school **must contact 911 immediately** for the following types of incidents:

- all deaths;
- use of a weapon or an imitation to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person;
- missing vulnerable children;
- bomb threats; and
- any incident in which the safety of students is in imminent danger.

Police must be notified **as soon as practicable** of the following types of incidents:

- physical assault causing bodily harm requiring medical attention;
- sexual assault or harassment;
- robbery;
- criminal harassment, including repeated bullying;
- relationship-based violence;
- possession of a weapon, including possessing an imitation thereof;
- weapons or illegal drugs trafficking;
- possession of an illegal drug;
- hate and/or bias-motivated occurrences;
- gang-related occurrences;
- human trafficking;
- extortion; and
- publication, etc., of an intimate image without consent.

DISCRETIONARY NOTIFICATION OF POLICE

The principal, vice-principal, or designate may notify police of the following types of incidents:

- giving alcohol to a minor;
- being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- physical assault;
- bullying, including cyberbullying;
- vandalism; and
- trespassing.

The principal, vice-principal, or designate should consider mitigating and other factors when deciding whether to call police in these discretionary situations. For students with special education needs, school boards should identify circumstances where a police response is neither necessary nor appropriate.

All school-related incidents not covered by this protocol will be addressed by the principal, vice-principal, or their designate on a case-by-case basis. The decision to notify the police or the Children's Aid Society will be made by the principal, vice-principal, or designate, in accordance with section 125 of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*.

8. INFORMATION SHARING AND DISCLOSURE

Various statutes govern information sharing and disclosure, including federal legislation such as the *Criminal Code of Canada* and the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, as well as provincial legislation like the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*, the *Freedom of Information*

and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), the Education Act, the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, and the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA).

This section outlines the obligations, rights, and procedures that police and school boards must follow to comply with these laws regarding information sharing and disclosure.

Criminal Code of Canada

Police may access a student's Ontario Student Record (OSR) and other student records through a warrant, subpoena, production order or with written consent from a parent or from the student if they are 18 years of age or older. In exigent circumstances, police can access a student's OSR without a warrant, as outlined in section 487.11 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*.

Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)

The YCJA includes provisions that deal with the disclosure, security, storage, and destruction of information pertaining to young offenders. Such information will be shared in a manner that ensures that there is a balance between the need to know and the rights of the young offender.

The YCJA safeguards the privacy and identity of young persons. Its provisions restrict all individuals, including police, youth courts, and school board officials, from publishing or disclosing any reports related to offenses committed or alleged to have been committed by a young person. This includes reports of hearings, adjudications, dispositions, or appeals where the names of the young person, the victim, or any witnesses are likely to be revealed. The term "report" encompasses a wide range of information or publications that could potentially disclose the identity of a young person.

This provision does not preclude disclosures mandated by a court order, nor does it prevent principals, vice-principals, or their designates from suspending or excluding students for reasons outlined in the *Education Act*. Furthermore, it does not prohibit school boards from hearing appeals from parents, guardians, or adult students, nor does it hinder school boards from exercising their authority to expel a student. In all such instances, evidence related to the events may be presented, even if there is an ongoing proceeding under the YCJA.

In prosecutions of students under the YCJA and the *Criminal Code of Canada*, courts often impose obligations on the accused students that also impact schools. For instance, a bail or probation order might mandate the student's attendance or forbid their return to school or specify that the student must maintain a certain distance from the alleged victim(s). Simultaneously, while the court proceedings unfold, the school may be considering suspending or expelling the student in accordance with the authority granted by the *Education Act*.

To avoid any conflict between the judicial proceedings and the school board's actions in dealing with an incident, police officers involved in the case should consult with the principal, vice-principal, or designate before recommending bail or probation conditions.

The principal, vice-principal, or designate is encouraged to initiate discussions with police regarding such conditions. Police officers will also strive to inform the school and assist in accommodating the bail or probation order, while continuing to fulfill their duties under the Education Act. Furthermore, subject to an appeal to the school board, the principal, vice-principal, or designate may refuse admission to the school or classroom to anyone whose presence, in their judgment, would be detrimental to the physical or mental well-being of the students and/or staff.

The *YCJA* establishes procedural requirements for handling young persons charged with offenses. (Refer to Part 6, sections 110 to 129, of the *YCJA*, titled "Publication, Records, and Information.")

There may be occasions when it is necessary for police to share confidential information with school officials. Section 119 of the *YCJA* provides the circumstances under which confidential information may be shared.

The following subsections of Part 6 are of particular relevance for police/school board protocols:

| Section | Description |
|---------|---|
| 110(1) | No person shall publish the name of a young person, or any other information related to a young person, if it would identify the young person as a young person dealt with under this Act. |
| 111(1) | No person shall publish the name of a child or young person, or any other information related to a child or a young person, if it would identify the child or young person as having been a victim of, or as having appeared as a witness in connection with, an offence committed or alleged to have been committed by a young person. |
| 118 | Except as authorized or required by this Act, no person shall be given access to a record kept under sections 114 to 116, and no information contained in it may be given to any person, where to do so would identify the young person to whom it relates as a young person dealt with under this Act. |
| 125(1) | A peace officer may disclose to any person any information in a record kept under section 114 (court records) or 115 (police records) that it is necessary to disclose in the conduct of the investigation of an offence. |
| 125(6) | The provincial director, a youth worker, the Attorney General, a peace officer or any other person engaged in the provision of services to young persons may disclose to any professional or other person engaged in the supervision or care of a young person — including a representative of any school board or school or any other educational or training institution — any information contained in a record kept under sections 114 to 116 if the disclosure is necessary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) to ensure compliance by the young person with an authorization under section 91 or an order of the youth justice court; (b) to ensure the safety of staff, students, or other persons; or (c) to facilitate the rehabilitation of the young person |

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)

This legislation regulates the collection and disclosure of personal information that is not related to the *YCJA*. As part of the local protocol, police services and school boards should develop a policy for the disclosure of personal information in situations under subsection 32(g) of the *MFIPPA* (i.e., “to aid an investigation undertaken with a view to a law enforcement proceeding ...”).

Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA)

The *CYFSA* mandates that anyone with reasonable grounds to suspect any of the conditions listed in section 125 of the *CYFSA* must report their suspicions to the Children’s Aid Society. This duty applies to

both professionals and the general public and cannot be delegated to another person. Reporting is an ongoing obligation, and information sharing should prioritize the protection of vulnerable children.

Education Act

Under the *Education Act* and in accordance with the regulations and the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, a principal is responsible for collecting information for inclusion in a student's record. The **Ontario Student Record (OSR)** contains information such as transcripts, report cards, and photographs.

The OSR will also include, where applicable, a *Violent Incident Form* containing:

- a description of the violent incident;
- a reference to the call to police, if applicable;
- a reference to the school board disciplinary response to the incident, if applicable; and/or
- a copy of the school board's letter(s) to the student and/or parent(s) or guardian(s) regarding the suspension or expulsion for violent behavior.

Copies of Violent Incident Forms shall not be kept in the school outside the OSR; however, the notes made by a school official in the process of preparing the Violent Incident Form may be shared with police.

Under the statute, information contained within the OSR is privileged, intended solely for the information and use of supervisory officers, principals, and teachers at a school. This information serves the purpose of enhancing student instruction and academic development.

Disclosure of its contents to police may be made in the following circumstances:

- with the written permission of a parent or guardian of the student or, where the student is an adult, with the written permission of the student;
- through a search warrant requiring the surrender of an OSR to police;
- through a production order from a court that compels the holder of documents to hand them over to the police;
- in exigent circumstances, without a warrant, under section 487.11 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*; or
- through a subpoena or appropriate court order.

In criminal matters, if a school principal is served with a warrant or a production order requesting an OSR or other records, the principal is obliged to comply with the warrant or production order and will provide a copy of the OSR contents and other records as specified. The principal may contact the Superintendent for legal advice before releasing information. This should be done immediately upon receiving the warrant or production order.

If a principal is personally served with a subpoena requiring his or her testimony in a criminal case, he or she is obliged to comply with the subpoena, attend court, and produce any records or documents, including the original OSR to court, as specified in the subpoena. If a record or document is ordered by the court to be entered into evidence, **the principal should bring the original records or documents, plus three copies**, so the school board can request to retain the originals and provide copies to the court.

OTHER RELEASE OF SCHOOL INFORMATION TO POLICE

If police are conducting an investigation for the purpose of law enforcement proceedings, the school principal shall, upon the request of police and pursuant to section 32(g) of *MFIPPA* and section 42(g) of *FIPPA*, release general information to police officer if:

- the disclosure is to aid in an investigation undertaken by police with a view to a law enforcement proceeding; or
- there is a reasonable basis to believe that an offence may have been committed and the disclosure is to enable police to determine whether to conduct such an investigation.

For example, the principal could share the name, address and phone number of the student or staff member or the name, address and phone numbers of the parent or guardian of the student.

In exigent circumstances, police can access a student's OSR without a warrant, under section 487.11 of the *Criminal Code*.

9. SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING TO POLICE

The school will follow procedures in accordance with information outlined in this section for the reporting of incidents that involve both students as victims and students as alleged offenders.

School officials are responsible for promptly reporting to the police all incidents outlined in the [Occurrences Requiring Notification of Police](#) section of this protocol.

In situations where there is no imminent threat to the safety of people in the school, school staff will consult with the principal, vice-principal, or designate as appropriate, and a decision will be made as to who contacts police.

In situations where there is an imminent threat to the safety of people in the school, the individual staff member who recognizes the threat will contact police immediately by calling 911 and inform the principal, vice-principal, or designate as soon as possible.

If a staff member has reasonable grounds to suspect any of the conditions listed in section 125 of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA)*, they must comply with the *CYFSA* provisions and follow any applicable school board guidelines, including child abuse protocols with the Children's Aid Society that outline the duty to report.

In emergency circumstances, reporting to police shall be done through 911.

In non-emergency situations that require police involvement, school staff should report the matter to the school principal, vice-principal, or designate, who will initiate police contact.

When contacting police regarding an incident, the caller should be ready to provide the following information. Further details might also be necessary:

- time, location, and description of the incident (Who? What? When? Where?);
- any injuries sustained and their severity and location of injured persons;
- caller's identity and location;

- presence of weapons, their type, current location, and possessor; and/or
- description of suspect(s), including number of suspects, names, location, and approximate ages.

Refer to [Appendix B](#) regarding school lockdown procedures.

Reporting procedures must comply with the Duty to Report provisions under the *CYFSA*.

10. INITIAL POLICE CONTACT

Under exigent circumstances or if the principal is being investigated, the officer is not required to follow the procedures set out below.

The responding police officer is responsible for gathering and thoroughly documenting information regarding a school-related incident. The officer typically follows these steps:

- reports to the principal, vice-principal, or designate with proper identification;
- explains the purpose of the visit and collaborates with the school officials on the course of action;
- considers alternative approaches to minimize disruption to the school day;
- gathers information from the principal, vice-principal, or designate about the student, including any accommodation needs or communication barriers, before contacting the student; and
- contacts, or arranges for the principal, vice-principal, or designate to contact, parents of students under the age of 18, unless it is their opinion that doing so is likely to cause prejudice to the student and would not be in the student's best interests, or if the parent is the alleged offender.

From time to time, it may become necessary and/or unavoidable to interview or apprehend a staff member on school property. If this occurs it is the intent of the school board to proceed as sensitively and unobtrusively as possible while co-operating with the police. Police may not always be able to discuss or disclose circumstances involving the investigation, including apprehension. Where feasible, police should attempt to contact a supervisory officer or senior executive of the school board of the staff member being apprehended.

11. SCHOOL AND POLICE INVESTIGATION OF INCIDENTS

While it is important that the principal, vice-principal, or designate not do anything to prejudice the police investigation, it is also important that police recognize and respect his or her obligations under the *Education Act*. Under the Act, a school board's decision regarding expulsion of a student must be made within twenty school days from the date when the student was suspended.

Police investigations should be undertaken in accordance with the local police service's Criminal Investigation Management Plan and, where required, with the *Ontario Major Case Management Manual*.

The principal, vice-principal, or designate will inform police of any logistical information about the school (e.g., the hours of the school day and class rotation schedules) that may be relevant to the investigation process.

Police services will endeavor to work within these logistical considerations to minimize the disruption to the school.

LEGAL RIGHTS AND PROCEDURES

In the investigation of school-related incidents where a young person is a suspect, particular attention should be given by the principal, vice-principal, or designate and police to procedures that are consistent with the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.

STUDENTS UNDER 12 YEARS OF AGE

Students under 12 years of age shall have a parent or legal guardian, or designated adult acting in loco parentis if the parent or guardian is not available, present during the interview with police, unless it is determined that this may hinder the investigation or jeopardize the student's safety.

STUDENTS 12 TO 17 YEARS OF AGE

Upon notifying police of an incident, school staff shall separate the involved students and refrain from taking written statements. If school staff are taking a statement while conducting an internal investigation and determine that a criminal offence has been committed, they shall discontinue the statement and notify police immediately.

The principal, vice-principal, or designate shall:

- take and turn over to the police for purposes of an investigation if requested any statement(s) taken;
- contact the police to initiate an investigation when the principal, vice-principal, or designate believes that a criminal offence has occurred;
- maintain a journal of actions;
- provide the necessary information as requested for the police report;
- notify the police officer of any learning disability or other exceptionality of the student that may impede the student from expressing or understanding written or oral communication;
- contact the parent or legal guardian as soon as possible **in consultation with the investigating police officer**, with the final decision on immediate notification at the police officer's discretion;
- ensure confidentiality of police involvement with students and/or parents; and
- summon the student and provide a private setting for the interview.

Police shall:

- ensure that the student is informed of their rights if under arrest or if criminal charges are being considered. If a student's parent or guardian is unavailable, notification may be given to an adult relative or another adult known to the student. If the parent or guardian is absent or unavailable, the youth has the right to have an adult of their choice present during any police interview; and
- inform the student of the legal right to waive the option of having anyone other than the police officer present during the interview. Such waiver must be made in writing and signed by the student.

ADULT STUDENTS (18 YEARS OF AGE) OR EMPLOYEES

Adult students and school board employees have the right of confidentiality. As such, the following applies:

The principal, vice-principal, or designate shall:

- contact the police to initiate an investigation when the principal, vice-principal, or designate or superintendent believes that a criminal act has occurred;
- maintain a journal of actions;
- provide the information to the police as requested;
- notify the police officer of any learning disability or other exceptionality of the student that may impede the student from expressing or understanding written or oral communication;
- summon the student or employee to the office and provide a private setting for the interview; and
- notify the appropriate school superintendent immediately, who shall inform the Director of Education, in the event of an arrest, detention, or removal of a board employee while on board property.

Police shall:

- ensure that students and staff are informed of their rights when under arrest or facing potential criminal charges;
- safeguard the safety and security of all individuals and property within Ontario, including on First Nation reserves;
- uphold the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Human Rights Code*;
- foster cooperation between policing providers and the diverse communities they serve;
- demonstrate respect for victims of crime and understanding their unique needs;
- be sensitive to the pluralistic, multiracial, and multicultural character of Ontario society;
- recognize and respond to the unique histories and cultures of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities;
- ensure that police services and police service boards are representative of the communities they serve; and
- ensure that all parts of Ontario, including First Nation reserves, receive equitable levels of policing.

When the principal is the subject of an investigation, the police officer will contact the appropriate supervisory officer of the school board to determine an appropriate procedure given the context of the investigation.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

The principal must inform students at the start of the school year that desks and lockers belong to the school, and students have no privacy expectations regarding them. Consequently, the principal, vice-

principal, or designate can search such property as necessary under the authority of the *Education Act* to uphold order and discipline, not as police agents. Another person must accompany them during any search.

Teachers and principals are placed in a position of trust that carries with it not only the onerous responsibilities to teach the students, but also to ensure their safety and well-being. The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that searches of students by elementary or secondary school officials who are entrusted with the care and education of children are not an unreasonable violation of a student's rights under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom* (section 8) to be secure from unreasonable search and seizure so long as certain procedures are followed as outlined below. The manner in which students are treated in these situations will determine their respect for the rights of others in the future. According to the courts, searches should be gender appropriate and minimally intrusive.

GROUNDINGS FOR A SEARCH

Courts have ruled that a warrant is not necessary for a principal, vice-principal, or designate to conduct a student search. They've acknowledged that these school officials are best equipped to evaluate and apply information within the context of the school environment.

Reasonable grounds may include:

- credible information received from a single student;
- information received from multiple students;
- observations made by a teacher or principal; and
- any combination of these factors that the principal, vice-principal, or designate deems credible.

The compelling nature of the information and the credibility of these or other sources must be assessed by the principal, vice-principal, or designate in context of the circumstances existing at a particular school. Random or arbitrary searches or searches on groundless suspicion will likely be in contravention of the charter.

The following are unlikely to provide a sufficient basis for reasonable grounds to believe that school rules have been breached:

- rumors, innuendoes, or hunches;
- anonymous tips which are not corroborated in any way; or
- information which could not reasonably be considered credible.

RIGHT TO SEARCH PERSONS AND PROPERTY

A principal, vice-principal, or designate is responsible for conducting investigations to determine the circumstances surrounding an infraction, ensuring the maintenance of order and discipline within the school. It is incumbent upon the principal to inform students at the onset of the school year that desks and lockers are considered school property and subject to search by school administration.

In carrying out their duties, the principal, vice-principal, or designate, upon reasonable grounds, may conduct searches of students' clothing, possessions, or any areas where their belongings may be stored, such as desks, lockers, or backpacks. However, it is advisable to have the student present during the

search of lockers or desks to prevent allegations of tampering. All searches conducted by a principal, vice-principal, or designate must be witnessed, and, if necessary, force should be employed lawfully and judiciously to ensure the safety and effectiveness of the search.

- ❑ Search lockers and personal property.
- ❑ Have the student empty and turn out pockets.
- ❑ Have the student remove outer clothing (jackets).
- ❑ Have the student remove shoes and socks.
- ❑ Call police if a more intrusive search is deemed necessary unless exigent circumstances prevail.
- ❑ Keep the student under observation until police arrival.

Searches conducted by the police must be conducted in accordance with lawful authority. Ideally, police should notify the principal, vice-principal, or designate before conducting searches on school premises. However, under exigent circumstances, police may be required to execute a search warrant or production order without prior notice to school officials.

DETENTION AND ARREST

Where investigations result in detention and/or arrest, police and the principal, vice-principal, or designate should pay particular attention to the following procedures and responsibilities:

- police procedures to be followed in the detention and/or arrest of suspects, in accordance with the *Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA)*;
- roles and responsibilities of police in the event of a suspect being arrested or detained on school property;
- legal grounds for police to demand entry (e.g., for weapon and drug searches, to arrest a person wanted for an indictable offence, or to save lives, etc.); and
- requirements to be followed under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* when a young person is arrested and detained, including who is responsible for discharging specific obligations.

Whether or not the incident giving rise to the necessity to arrest is school-related, police shall, in the interest of school safety and morale and where possible, consult with the principal, vice-principal, or designate prior to the arrest to arrange a suitable procedure by which police will access the student.

When it is necessary that a student be arrested at school during school hours, such an arrest will be made in a manner that will minimize disruption of school routines.

Where a student is to be arrested, police shall not be denied access to the student.

There may be circumstances in which physical restraints will be necessary. These will be employed with full regard for the safety of those involved in accordance with this protocol, police procedure and the arresting officer's discretionary powers.

In the interest of safety or in exigent circumstances, police may promptly arrest a student. Following the arrest, they shall notify the principal, vice-principal, or designate as soon as possible.

SUPPORTS FOR VICTIMS

It is important that police and the principal, vice-principal, and designate be aware of the following procedures and responsibilities with respect to providing support for victims:

- procedures consistent with the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA);
- roles and responsibilities of police and school personnel, such as:
 - the requirement that police officers remain at the scene until satisfied that there is no imminent threat to the victim and that issues related to the victim's safety have been addressed;
 - the obligation that the principal, vice-principal, or designate inform the parents or guardians of victims who have been harmed as a result of an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered, unless, in the principal's, vice-principal's, or designate's opinion, doing so would put the victim at risk of harm from the parents (*Education Act*, s. 300.3(1) and O. Reg. 472/07); and
 - the requirement that all school board employees who work directly with students are expected to support all students, including those who disclose or report such incidents, by providing them with contact information about professional supports (e.g., public health units, community-based service providers, Help Phone lines, etc.);
- notice to victims and, when applicable, their parents of the services available to them and other considerations, such as:
 - police services for victims;
 - student support services of the school board;
 - services offered by other municipal, community, and social service agencies, including legal services;
 - access to information; and
 - confidentiality of victim and witness identity (*Youth Criminal Justice Act*); and
- procedures for information sharing and community referrals.

12. POLICE INTERVIEWS OF STUDENTS

It is the responsibility of police to conduct interviews related to criminal investigations of incidents that involve students as alleged offenders, victims, or witnesses.

During an investigation, the police may need to interview students. For routine investigations unrelated to school incidents, officers will aim to interview students outside of school premises and during non-school hours. However, if there is an immediate danger or emergency, or if contacting the student at school is the last resort, officers may interview them on school premises.

In the event of an incident requiring police involvement, the principal, vice-principal, or designate shall request police assistance at the school. The following procedure will be followed for student interviews:

- Police wishing to interview a student on school property must contact the principal, vice-principal, or designate to inform them of the visit's nature and request a meeting with the student.

Officers should obtain permission from the principal, vice-principal, or designate before interviewing a student on school or board properties, or at school functions. If obtaining prior permission was not possible, the principal, vice-principal, or designate should be notified as soon as practicable.

- It is the school's responsibility to inform the police officer of any student with learning disabilities or exceptionalities that may affect their communication abilities. The principal, vice-principal, or designate shall remain with the student during any school interviews.
- If the student is under 18 years old, the school will inform them that their parents or guardians will be contacted before any police interview. Parents or guardians will be notified that their child is being interviewed as a witness, victim, or suspect. The principal must not make this disclosure if he is of the opinion that it is likely to cause prejudice to the student and would not be in the student's best interests or if the parent or guardian is the alleged offender.
- If the student is 18 years or older or has withdrawn from parental control at 16 or 17, the school will not contact parents and guardians without the student's permission. Parents and guardians have the right to attend the interview if the student who is 16 or 17 years of age agrees, as per the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*;
- If parental permission for the interview is refused, the school will request that the police conduct their interview **off school premises**.
- Once parental permission is obtained, the school will provide police with access to the student. A private room will be arranged for interviews to ensure confidentiality for students and/or parents or guardians.
- If the parents or guardians of a student under 18 are unavailable or unwilling to attend the school, or if the adult student expresses a desire not to involve their parents or guardians, the principal, vice-principal, or designate will be present during the interview at the school, provided the student agrees.
- If a student requests that the principal, vice-principal, or designate not be present, the school will ask the police to conduct the interview **off school property**. Details will be documented by the principal, vice-principal, or designate and police.
- If the student is absent from school on the interview day, the school will provide the police officer with the student's date of birth, address, phone number, and parent/guardian contact details on file, in accordance with section 32(g) of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* or section 42(g) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, which is the authority for providing such personal information to law enforcement officials who are conducting an investigation of law enforcement proceedings.

The principal, vice-principal, or designate will recognize that the police and the Children's Aid Society may conduct a joint interview if a child is suspected to be in need of protection.

NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS

If the student is a Crown ward or ward of the Children's Aid Society, the legal guardian is the Children's Aid Society, and they shall be contacted in the same way as a parent or guardian.

There may be times where police will direct the principal, vice-principal, or designate **not** to contact the parents and guardians. For example:

- the parents or guardians are the suspects of a crime about which the student is being interviewed; and/or
- contacting the parents or guardians could interfere with the police investigation.

The principal, vice-principal, or designate will follow police direction in this regard and will document the name and badge number of the officer and the direction given.

STUDENTS UNDER 12 YEARS OF AGE (CHILDREN)

Students under 12 years of age shall have a parent or guardian present, or any other adult acting in *loco parentis* if a parent or guardian is not available, during the interview with the police unless it is determined that this may hinder the investigation or jeopardize the safety of the student.

The following procedures should be recognized in occurrences involving children under the age of 12:

- police may arrest but will not process charges against these young children under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, the *Provincial Offences Act*, or the *Criminal Code of Canada*;
- parents or guardians must be notified as soon as possible; and
- police have the authority to take reports and conduct interviews.

Incidents involving students under 12 years of age that warrant reporting include serious acts of violence or threats thereof, as well as situations indicating potential harm or the need for protection of the child.

STUDENTS 12 TO 17 YEARS OF AGE

These students may have a parent, guardian, or any other adult chosen by the student present during the police interview. Police will inform the student of this right before taking an oral or written statement, ensuring the student has a reasonable opportunity to consult with counsel, a parent, or any appropriate adult chosen by the young person. The student also retains the right to refuse the presence of a parent, guardian, or any other adult during the interview. Police will adhere to accepted procedures regarding the admissibility of statements, including notifying the young person of their rights, including the right to refuse to provide a statement. In cases involving the Children's Aid Society, such as suspected abuse or neglect, principal, vice-principal, or designate, police, and child protection workers will collaborate to determine the timing and procedure for notifying the parent or guardian.

STUDENTS 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER

Parents or legal guardians must not be contacted if the student is aged 18 or over, unless the student gives his or her consent, requests it, or is unable to give consent.

Once consent has been obtained from the student, the principal, vice-principal or designate will contact the student's parent, guardian, or another adult of choice as soon as possible. However, if the police advise that such action might violate the student's rights, impede the investigation, or compromise the student's safety, such communication may be delayed. Where circumstances or the timing of the investigation do not allow for immediate contact, the principal, vice-principal or designate will inform the parent or guardian of the interview as soon as possible, unless the investigating officer specifically requests not to do so.

PREPARATION FOR INTERVIEWS

Considerations shall be given by school and police representatives to preparations for interviews, including details such as:

- secure locations for interviews of persons suspected of criminal offences;
- the need for specialized resources where the student is known to have a behavioral, cognitive, physical, or learning disability, especially where these exceptionalities and needs have been identified in the student's Individual Education Plan;
- the methodology of the interview, adjusted according to the age of the student; and
- the need for an interpreter (e.g., a language interpreter, an interpreter for deaf or hearing-impaired students, etc.).

CONDUCT OF INTERVIEWS

Considerations shall be given to:

- providing legal caution and notification of the right to counsel where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the student being interviewed has been involved in the commission of a criminal offence;
- considering legal considerations respecting the admissibility of statements made to persons in authority;
- involving the local Children's Aid Society in the interview process, which is **required** when the child is potentially in need of protection; and
- requiring that an adult be present throughout the interview, except when the student can waive and has waived the right to have an adult present. Best efforts must be made to have the student's parent(s) or another adult of the student's choice present. In circumstances when this cannot be done, the principal, vice-principal, or designate must attend the interview.

13. DUTY TO REPORT – CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES ACT

Under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, section 125, every person who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is in need of protection must promptly report the suspicion and the information upon which it is based to a Children's Aid Society. This duty to report applies to anyone, including professionals who work with children, and they must make the report directly and personally. The duty to report is ongoing, meaning that if additional grounds for suspicion arise after the initial report, further reports must be made. Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect is an offense and may result in legal consequences.

The school boards have and will maintain policy and guidelines to ensure the safety of the students (i.e., the protocol for contacting the Children's Aid Society, etc.).

14. INVESTIGATION INVOLVING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

All school board staff have a duty to ensure that all members of the school community are able to work and learn in a safe and positive environment. They are obliged to report incidents to police as outlined in

this document. However, additional considerations must be considered by school board personnel and police in investigations that involve a student known to have special needs, who may be identified as having an exceptionality in any of the following categories: behaviour, communication, intellectual, physical, or multiple.

Considerations for handling such situations include the following requirements:

- informing the police of any student known to have special needs or communication difficulties;
- ensuring that accommodation for the student, particularly during interviews, and that specialised aids or resources are provided where necessary; and
- contacting the student's parent or guardian as promptly as possible, except in exigent circumstances or if police suspect the parent may be involved in the incident.

In cases involving students with special education needs, the principal, vice-principal, or designate should review the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and other relevant student records to identify whether further intervention strategies and/or resources are required for the student. These may include the development of and/or revisions to a Behaviour Management Plan or a Safety Plan.

15. OCCURRENCES INVOLVING CHILDREN UNDER 12

Where children under the age of 12 are involved, school boards are expected to use their discretion in applying the rules previously outlined for reporting incidents to police. Children under 12 cannot be charged with an offence under the *Criminal Code of Canada*, *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, or the *Provincial Offences Act*, but police may take reports of incidents allegedly committed by students in this age group and may respond in an appropriate manner. Early intervention for children involved in such incidents is essential, and involving police and parents as early as possible may facilitate the provision of appropriate intervention and support.

The principal, vice-principal, or designate is required to conduct an investigation of an incident for the purpose of school discipline (e.g., where a recommendation for suspension or expulsion may be required) regardless of the age of the students involved.

Under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, a “young person” refers to individuals aged 12 through 17. While students under 12 cannot face criminal charges, the police may still intervene to facilitate communication between the school and parents or guardians. However, as outlined in section 125(1)(12) of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, if a child under 12 years old has caused serious harm or damage and their parents or guardians fail to provide necessary services or treatment to prevent reoccurrence, the situation must be reported to the Children's Aid Society. This obligation extends to cases where the child cannot consent to treatment, and the parents or guardians decline or are unavailable to provide consent.

Police have the authority to arrest, when necessary, take reports, and conduct interviews. The principal, vice-principal, or designate will document attempts made to contact a parent or guardian. In cases involving students who are Crown Wards, the legal guardian is considered to be the Children's Aid Society (excluding foster parents).

Considerations for responding to occurrences involving students under the age of 12 include:

- the requirement for the principal, vice-principal, or designate to notify the child's parent or

guardian as soon as possible, except in exigent circumstances or where police believe the parent may be implicated in the incident;

- the need to provide accommodations and/or modifications for students with special needs, as outlined in their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs);
- the authority of police to take reports, make referrals to additional services (e.g., health or counseling), and conduct interviews; and
- the duty to report to a local Children’s Aid Society, as mandated by section 125(1) of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA)*, encompasses situations involving evidence of abuse or neglect, or the risk thereof. Additionally, it extends to cases where a child has engaged in serious behavior and the parent or guardian is not seeking appropriate treatment, as well as other circumstances outlined in section 125(1) of the *CYFSA*.

16. SCHOOL BOARD COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Regular and meaningful communication will garner support for this protocol from school councils, parents, staff, and students for the development and understanding of the contents.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEDIA

Police and the principal, vice-principal, or designate will collaborate prior to engaging with the media. Whenever feasible and appropriate, police will issue media releases regarding school-related incidents. Both parties will designate a lead spokesperson for media interactions during an incident. The Director of Education or their designate will serve as the school spokesperson, while the police spokesperson will typically take the lead in communicating with the media while the event or police investigation is ongoing.

17. PROTOCOL REVIEW PROCESS

A review of this protocol shall be conducted every two years or sooner if required.

The review is conducted by police and school board, who should develop an effective mechanism for soliciting input from school staff, students, and parents.

18. PHYSICAL SAFETY ISSUES

To enhance the safety of students, staff, and teachers, when requested, police can work in cooperation with local schools to assess areas of concern. School officials are encouraged to discuss details about the level of support and available resources with their local police service.

Similar support may be available to the school through the local police service for obtaining risk and/or threat assessment services.

19. RISK ASSESSMENT SERVICES

School staff should be vigilant when a student displays high-risk behavior that could potentially lead to serious criminal activity. Such behavior may include activities like collecting information on weapons or bomb-making or engaging in creative writing assignments depicting death and destruction.

Incidents of violence in schools can often be prevented through early intervention in response to threatening behavior or behavior that, while not explicitly threatening, raises concerns about potential violence. Identifying at-risk students through early and ongoing assessment, as well as implementing intervention strategies, can significantly reduce the need for disciplinary actions and police involvement.

In cases where such behavior is observed, the principal, vice-principal, or designate should promptly contact the relevant police service for their jurisdiction. The incident will be assessed, and if necessary, the police service involved will contact the OPP Threat and Behavior Analysis Team for further assistance.

20. EMERGENCY PLANNING AND THREATS TO SCHOOL SAFETY

Schools are expected to develop an Emergency and Crisis Response Plan, in keeping with school board policies, with appropriate follow-up measures. The plan should be communicated to members of the school community and police services. School boards are not required to translate their Emergency and Crisis Response Plan.

Response plans should be developed for the following emergencies:

- fire;
- bomb threat or explosion;
- armed intruder;
- violent or potentially violent incident (e.g., active shooter);
- tragic response (e.g., school bus collision involving deaths or injuries);
- evacuations to an alternate site;
- safe arrival procedures for elementary schools; and
- any other threats unique to the school that require emergency preparedness.

The development and monitoring of this plan should include teachers, staff, students, and school councils. The plan should be fully communicated to members of the school community and police services. Mechanisms for sharing the Emergency and Crisis Response Plan with police services should be specified.

CRISIS INTERVENTION REPORTING

When police arrive at the school in response to a crisis, the school will provide the following upon request:

- a complete list of staff and students;
- class schedules and time tables;
- attendance records for that day;
- access to video footage (CCTC);
- floor plans of the school, including environmental and mechanical systems;
- master keys; and
- telephone numbers, including teachers with access to cellular phones.

FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

The principal, vice-principal, or designate shall report to a supervisory officer as soon as possible the basic details of a crisis event and shall follow up with a detailed written report when the crisis has passed. The Director of Education will provide information for school board trustees.

They will involve various teams and services as deemed necessary to help students and staff members cope with critical and/or tragic events.

School personnel and students should be made aware of certain police procedures that can be expected in instances of an emergent ongoing incident of a violent nature.

21. TRAINING

This document specifies the requirement that the school boards and police services provide training on the Ontario North East Region Safe Schools Protocol to their respective staff on an annual basis.

To improve collaboration between local police services and schools, training should be based upon effective leading practices and, where possible, the training should be delivered by police and school board personnel.

The principal will review the school's Emergency and Crisis Response Plan with staff and school council at least annually and will ensure that staff is aware of the points of contact (e.g., 911 for emergencies). The police service should be invited to participate in this process.

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

| TERM | DEFINITION |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| ARREST/DETENTION | Both arrest and detention involve the legal restriction of a person’s liberty. However, detention differs from arrest in that police can detain someone without formally charging them with an offense. This typically occurs when the police have suspicions about a person's activity but lack sufficient grounds to charge them with a specific offense, and they aim to gather more information. There are four types of detention: physical, lawful, psychological, and investigative, as outlined in Section 10 of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i> . |
| ASSAULT | <p><i>As defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 265)</i></p> <p>(1) A person commits an assault when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) without the consent of another person, he applies force intentionally to that other person, directly or indirectly; (b) he attempts or threatens, by an act or a gesture, to apply force to another person, if he has, or causes that other person to believe on reasonable grounds that he has, present ability to effect his purpose; or (c) while openly wearing or carrying a weapon or an imitation thereof, he accosts or impedes another person or begs. <p><i>Application</i></p> <p>(2) This section applies to all forms of assault, including sexual assault, sexual assault with a weapon, threats to a third party or causing bodily harm and aggravated sexual assault.</p> |
| BARRICADING | Creating a further barrier to a classroom or office that would obstruct the entry of an intruder should the locked door be compromised. Barricading can be done by a number of means, including but not limited to adding a secondary locking mechanism or blocking the doorway with a large moveable object or with multiple smaller moveable objects. The barricade should be capable of being removed to allow exit from the room once the lockdown incident has been resolved. |
| BOARD CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM | <p>A team of professional support services staff and educators who are trained to respond in crisis events in a school system. A crisis event is a death, accident or traumatic event that affects students, staff and school community that goes beyond the school resources in terms of coping and responding.</p> <p>The primary focus of crisis response is restoring equilibrium to address immediate and short-term mental health needs of students and staff which includes psychological first aid and immediate coping counseling.</p> |
| BODILY HARM | <p><i>As defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 2)</i></p> <p>For the purposes of this section, “bodily harm” means any hurt or injury to the person that interferes with the health or comfort of the person and that is more than merely transient or trifling in nature.</p> |
| BULLYING | <p><i>As defined in the Education Act</i></p> <p>means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) causing harm, fear, or distress to another individual, including |

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| | <p>physical, psychological, social, or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or</p> <p>(ii) creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and</p> <p>(b) the behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability, or the receipt of special education;</p> |
| <p>CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY</p> | <p>For the purposes of this protocol, shall also include any equivalent child protection agency.</p> |
| <p>CRIMINAL HARASSMENT</p> | <p><i>As defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 264)</i></p> <p>(1) No person shall, without lawful authority and knowing that another person is harassed or recklessly as to whether the other person is harassed, engage in conduct referred to in subsection (2) that causes that other person reasonably, in all the circumstances, to fear for their safety or the safety of anyone known to them.</p> <p><i>Prohibited conduct</i></p> <p>(2) The conduct mentioned in subsection (1) consists of</p> <p>(a) repeatedly following from place to place the other person or anyone known to them;</p> <p>(b) repeatedly communicating with, either directly or indirectly, the other person or anyone known to them;</p> <p>(c) besetting or watching the dwelling-house, or place where the other person, or anyone known to them, resides, works, carries on business, or happens to be; or</p> <p>(d) engaging in threatening conduct directed at the other person or any member of their family.</p> |
| <p>DESIGNATE</p> | <p>A teacher appointed by a board to perform in respect of a school the duties of a principal under the <i>Education Act</i> and the regulations. From time to time some duties of the principal may be assigned to a designate.</p> |
| <p>EMERGENCY AND CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN</p> | <p>An Emergency and Crisis Response Plan is a comprehensive strategy designed to address various emergency situations that may arise within a school environment. It outlines procedures and protocols to ensure the safety and well-being of students, staff, and other stakeholders during critical incidents. The plan typically covers a range of scenarios, including natural disasters, medical emergencies, violence, and other unforeseen events.</p> |
| <p>EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES</p> | <p>Urgent, pressing, and/or emergency circumstances. Exigent circumstances usually exist when immediate action is required for the safety of the police or others. Such circumstances may include a bomb threat, a person possessing or using a weapon, or a fire on school property.</p> |
| <p>EXPLOSIVE SUBSTANCE</p> | <p><i>As defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 2)</i></p> <p>Includes</p> <p>(a) anything intended to be used to make an explosive substance,</p> <p>(b) anything, or any part thereof, used or intended to be used, or adapted to cause, or to aid in causing an explosion in or with an explosive substance, and</p> |

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| | (c) an incendiary grenade, fire bomb, Molotov cocktail or other similar incendiary substance or device and a delaying mechanism or other thing intended for use in connection with such a substance or device; |
| EXPULSION | The removal of a student from his or her school or from all schools of the board. Students expelled only from their school are assigned to another school of the board. Students expelled from all schools of the board must be offered a program for expelled students. Activities for which expulsion must be considered are found in section 310(1) of the <i>Education Act</i> . An example is using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm. |
| EXTORTION | <i>As defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 346(1))</i> (1) Everyone commits extortion who, without reasonable justification or excuse and with intent to obtain anything, by threats, accusations, menaces, or violence induces or attempts to induce any person, whether or not he is the person threatened, accused, or menaced or to whom violence is shown, to do anything or cause anything to be done. |
| EXTRA-JUDICIAL MEASURES | Measures used by police to hold a young person accountable for his or her alleged criminal behavior, in a timely manner, outside the formal youth justice system. The formal system would include charging the individual and going through the court process. Extra-judicial measures hold a youth accountable for his or her actions and provide sanctions outside of judicial proceedings. Some examples of sanctions include substance abuse counselling, volunteer work, repair of or compensation for damaged or stolen property, and a letter of apology. |
| FAMILY REUNIFICATION SITE | Reunification sites play a critical role in ensuring the safety and well-being of students during emergencies. When an incident occurs at a school (such as a natural disaster, violence, or other crisis), students may need to be evacuated from the school premises. The reunification site serves as a central location where parents or legal guardians can pick up their children and be informed about the situation. To ensure security and controlled access, a double gate system is often used at the reunification site. Parents enter through one gate, complete necessary paperwork, and receive identification. Students are released through a separate gate, where parents present their identification to pick them up. Remember that effective family reunification planning is essential for maintaining order and minimizing stress during crisis situations in schools. |
| FIREARM | <i>As defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 2)</i> A barrelled weapon from which any shot, bullet or other projectile can be discharged and that is capable of causing serious bodily injury or death to a person and includes any frame or receiver of such a barreled weapon and anything that can be adapted for use as a firearm. |
| FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT, R.S.O. 1990 S. 42 | An institution shall not disclose personal information in its custody or under its control except to an institution or a law enforcement agency in Canada if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the disclosure is to aid an investigation undertaken with a view to a law enforcement proceeding; or • there is a reasonable basis to believe that an offence may have been committed and the disclosure is to enable the institution or the agency to determine whether to conduct such an investigation. |

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| GANG-RELATED OCCURRENCES | Incidents involving a group that consists of three or more persons, however organized, and has as one of its main purposes the commission or facilitation of a criminal offence in which any or all the members engage. |
| HATE/BIAS MOTIVATED CRIME | <i>As defined in the Policing Standards Manual 2000</i> A criminal occurrence committed against a person or property which is motivated by hate/bias or prejudice based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or any other similar factor. |
| HATE AND/OR BIAS MOTIVATED OCCURRENCES | Incidents (e.g., involving statements, words, gestures) motivated by hatred or bias towards an identifiable group (i.e., a group distinguished by colour, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnic origin) that are willfully intended to promote or incite bias or hatred against such a group. |
| INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP) | An individual education plan (IEP) is a written plan that describes special education programs, accommodations, and services that a school board will provide for a student. The IEP includes a description of the student’s strengths and needs and specific educational expectations; an outline of the special education program and services that will be received; a statement about the methods by which the student’s progress will be reviewed; and a transition plan that includes the specific goals, actions required, person(s) responsible for actions, and timelines for each educational transition where the student requires support. |
| INTIMIDATION | <i>As defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 423)</i> (1) Every one is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than five years or is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction who, wrongfully and without lawful authority, for the purpose of compelling another person to abstain from doing anything that he or she has a lawful right to do, or to do anything that he or she has a lawful right to abstain from doing, (a) uses violence or threats of violence to that person or their intimate partner or children, or injures the person’s property; (b) intimidates or attempts to intimidate that person or a relative of that person by threats that, in Canada or elsewhere, violence or other injury will be done to, or punishment inflicted on him or her or a relative of his or hers, or that the property of any of them will be damaged; (c) persistently follows that person; (d) hides any tools, clothes or other property owned or used by that person, or deprives him or her of them or hinders him or her in the use of them; (e) with one or more other persons, follows that person, in a disorderly manner, on a highway; (f) besets or watches the place where that person resides, works, carries on business, or happens to be; or (g) blocks or obstructs a highway. <i>Exception</i> (2) A person who attends at or near or approaches a dwelling-house or place, for the purpose only of obtaining or communicating information, does not watch or beset within the meaning of this section. |

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| LOCKDOWN | A procedure used in response to a major incident or threat of violence within the school or in relation to the school. (See Appendix B) |
| MISCHIEF (VANDALISM) | <p><i>As defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 430)</i></p> <p>(1) Everyone commits mischief who willfully:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) destroys or damages property; (b) renders property dangerous, useless, inoperative, or ineffective; (c) obstructs, interrupts, or interferes with the lawful use, enjoyment, or operation of property; or (d) obstructs, interrupts, or interferes with any person in the lawful use, enjoyment, or operation of property. |
| MITIGATING FACTORS | <p><i>As defined in the Education Act, Ontario Regulation 472/07</i></p> <p>(2) For the purposes of subsections 306 (2), 306 (4), 310 (3), 311.1 (4) and clauses 311.3 (7) (b) and 311.4 (2) (b) of the Act, the following mitigating factors shall be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The pupil does not have the ability to control his or her behaviour. 2. The pupil does not have the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour. 3. The pupil’s continuing presence in the school does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any person. |
| NEGATIVE IMPACT ON SCHOOL CLIMATE | A possible result of inappropriate activities or behaviours, whether those activities or behaviours occur inside or outside the school. Actions or behaviours that occur outside school may still have a negative impact on school climate. For example, cyberbullying often occurs outside school, but if it targets individual students and causes them to be afraid to come to school, it is having a negative impact on school climate. |
| OFFENDER | <p><i>As defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 2)</i></p> <p>A person who has been determined by a court to be guilty of an offence, whether on acceptance of a plea of guilty or on a finding of guilt.</p> |
| OTHER FACTORS | <p><i>As defined in the Education Act, Ontario Regulation 472/07</i></p> <p>3. For the purposes of subsections 306 (2), 306 (4), 310 (3), 311.1 (4) and clauses 311.3 (7) (b) and 311.4 (2) (b) of the Act, the following other factors shall be taken into account if they would mitigate the seriousness of the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The pupil’s history. 2. Whether a progressive discipline approach has been used with the pupil. 3. Whether the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended or expelled was related to any harassment of the pupil because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation or to any other harassment. 4. How the suspension or expulsion would affect the pupil’s ongoing education 5. The age of the pupil. 6. In the case of a pupil for whom an individual education plan has been developed, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Whether the behavior was a manifestation of a disability identified in the pupil’s individual education plan, ii. Whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been |

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| | <p>provided, and</p> <p>Whether the suspension or expulsion is likely to result in an aggravation or a worsening of the pupil's behavior or conduct.</p> |
| PARENT | <p>Refers to a parent or legal guardian; that is, a person legally entrusted with the care of, and managing the property and rights of, another person, usually a child/youth who is under the age of 18. For the purposes of Part XIII of the <i>Education Act</i>, students who are 18 years of age or older and students who are 16 or 17 years of age but have withdrawn from parental control are considered to be adults.</p> |
| POSSESSION OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE (DRUGS) | <p>Having a controlled substance (e.g., a drug or narcotic, as set out in the <i>Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and Cannabis Act</i>.) in one's personal possession or possessing it jointly with others, including knowingly possessing an illegal drug elsewhere.</p> |
| POSSESSION OF WEAPON FOR DANGEROUS PURPOSE | <p><i>As defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 88)</i></p> <p>Every person commits an offence who carries or possesses a weapon, an imitation of a weapon, a prohibited device or any ammunition or prohibited ammunition for a purpose dangerous to the public peace or for the purpose of committing an offence.</p> |
| PUBLICATION, ETC., OF AN INTIMATE IMAGE WITHOUT CONSENT | <p><i>As defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 162.1)</i></p> <p>(1) Everyone who knowingly publishes, distributes, transmits, sells, makes available or advertises an intimate image of a person knowing that the person depicted in the image did not give their consent to that conduct, or being reckless as to whether or not that person gave their consent to that conduct, is guilty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than five years; or (b) of an offence punishable on summary conviction. <p><i>Definition of intimate image</i></p> <p>(2) In this section, intimate image means a visual recording of a person made by any means including a photographic, film or video recording,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) in which the person is nude, is exposing his or her genital organs or anal region or her breasts or is engaged in explicit sexual activity; (b) in respect of which, at the time of the recording, there were circumstances that gave rise to a reasonable expectation of privacy; and (c) in respect of which the person depicted retains a reasonable expectation of privacy at the time the offence is committed. |
| RELATIONSHIP-BASED VIOLENCE | <p>Any behaviour or action that is used to scare, harm, threaten, control, intimidate, or injure another person within an intimate relationship. The behaviour or action can be physical, sexual, or emotional, and it may comprise a single act of violence, regardless of the level of physical injury, or a number of acts forming a pattern of abuse through the use of assaultive and controlling behavior.</p> |
| ROBBERY | <p><i>As defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 343)</i></p> <p>Everyone commits robbery who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) steals, and for the purpose of extorting whatever is stolen or to prevent or overcome resistance to the stealing, uses violence or threats of violence to a person or property; (b) steals from any person and, at the time he steals or immediately before or immediately thereafter, wounds, beats, strikes, or uses any personal violence |

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| | <p>to that person;</p> <p>(c) assaults any person with intent to steal from him; or</p> <p>(d) steals from any person while armed with an offensive weapon or imitation thereof.</p> |
| SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT | <p>A school code of conduct is a set of rules and standards that define the behavior expected of students, teachers, and other members of the school community. These standards of behaviour apply whether they are on school property, on school buses, at school-related events or activities, or in other circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate.</p> |
| SEXUAL ASSAULT | <p><i>As defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 271)</i></p> <p>Everyone who commits a sexual assault is guilty of</p> <p>(a) an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than 10 years or, if the complainant is under the age of 16 years, to imprisonment for a term of not more than 14 years and to a minimum punishment of imprisonment for a term of one year; or</p> <p>(b) an offence punishable on summary conviction and is liable to imprisonment for a term of not more than 18 months or, if the complainant is under the age of 16 years, to imprisonment for a term of not more than two years less a day and to a minimum punishment of imprisonment for a term of six months.</p> |
| SUSPENSION | <p>The removal of a student from his or her school and all school-related activities for a minimum of one school day to a maximum of twenty school days. Activities for which suspension must be considered are found in subsection 306(1) and subsection 310(1) of the <i>Education Act</i>.</p> |
| THREATS | <p>Any statement, act, or communication by any means, including electronic means, of an intent to cause harm, whether physical or emotional, to any person or thing, in circumstances where the person threatened believes or has grounds to believe the threat may be carried out.</p> |
| TRAFFICKING | <p>Assisting in any manner with the distribution of a controlled drug or substance, as set out in the <i>Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and Cannabis Act</i>, or with the distribution of weapons.</p> |
| VICTIM | <p><i>As defined in the Canadian Victims' Bill of Rights</i></p> <p>An individual who has suffered physical or emotional harm, property damage or economic loss as a result of the commission or alleged commission of an offence.</p> |
| WEAPON | <p><i>As defined in the Criminal Code of Canada (s. 2)</i></p> <p>Means any thing used, designed to be used or intended for use</p> <p>(a) in causing death or injury to any person, or</p> <p>(b) for the purpose of threatening or intimidating any person</p> <p>and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, includes a firearm and, for the purposes of sections 88, 267 and 272, any thing used, designed to be used or intended for use in binding or tying up a person against their will.</p> |

APPENDIX B: LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

Staff, students, and visitors in Ontario's schools have the right to learn, work, and be present in a safe and secure environment. However, the possibility of a major incident of violence is a reality that cannot be overlooked. Everyone who spends any amount of time in an Ontario school on a regular basis needs to know how to protect themselves and how to protect students in the event of a major incident or threat of school violence.

Given the dynamic, complex, and fluid nature of such incidents, continuous communication, assessment, and coordination by first responders and the principal, vice-principal, or designate are of paramount importance in ensuring an effective response. School board and police department staff must bring this understanding to all planning and training related to lockdown procedures.

Plans and procedures reflecting the following policy must be included in the school's Emergency and Crisis Response Plan, which must be appended to the protocol.

PURPOSE

Based on lockdown procedures that have already been established in many Ontario schools, the following policy is being provided to help elementary and secondary schools ensure their lockdown plans meet basic requirements and to ensure a degree of consistency across the province.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

While much of what is provided will be termed *Effective Practices*, there are two key elements which the *Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP)* is recommending as mandatory requirements by the Ministry of Education:

1. All publicly funded school boards in Ontario must establish a lockdown policy to ensure the development and implementation of individual school plans.
2. A minimum of two lockdown drills must occur each school year. It is recommended that one lockdown drill occur before September 30.

In developing lockdown plans, each elementary and secondary school should consider the following policy.

TERMINOLOGY TO BE USED

Clear and precise terminology is paramount. Plans must distinctly delineate when to implement a "lockdown" compared to other terms. The language used to initiate a lockdown should be straightforward, unambiguous, and eliminate any potential for misunderstanding regarding expectations. Avoid the use of covert passwords.

Lockdown

Definition A safety protocol implemented in educational institutions to secure students, staff, and faculty in response to a perceived threat or emergency situation, such as a potential intruder or external danger (e.g. locking all doors, hiding in classroom, evacuating to safety if possible).

Use Should be reserved for instances of significant incidents or credible threats of school violence occurring within or directly related to the school. Overusing or misusing "lockdown" may desensitize staff and students, leading to a lack of seriousness when genuine emergencies arise.

Hold and Secure

Definition Involves securing the perimeter of a school building to prevent individuals from entering or leaving due to a threat or emergency situation in the vicinity, while normal activities continue inside the school

Use Should be used when it is desirable to secure the school due to an ongoing situation outside and not related to the school (e.g., a criminal incident near a school but not on school property).

School boards must use the above terminology in developing local plans to ensure consistency across the province. This policy focuses primarily on lockdowns.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and expectations are critical in emergency situations. At a minimum, plans should include expectations with respect to staff, students, parents, and police. The lockdown policy should address issues such as accessibility and communications for students with special needs.

Principal

The principal has several crucial responsibilities to ensure the safety of its students and staff. These include:

- developing the final content of the plan;
- coordinating exercises;
- inviting police, fire and emergency medical services to participate in these initiatives;
- regular training of students and staff; and
- the general safety of staff and students.

In the event of a real incident, such as a threat or criminal offence, the police take over the management of the situation and subsequent investigation, but the full cooperation of the school management is imperative to facilitate an effective response.

Staff

School staff, particularly the principal, have the overall responsibility for the training, safety, and well-being of students. During a violent incident, principals, vice-principals, or designates have additional responsibilities in terms of working closely with police. It is important to note that it is not necessary for a lockdown to be initiated by the principal, vice-principal, or designate; any staff member can call a lockdown as needed.

Students

Students are expected to acquaint themselves with the plan and promptly follow staff instructions during a lockdown. Any student possessing information or prior knowledge of an individual or potential situation that could lead to a violent incident must promptly disclose such information. This applies both before and during an incident. It's important to note that in nearly every instance of major violence at a school, it was discovered later that one or more students had prior knowledge of the situation but chose not to report it.

Police

Police must respond to and investigate violent incidents. During a violent incident, police will assume command and control of the response and investigation but will liaise and work closely with school administration and other emergency services throughout the process. Police must be familiar with the locations and internal designs of schools within their areas of patrol. Police can also contribute to educating students in matters related to safe schools.

Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians will be informed of the existence of this plan by the principal. Parents should review and discuss their child's responsibilities with respect to following directions and disclosing any incident-related information during a violent incident. During a crisis, parents are to follow instructions given by the police services through a dedicated phone application, when available, or through communications emanating from the police service's communication services. Parents and guardians must not attend the school during a crisis. This could impede the critical work being carried out by emergency services. The location of the family reunification site will be disclosed by police as soon as possible.

School Councils

Members of School Councils need to support the local school plan and assist the school principals in promoting awareness of the plan throughout the broader school community.

PREPARATION AND PLANNING

Crisis and Evacuation Kits

On the onset of a lockdown, police will access the fire box to obtain the master key. Additionally, as soon as possible, emergency personnel will require specific information and materials that are essential to an efficient response. These include:

- a complete list of staff and students;
- class schedules and time tables;
- attendance records for that day;
- access to video footage (CCTC);
- floor plans of the school including environmental and mechanical systems;
- master keys; and
- telephone numbers including teachers with access to cellular phones.

These materials should be made easily available either in paper or electronic format.

Floor Plans

Accurate floor plans are a key component of lockdown plans and are important from both a planning and a response standpoint.

Effective Practices

Consideration should be given to colour coding floor plans using three colours, such as red, green, and blue. Red indicates danger areas of the school that cannot be locked down safely, with green identifying areas where staff and students are to proceed to safely lock down. Blue areas identify command post locations, which will be utilized by police depending on the nature of the incident.

Normally, the main office will be a command post location, with another area within the school identified as an alternate command post location. A third off-site command post location should be identified within the individual school plan in the event that neither on-site command post location is available. Information regarding command post locations should **not** be publicly circulated.

Floor plans should be posted throughout the school, at least in every classroom and at every entry point to the school. In multi-level buildings, it is suggested that only the floor plans relevant to a specific level be posted on that level.

Hard copies of floor plans should be provided to police, along with electronic copies if available.

Identification of Buildings, Exterior Doors, and Classrooms

To assist police in responding to a major incident or threat of violence, buildings, entrances, and all rooms within buildings need to be clearly identified.

Effective Practices

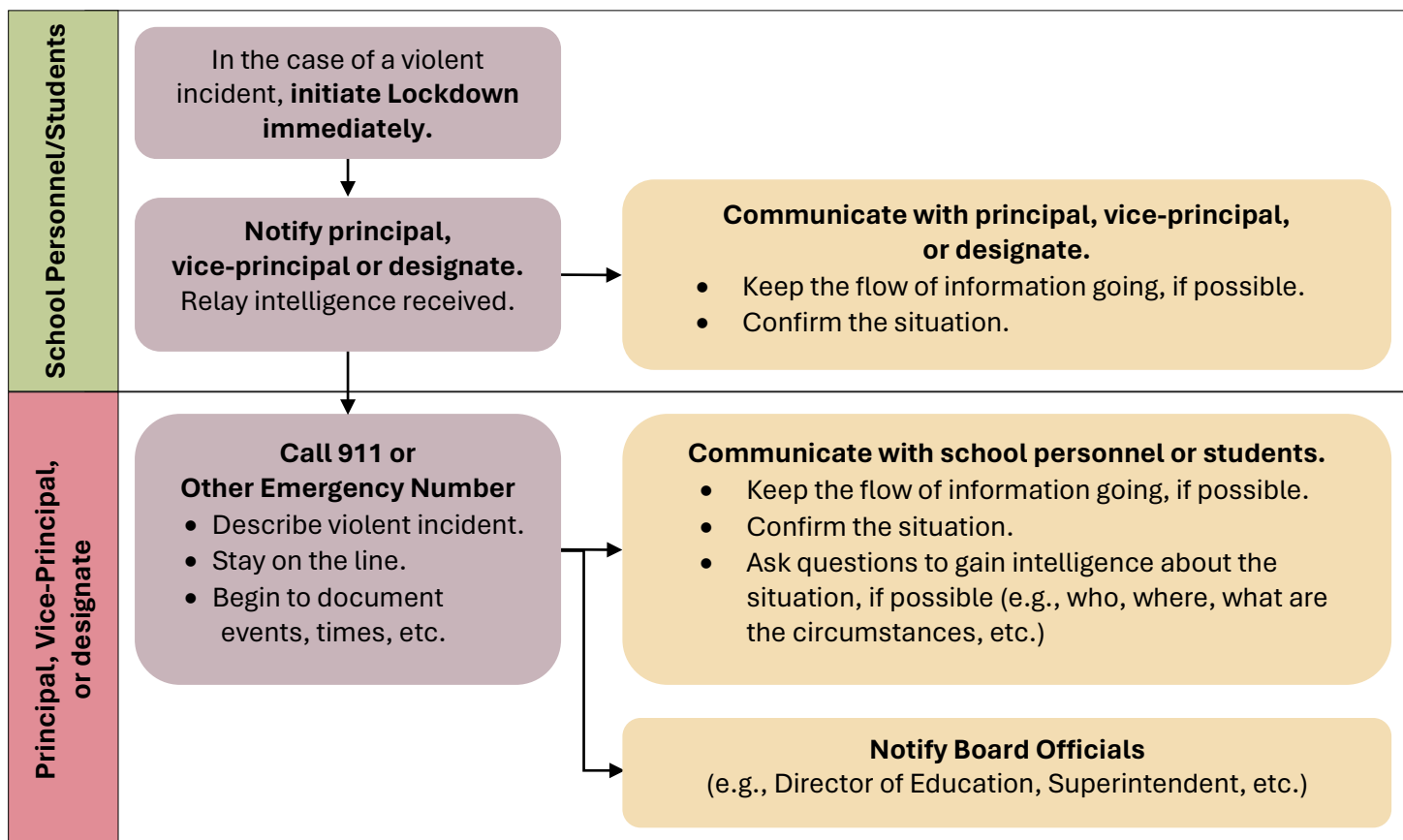
In situations where more than one building exists on school grounds, each building should be clearly identified on all sides of the building with a building identifier, such as a number. All portables shall be clearly identified as well.

All exterior doors should be clearly identified (e.g., doors A, B, C, etc.).

All rooms within the building should be clearly marked with room numbers.

INITIATING LOCKDOWN

Plans should emphasize the importance of locking down as quickly as possible. At the first indication of a major incident of school violence, the lockdown must commence immediately. Any staff member can initiate a lockdown.



Call 911 or Local Emergency Number

The person receiving notification of the violent incident calls 911 or local emergency number or requests someone to immediately call 911. If you are the only one in the office, you should attempt to initiate the Lockdown before calling 911. A call to 911 will initiate assistance from police services, as well as fire and ambulance services if required.

When you call 911:

- identify yourself, the school’s name, and full address;
- describe situation (provide all known information);
- identify whether anyone is injured and the severity of the injuries;
- stay on the line and continue to provide information as requested by the emergency operator;

- explain safe approach (routes/entrance) for police if known; and
- begin to document times and events relating to the incident.

If you haven't already done so, notify the principal/vice-principal or designate of the situation and provide all known information about the incident.

Violent Incident

When a Violent Incident Occurs

Although every effort is made to ensure a safe school environment, staff, and students need to be aware of the possibility that a violent incident can occur at any time or in any location within a school.

If you observe a violent incident, **DO NOT CONFRONT THE SUSPECT.**

It is critical to notify the principal, vice-principal, or designate. As well, if it is safe to do so without danger to yourself or others, obtain the following details:

- location and number of suspects;
- suspect moving or stationary;
- identity of suspect;
- description of physical appearance (e.g., clothing, build, etc.);
- description of weapons;
- possible motive or threats made; and
- any known injuries and location of casualties.

When Principal, Vice-Principal, or Designate is Notified of a Violent Incident

When a violent incident is reported, staff in the office need to keep the flow of information ongoing, obtaining as much detail about the incident as possible from the initial observer. A priority at this point is to confirm a violent incident is occurring. It is important to note that it is not necessary for a lockdown to be initiated by the principal, vice-principal, or designate, as any staff member can call a lockdown as needed.

Announcing Lockdown or Hold and Secure

When alerted to a violent incident, promptly initiating a lockdown, contacting 911 (or the local emergency number), and informing the principal, vice-principal, or designate should occur simultaneously. Responding personnel must exercise individual judgment on prioritizing actions, always prioritizing the safety of students and staff at risk. Remember the following guidelines: **If possible, flee; if not, seek refuge; and if found, defend yourself.**

Decisions regarding evacuation or lockdown will depend on the judgment of staff members in different areas of the building. Factors to consider include:

- the location of the threat;
- the nature of the threat;
- the mobility of the threat;
- a clear means of evacuation that will not cross the path of the threat;
- the ability to secure and/or barricade the room that is being occupied;
- alternate means of evacuation;

- the number of students involved;
- any victims requiring immediate attention; and
- the use of random or targeted violence to any one or several individuals.

These are only some considerations. The common sense, judgment, and leadership of staff members will determine the appropriate actions to be taken.

If the incident is taking place beyond the limits of the school property, a hold and secure could be the better course of action as to permit the school to function normally, with the exterior doors remaining locked until such time as the situation near the school is resolved. The primary intention here is to keep the students safe within the school.

Lockdown and Hold and Secure Procedures

The person receiving the report of a violent incident initiates the lockdown procedure as follows:

1. Activate all public address (PA) systems (inside and outside).
2. Clearly and calmly announce on the public address (PA) system whether it is a Lockdown or a Hold and Secure situation. If possible, utilize a pre-recorded message to consistently broadcast the lockdown instructions.
3. Upon hearing the announcement, staff will immediately initiate appropriate procedures.
4. During this time, occupants will disregard fire alarm system and school bells unless otherwise informed.
5. The Lockdown or Hold and Secure is in effect until cancelled by police, principal, vice-principal or designate.

Note: Depending on the individual school plan and the situation (e.g., location and actions of the suspect) consideration must be given to the controlled evacuation of students to identified secure areas. See [Individual School Plan](#) for details relating to your school.

The Major Incident Commander from police will coordinate activities on the scene.

Effective Practices

All staff, especially those stationed in the main office, should undergo training. Upon receiving information indicating the need for a lockdown, the individual receiving such information must promptly activate the school's public address (PA) system indoors and outdoors, announcing the lockdown. There should be no hesitation in initiating the lockdown, and the decision to do so should be made immediately by the staff member who receives the call to the office, without delay for the purpose of consulting with the principal, vice-principal, or designate beforehand.

School boards should consider both auditory (PA) and visual notification systems inside and outside the school to announce a lockdown. Consider using strobe lights or other visual indicators alongside the PA system in areas with high noise levels, such as cafeterias and outdoor spaces, to ensure the safety of hearing-impaired individuals and to ensure that all staff and students receive important announcements.

It is recommended that the actual wording announcing a lockdown be affixed on or near the microphone, so that it is clearly visible and can be read by the person announcing the lockdown.

Where possible, the message announcing a lockdown should be recorded and available to be launched as a repeated message.

LOCKING DOWN

If the threat is nearby and there are no safe exit routes available, you have the option to remain in a classroom or another location that can be secured and barricaded. Locate an area within the room that offers good protection and place any solid items available between yourself, the students, and the threat. Police responding to the incident will be informed of your situation and will locate you accordingly. They should have a master key to access the room. Do not open the door unless you are absolutely certain that it does not pose a risk to you or others.

Lockdown describes the steps that school staff members take to ensure the safety and security of school occupants during a violent incident. These steps are outlined below. Every attempt should be made to respond quickly and calmly.

Procedures During Lockdown

In School Buildings

During the lockdown phase, the priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of students. They should be directed away from danger and guided to the nearest secure area. Staff should remain with the students and, if possible, secure the doors to implement the lockdown. Once in the secure area, staff should assess for any injuries and determine their severity. Necessary steps should be taken to provide aid to the injured individuals while ensuring the safety of everyone involved.

In Classrooms and Portables

Students should be directed to move away from doors and windows, maintaining quietness and following staff and police instructions. Lights should be switched off, and blinds closed to minimize visibility into the room. Staff need to be mindful of sightlines, avoiding them as much as possible, and considering covering any windows in classroom doors. If available, staff and students should take cover behind solid objects.

Contact with the office should only occur for vital information regarding the violent incident. It's crucial for staff and students to remain silent, refraining from talking or calling out. While cell phones may be utilized to text essential emergency details, excessive usage should be avoided to prevent overwhelming communication lines. Handheld radios can also convey crucial information, with audible sounds muted, and volume minimized.

Staff should take attendance and complete an attendance report, disregarding fire alarm systems and school bells unless otherwise instructed. Everyone should remain in the secure location until notified by appropriate personnel on further actions to take. If a door lacks a locking mechanism, staff should explore ways to secure it using items like door wedges, chairs, or desks. Barricading doors should also be considered for added protection.

Detailed procedures for locking down a classroom or other secure areas should be outlined in plans. It's recommended that before locking a door, staff gather everyone nearby into their classroom or

secure area if safe to do so. Additionally, strategies should be developed for assisting students in coping with an extended lockdown or Hold and Secure. Access to emergency medications for prevalent medical conditions should be ensured, with the goal of making the classroom appear vacant.

Effective Practices

Plans must address unique challenges associated with portables, such as their thin wall construction. To mitigate potential risks, it is recommended to tip desks onto their sides with the desktops facing outward, serving as an additional barrier against stray rounds. Additionally, plans should outline procedures for effectively and safely locking down a school portable.

In the Main Office

In the event of an emergency, several critical steps must be taken to ensure the safety and security of all individuals involved. Firstly, it is imperative to notify the principal, vice-principal, or designate immediately. Simultaneously, contact the police via 911 or the local emergency number to alert them to the situation.

Next, all staff and students should be instructed to vacate hallways and relocate to secure rooms. Once inside these rooms, they must lock their doors to prevent unauthorized entry and ensure their safety. Additionally, the office should be locked to facilitate uninterrupted communication with staff and emergency responders.

A designated individual should be assigned to remain at the intercom as a communicator, ensuring clear communication channels for emergency updates and instructions. It's essential to maintain clear access to the intercom for emergency use, including providing portable radios if staff are outside in the playground with children. These coordinated actions are crucial for effectively managing emergencies and ensuring the safety of everyone involved.

In the Washrooms

Plans should address what staff and students should do if they are in a washroom when a lockdown is called.

Effective Practices

Washrooms, being unable to be locked, should be identified as danger (red) areas during planning for a lockdown. Students should evacuate washrooms if possible and move to an area that can be safely locked down (green).

For elementary schools, it is recommended that plans designate adults who normally work in close proximity to student washrooms to check the washroom(s) prior to locking down themselves, if it safe to do so. After gathering students in the immediate vicinity of their classroom door into their classroom, they would quickly check both male and female washrooms to which they have been assigned in the planning phase, if it is safe to do so, and take any students found in the washrooms into their classrooms to lock down. If it is not possible to leave the washroom, students and/or staff should lock stall, sit on the toilet, and lift legs.

For secondary schools, it is recommended that training include an explanation to students that they are responsible for getting out of the washrooms immediately upon hearing a lockdown announced and getting to the nearest classroom or other area that is identified as a safe (green) area.

As a last resort, staff or students trapped in a washroom should attempt to somehow secure the bathroom door, enter a stall, lock the door, and climb on top of the toilet.

Plans need to indicate that staff and students should be moved from washrooms into classrooms but not if it means moving into immediate danger. In those instances, staff and students should remain in the washroom and attempt to make the washroom appear vacant.

In Open Areas

Plans should recognize that open areas, including cafeterias, libraries, and hallways, are the most vulnerable areas of a school, making them the most likely location for a shooting and the most difficult areas to quickly and effectively secure.

Effective Practices

Considerable time and attention need to be given to open areas during the planning phase. All possible options should be considered to best address these highly vulnerable areas, including the possibility of evacuating to the exterior of the school. This may be the best option if these areas are adjacent to exterior walls and have doors leading to the outside. It is very important during staff and student training that everyone understand what to do and where to go if a lockdown is called when they are in an open area.

Childcare and Other Facility Occupants

As many schools have licensed childcare centres or other tenants and community groups using school premises, those organizations or individuals must be taken into consideration at all stages.

Effective Practices

It is important that principals, vice-principals, or designates ensure the appropriate staff from organizations sharing facilities are included in the development and implementation of lockdown procedures and that these organizations participate in aspects of planning, training, and drills.

Outside of School Buildings When a Lockdown Is Called

Not all students and staff will be inside the building when a violent incident occurs. Procedures must address where staff and students outside the school should go in the event of a lockdown. These procedures should also address how people who are outside the school building will know where the evacuation sites are located.

If you find yourself outside the building during an evacuation, adhere to the steps outlined in the evacuation plan. Staff members should exercise their judgment based on their specific location outside, always prioritizing the safety of students and themselves as their primary responsibility.

Effective Practices

To ensure that those who are outside school buildings are aware that the school is locking down, the PA system must be capable of being activated outside the school. Consideration should also be given to include an exterior visual indicator (e.g., strobe lights) that can be used to indicate that a lockdown has been called.

Those who are outside the school when a lockdown is called shall not re-enter the school but shall proceed immediately to the pre-determined off-site evacuation location(s). Once at the location, staff and students shall remain in that location until further advised by the principal, vice-principal, designate, or police. Plans should include the taking of attendance at the off-site evacuation location(s). Neighbouring schools may not be the best option as off-site evacuation locations, as they too may lock down once they become aware of an incident at a nearby school.

Note: When a Hold and Secure situation occurs and staff and students are outside the building, they should re-enter the building prior to the exterior doors being locked.

CONTROLLED EVACUATION

Every school plan must detail procedures to facilitate a safe and effective partial or full evacuation of the facility. **See [Appendix D: Guidelines for Evacuations in the event of a fire, bomb threat, or violent incident](#) and consult your school evacuation procedure.**

Police or school board will inform parents of the designated family reunification site. Direct families to this location where they can receive information.

Everyone involved in the evacuations should refrain from talking to others about the situation unless they are providing information to school officials or police for investigative purposes. If staff are trying to calm students, they should avoid making up stories. When receiving messages from family and friends, staff and any persons involved should refrain from discussing any details with them.

In the event of a prolonged situation or a situation where the threat has been contained, plans should include provisions for a controlled evacuation of the areas of the school not in the vicinity of the contained area. Please consult [Appendix D](#).

Effective Practices

Police will make the decision as to whether a controlled evacuation of a school under lockdown is a viable option and will direct the evacuation process. This will normally be done on a room-by-room basis, with evacuees being escorted by police to the evacuation location.

COMMAND-AND-CONTROL

The command-and-control section is vital during a violent incident.

During an emergency, it is crucial for school officials to maintain Command and Control until the arrival of the police. Once law enforcement is on-site, Command and Control will transition to the police services. Police supervisors will oversee and direct the overall response to the incident, ensuring coordination and effective management. Meanwhile, the principal, vice-principal, or designate will collaborate closely with the police, providing necessary support and information via telephone to aid in the response efforts. This

collaborative approach between school officials and law enforcement is essential for effectively managing the situation and ensuring the safety of all individuals involved.

Should the violent incident develop into a more prolonged event then a formal Command Post would be established in a suitable location by the attending police service. The location would be determined at the time of the incident by the incident commander, as there are many different scenarios that the incident may take, and police tactics would have to be considered.

FIRE ALARMS

Plans should address the issue of how to deal with a fire alarm activation after a school has gone into lockdown.

Effective Practices

If a fire alarm is pulled once a lockdown has been called, staff and students shall not respond as they normally would to a fire alarm, but shall remain locked down, if it is safe to do so. Staff and students must always be aware of other dangers such as fire and be prepared to respond accordingly to ensure their own safety.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Police

Once the police arrive on the scene, they assume ultimate command of the incident, and it is imperative for all staff, students, and other occupants to provide full cooperation and adhere to police directives. Police will take control of access to the school premises and any designated off-site locations, ensuring the safety and security of everyone involved.

Police will assign an officer to the family reunification site to communicate information to staff, students, and families. Families arriving on-site will be directed to the pre-designated family reunification site, where they can receive updates and necessary information regarding the situation. This coordinated approach by law enforcement aims to facilitate effective communication and support, ensuring the well-being of all individuals impacted by the incident.

Principal, vice-principal, or designate

- The principal, vice-principal, or designate remains primarily responsible for the safety of students and staff.
- The principal, vice-principal, or designate will meet police on arrival and describe the situation (if possible).
- The principal, vice-principal, or designate and staff cooperate with police to make appropriate decisions.

Staff, Student, and Other Occupants

Staff, students, and other occupants need to be aware that any site(s) may contain crime scene evidence. As such, they should:

- avoid unnecessarily tampering with or disturbing evidence;

- to the extent possible, leave all objects exactly as they are to protect the crime scene for law enforcement investigations;
- discourage others from disturbing potential evidence; and
- keep the area isolated.

PROCEDURES TO END A LOCKDOWN

Plans should include how a lockdown will be terminated, which should be site specific.

Effective Practices

Procedures to conclude a lockdown will vary based on location. Options may include a general announcement via the PA system by the principal, vice-principal, or designate, or a room-to-room visit from police or the principal, vice-principal, or designate. To ensure authenticity, an identification process should be implemented during room-to-room checks. Local plans should also address procedures for ending lockdowns at off-site evacuation locations. In all instances involving police response, plans must stipulate that the decision to terminate a lockdown requires approval from the on-scene police incident commander.

SCHOOL RECOVERY FOLLOWING A LOCKDOWN

Plans should include provisions to address the aftermath of a school lockdown.

Effective Practices

A debriefing shall occur in all situations following a lockdown. The nature and severity of the incident will dictate who should be included in the debriefing. After all lockdowns, the school board's Trauma Response Plan should be initiated. In all cases, communication with parents is vital.

Actions taken following violent incidents can have a major impact on the well-being of staff, students, and the broader community.

Follow-up procedures may include:

- involving the school board's Crisis Response Team to provide counseling for staff and students;
- providing appropriate information to parents, guardians, staff, students, and the broader school community regarding the incident;
- conducting a debriefing session – uniformed officers will lead an operational debrief, while the school board conducts a session with its staff; furthermore, police and school boards may collaborate on a joint review of the incident at the management level to explore potential recommendations;
- coordinating police and school board news releases;
- evaluating the adequacy of the Violent Incident – Emergency and Crisis Response Plan and making modifications as necessary;
- identifying lessons learned and developing further preventative measures;
- maintaining close contact with any injured victims and families;

- maintaining close co-operation with police services to facilitate completion of investigations; and/or
- completing all necessary legal, insurance, and administrative forms and documents as required.

In serious situations where injuries or loss of life occurs, the school board's Trauma Response Plan must be initiated with help from local agencies (e.g., counselling centre, Indigenous support teams etc.) as required.

If students are directed to the family reunification site, the school day will be officially concluded.

TRAINING

This plan will be of little value in a violent situation if it is not exercised on a regular basis. The principal will be required to review this plan with staff (including supply teachers, parent volunteers, etc.) at least once during each school year. The local police service responsible for community policing at each school should be invited to participate in annual training sessions.

Each school will be responsible for training their students to educate them on how to react when police arrive at the scene.

Plans should address initial and ongoing training of staff, students, and visitors to the school.

Effective Practices

Orientation programs for new teachers must include mandatory lockdown training sessions. Schools should establish a systematic approach to conduct annual lockdown review training for all staff members. Additionally, secondary schools should consider organizing assemblies to educate students on lockdown procedures. Given the young age of elementary students, it is recommended that classroom teachers take responsibility for training students at this level.

Moreover, any training provided to students with special needs should align with the expectations outlined in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Whenever feasible, it is beneficial to have police partners present during training sessions to assist with the instruction of both staff and students.

To ensure broader community awareness, information for parents can be disseminated through newsletters, school or board websites, or evening sessions dedicated to discussing lockdown plans. Furthermore, fire and emergency medical services personnel should be invited to participate in training sessions to enhance coordination and response efforts.

DRILLS

Fire drills have long been accepted as an important and effective tool in preparing staff and students for procedures to be followed in the event a fire breaks out in a school. Equally important is the practicing of lockdown drills in preparation for a major incident of school violence.

Mandatory Requirements (Ministry of Education)

Each school shall conduct a minimum of two lockdown drills during each school year.

Effective Practices

School personnel shall invite police partners to all drills. The principal is responsible for setting the date of drills and overseeing the drill with police support and/or assistance. Consider including fire and EMS personnel during drills, so they become familiar with lockdown plans. Staff, students, and parents should be given some warning of an impending drill. Procedures should include a plan to alert neighbouring schools of lockdown drills, especially if fire and EMS personnel have been invited to participate. A short debriefing should be included after all drills to identify areas for improvement. Many boards have established a tracking system to record drill dates, thereby ensuring accountability and compliance.

MEDIA

Plans shall include provisions for dealing with media.

Effective Practices

The Media Liaison Officer from police will direct and coordinate the handling of the media. Police will make media releases or post information on their communication application during the crisis. Releases made upon the conclusion of the crisis will be made after consultation with school authorities. Likewise, school authorities should refrain from making any comment to the media without first consulting police during or subsequent to an incident.

Police are responsible for addressing media with respect to the criminal incident involved and police response to an incident. Board personnel are responsible for dealing with media on issues of staff and student safety. It is strongly advised that media personnel from police and school boards share news releases prior to their release to the media, so that both police and school officials are aware of what the other is saying. A spirit of cooperation is highly recommended in terms of police and school officials working closely on media issues.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS, GUARDIANS, AND THE COMMUNITY

Communication with parents, guardians, and the community in general is important to ensure a good understanding of lockdown procedures without instilling fear.

Effective Practices

Consider sending a newsletter to each home at the beginning of the school year to inform parents of lockdown procedures and to encourage parents to reinforce with their children the importance of understanding the procedures and following staff direction.

Parents need to be informed of where they should proceed in the event of an actual incident involving a lockdown and how police and the school board will communicate this to parents. Communication with parents around the importance of lockdowns is vital. Parents should be informed of what is expected should they arrive at school during a drill or if they are present within the school when a lockdown is called.

In all instances of a lockdown that was not a drill, it is recommended that a notification to parents be sent home with each student at the conclusion of the school day or as soon as possible.

Parents should be encouraged to ensure that their contact information is kept up to date so they can easily be reached by staff in the event of an emergency.

PLAN REVIEW

Each school's plan, along with the board-wide plan, must undergo a comprehensive annual review.

Individual School Plans

While it is important to maintain consistency across the school board in terms of emergency response, it is vital that each school addresses their unique open areas (e.g., cafeteria, gymnasium, library, etc.) and off-site evacuation areas.

The following items must be considered on a site-specific basis:

- Evacuation Plan (include a primary & secondary evacuation point);
- Lockdown Plan;
- location of emergency items (see [Crisis and Evacuation Kits](#));
- specific duties assigned (e.g., kit updates, personnel at evacuation site, etc.); and
- submission of the most recent individual school plan to the respective school board.

The principal of each school shall review their individual school plan annually and make appropriate updates.

Effective Practices

A page should be included within the plan that allows for documentation of when the plan was reviewed and who reviewed it, along with a signature area. Where boards develop a web-based application to record when drills have been completed, a separate page could be created to allow for the recording on the website of the date the plan was reviewed annually.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Schools will maintain an updated emergency contact list, reviewed biannually, and incorporate it into the Violent Incident Emergency Response Quick Reference. This document will be provided to the local police service.

| | |
|--|--|
| Emergency (Police, Fire, Ambulance) | |
| Evacuation Sites (Primary & Secondary) | |
| Board Official (including cell phone numbers) | |
| Bus Companies | |
| Hospital(s) | |
| Other numbers | |

APPENDIX C: BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

Staff, students, and visitors in Ontario's schools have the right to learn, work, and be present in a safe and secure environment. To enhance safety and security, it is important that schools have plans for responding to bomb threats. According to the RCMP, the overwhelming majority of reported bomb threats are unfounded, but some are not. It's crucial to handle each incident calmly and consistently. Everyone who regularly spends time in an Ontario school must understand how to safeguard themselves and the students during a bomb threat.

The Ministry of Education, school boards, and police services from across the province continue to work in partnership to create safe school environments. This work includes planning and preparation if a bomb threat is received, an explosive device is discovered, or an explosives incident takes place.

Many school boards have actively undertaken the process of establishing Bomb Threat Response Plans, with the support of their police services. Plans and procedures reflecting the following policy must be included in the school's Emergency and Crisis Response Plan, which must be appended to the protocols already developed by school boards and police services.

Given the dynamic, complex, and fluid nature of such incidents, continuous communication, assessment, and coordination by first responders and the principal, vice-principal, or designate are of paramount importance in ensuring an effective response.

PURPOSE

The following policy is being provided to help elementary and secondary school staff ensure that their bomb threat plans meet basic requirements and to ensure an acceptable level of consistency across the province. Using these guidelines can help school staff and emergency services personnel work together to deal with bomb threat situations quickly and cautiously.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

While much of what is provided will be termed *Effective Practices*, there are two key elements which the *Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP)* is recommending as mandatory requirements by the Ministry of Education:

1. All publicly funded school boards in Ontario must establish a lockdown policy to ensure the development and implementation of individual school plans.
2. A minimum of two lockdown drills must occur each school year. It is recommended that one lockdown drill occur before September 30.

In developing Bomb Threat Response Plans, each elementary and secondary school staff should be guided by the following policy.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities are critical in emergency situations. At a minimum, plans should include expectations with respect to staff, students, parents, and police.

Principal

The principal holds the ultimate responsibility for crafting and finalizing the individual school plan. They are also responsible for inviting the participation of police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) in plan development, ensuring that these agencies are aware of planning and drill activities, and overseeing the training of staff and students. Additionally, the principal, along with the vice-principal and designate, must have a comprehensive understanding of the school's bomb threat plan and the authority and responsibilities outlined within it.

During the initial stages of a bomb threat, the principal, vice-principal, or designate will be the authority responsible for the initial assessment and related decisions, including those regarding visual scans. For ongoing incidents, police are responsible for management of the threat and any subsequent criminal investigation. However, the principal, vice-principal, or designate will cooperate fully with police and any other agencies involved and strive to ensure that all staff and students do the same. During an incident, they should continue to exercise their duties, to the extent possible, in support of the emergency responders' management of the situation.

Staff

School staff, particularly the principal, vice-principal, or designate, have the overall responsibility for the training, safety, and well-being of students. During a bomb threat incident, principals, vice-principals, or designates also have the responsibility of working closely with police.

Students

Students have a responsibility to be familiar with the plan and to respond quickly to the direction of staff during a bomb threat or explosives incident. Any student with information on or prior knowledge of anyone or anything that may be associated with or result in a bomb threat, the placement of a suspicious package or device, or an explosives incident must come forward with that information as soon as possible.

Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians must be informed of the existence of an Emergency and Crisis Response Plan. Parents can be encouraged to reinforce with their children the responsibilities students have with respect to following directions during an incident and disclosing any information they may have prior to or during an incident.

Police

Police are responsible for responding to and investigating bomb threats and explosives incidents. During any such incident, police will assume command and control of the response and investigation but will liaise and work closely with the principal, vice-principal, or designate and other emergency services throughout the process. Police must be notified of all bomb threat incidents, regardless of other actions taken by the schools. The criminal investigation of bomb threats by police may lead to the apprehension of persons responsible.

Fire Department

The fire department may be present during bomb threat incidents to provide fire suppression operations if needed, and they will also offer fire suppression and rescue operations in explosives incidents.

FLOOR PLANS

See [Floor Plans](#) in [Appendix B](#).

IDENTIFICATION OF BUILDINGS, EXTERIOR DOORS, AND CLASSROOMS

See [Identification of Buildings, Exterior Doors, and Classrooms](#) in [Appendix B](#).

COMMAND POST

Each plan should designate primary, secondary, and off-site command post locations.

Effective Practices

Normally, the main office will be a command post location, with another area within the school identified as an alternate command post location. A third off-site command post location should be identified within the individual school plan if neither on-site command post location is available. Information regarding command post locations should not be publicly circulated. This will help to ensure that the command posts do not become locations for the placement of explosive packages or devices or for secondary incidents.

FACILITY ASSESSMENT AND PHYSICAL SECURITY

The careful assessment of a school facility and the development and implementation of sound security and planning measures may reduce the potential for bomb threats and explosives incidents. Local police services can be a useful resource when such assessments are conducted.

Effective Practices

Each school's bomb threat plan should detail proactive measures in a number of areas. In developing their plans, schools should:

- determine likely locations in and around the school for the placement of suspicious packages or devices;
- provide for controlled access to critical areas of all facilities (e.g., the main office, electrical rooms, mechanical rooms, etc.);
- consider the use of electronic surveillance or closed-circuit television (CCTV), and, if such surveillance is adopted, post signage regarding its use;
- address ways to ensure that emergency exits are kept clear from obstructions;
- provide for the regular inspection of first aid and firefighting equipment;
- include and provide for the regular review of document-safeguarding procedures;
- assess whether interior, exterior, and auxiliary lighting is adequate;

- develop an inspection procedure for all incoming packages; and
- consider other potential threats.

BOMB THREAT INTAKE PROCEDURES

In all cases, the communication of a bomb threat should be taken seriously. School staff in positions that make them most likely to receive bomb threats should be identified in school plans and should receive training in proper procedures (e.g., secretaries, principals, other office staff, etc.).

Effective Practices

The person receiving a bomb threat by telephone should try to keep the caller on the line as long as possible and should record precise details of the call, especially the exact wording of the threat. However, the person should end the call if staying on the line puts them in harm's way or prevents them from initiating response procedures.

If a bomb threat is received by email, electronic bulletin boards, or through social media, the same procedure is followed. Procedures should include how to immediately isolate the received message, remove it from any external posting, and communicate the information to the school principal, vice-principal, or designate during and after school hours, including on weekends and holidays.

It is recommended that a checklist be made available to staff members who are most likely to receive a bomb threat.

Staff should undergo training to accurately document specific details during a bomb threat call, including:

- precise wording of the threat;
- date and time of the call;
- phone number or line receiving the call;
- caller's number, if displayed;
- gender and approximate age of the caller;
- location of the person making the threat, if disclosed;
- exact location and detonation time of the explosive device, if disclosed;
- type and description of the explosive device (e.g., pipe bomb, truck bomb), if disclosed;
- the time of intended detonation, if disclosed;
- the reason for placing the device, if disclosed;
- disclosed;
- any distinct speech patterns of the caller (e.g., accent, rate of speech, diction);
- any background noises (e.g., traffic, music, laughter);
- the emotional state of the caller (e.g., intoxicated, excited, angry);
- the caller's name, if disclosed;
- the recognition of the caller's voice by the call taker;
- the time of call termination; and
- any other information shared during the call.

If possible, the call taker should attempt to notify the school principal, vice-principal, or designate during the telephone call. If not, the principal, vice-principal, or designate should be notified

immediately after the call. All pertinent details of the call should immediately be relayed to the principal, vice-principal, or designate and documented.

School plans should address who will contact the local police service and provide details about the bomb threat. It is recommended that, unless there are exigent circumstances, this should be done after the principal, vice-principal, or designate has been provided with available information and after the initial assessment.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

One of the most challenging aspects of a bomb threat incident is the initial assessment of the threat and the accompanying decisions about whether to authorize a visual scan, to activate the Hold and Secure procedure or to evacuate students and staff. The safety of students and staff is paramount during a bomb threat; therefore, every threat must be assessed individually, based on known information.

These guidelines cannot prescribe when to conduct a safe visual scan or when to evacuate during a bomb threat. Rather, presented below are areas of concern that should be assessed during an incident. Individual school plans should address these areas and expand on them as necessary if other concerns are identified based on local circumstances.

Decisions regarding scans, the Hold and Secure procedure, and evacuation protocols are made following an assessment of available information, prioritizing the imminent threat to life. This evaluation process remains ongoing and subject to continuous reassessment throughout the duration of a bomb threat incident.

Effective Practices

Plans should identify in detail the information that needs to be immediately assessed by the principal, vice-principal, or designate during the initial stages of a bomb threat. The initial assessment should be based on the following:

- the information recorded on the bomb threat checklist (see [Bomb Threat Intake Procedures](#));
- any other notes made by the call taker;
- activities taking place in the school at the time of the threat (e.g., examinations)
- whether a specific location for a bomb was stated or the entire school was threatened;
- whether the threat was specific to the current time or a future date and time;
- any recent negative incidents involving a student, staff member, or anyone else connected with the school;
- whether there have been any other recent bomb threats or hoaxes;
- the likelihood of anyone having the opportunity to place a bomb in the stated location; and
- whether a suspicious device or package has been located.

Once the initial assessment has taken place and decisions have been made regarding a visual scan, activating the Hold and Secure procedure and/or evacuation, police must be notified. Initial contact with police may be made while the principal, vice-principal, or designate is conducting the assessment and making decisions. While it's crucial to furnish the police with detailed information

regarding a bomb threat beyond mere acknowledgment of its receipt, it's imperative not to postpone initial contact.

Plans should include a list of information to be provided to police, including the following:

- the information recorded on the bomb threat checklist (see [Bomb Threat Intake Procedures](#));
- the activities taking place in the school at the time of the threat (e.g., examinations);
- the status of any evacuation that may be underway;
- the status of any safe visual scan that may be underway; and
- the in-school contact person for police once they are on the scene.

A continual assessment of the situation must be ongoing, and the principal, vice-principal, or designate must be informed of all further information pertaining to the situation.

VISUAL SCANS

Plans must detail procedures for safe visual scans conducted by designated staff. When a threat has been made, a safe visual scan can provide critical information to support decision making during the initial assessment.

Effective Practices

Designating Persons to Conduct Visual Scans

As part of the initial assessment, the principal, vice-principal, or designate may decide that a safe visual scan of the school and/or classroom for suspicious devices or packages should be conducted. Every school plan should identify the staff member(s) who will conduct this visual inspection. It is imperative that scans be conducted by individuals who have detailed knowledge of the facilities and are familiar with students and fellow staff. Such individuals know what does and does not belong within the school; therefore, they are best suited to recognize suspicious devices or packages. These individuals should not be responsible for supervising students at the time of the visual scan.

Responsibilities related to safe visual scans are to be addressed as part of the planning process and not at the time of an actual incident.

Principals, vice-principals, and designates should undergo training to empower them in making informed decisions regarding the necessity and timing of conducting safe visual scans. Local police services can offer valuable assistance in this regard. Additionally, staff members designated to perform scans should be provided with basic guidance on executing safe visual scans.

Under no circumstances should a staff member conducting a visual scan touch a suspicious device or package. Upon detecting a suspicious package or device, the area must be promptly secured, and the package or device reported to the principal, vice-principal, or designate without delay.

PROCEDURE AFTER RECEIVING A CREDIBLE BOMB THREAT

The principal, vice-principal, or designate must consider the initial assessment when considering the next actions to take. The following are possible options:

- full evacuation of the school – when a possible explosion is imminent, but the placement of the explosive device is not known;

- partial evacuation of the school – when a possible explosion is imminent, and the placement of the explosive device has been identified in a particular section of the school; and
- Hold and Secure – when the threat is not imminent. The principal, vice-principal, or designate calls a Hold and Secure and police are contacted by calling 911. The principal, vice-principal, or designate follows police guidance for next steps.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWING THE LOCATION OF A SUSPICIOUS DEVICE OR PACKAGE

Effective Practices

When a suspicious package or device is located by staff member or student, appropriate procedures include the following:

- isolation and/or containment of the device or package, ensuring that it is not touched;
- immediate communication of the discovery to the principal, vice-principal, or designate, police, and fire services; and
- immediate re-evaluation of any evacuation decisions in light of the discovery.

Regardless of whether the package or device has been delivered to the school or located during a visual scan or under other circumstances, it is imperative that the object is not touched or moved and that it is immediately contained. This direction applies even if the package had already been moved prior to being deemed suspicious.

The school principal, vice-principal, or designate should be notified immediately of the discovery of a suspicious package or device and of any action taken to that point.

Police should be notified or updated when confirmation is received regarding the precise location of the package or device. Police will notify the fire department and EMS as required.

The school principal, vice-principal, or designate will work with emergency services personnel, which may include first responders, investigators, and bomb technicians, to evaluate the need to relocate evacuees and/or command posts.

Legitimate property may have been left behind in an evacuated area, so attempts should be made to establish ownership of any suspicious device or package. This should be done by making inquiries, not by handling the package or device.

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Plans must detail procedures to facilitate a safe and effective partial or full evacuation of the facility. See [Appendix D – Guidelines for Evacuation in the event of fire bomb threat and explosives incident](#) and consult your school evacuation procedure.

COMMUNICATIONS

Having primary and secondary communication systems allows for accurate transmission of information between officials, staff, students, and emergency services personnel.

Effective Practices

Plans should specify designated primary and secondary communication systems with provisions for internal communication with staff and students and external communication with emergency services personnel. The external communication plan should have provisions for communication with parents, guardians, or other stakeholders during extended incidents and after incidents.

In most cases, intercoms and telephones will be used as primary communication systems. Radios and walkie-talkies are **not** recommended as secondary systems, given that radio signals may detonate sensitive explosive devices. Runners, loud hailers, or other methods should be used for secondary communication systems. Local police services should be consulted regarding the use of cell phones, and staff and students should be educated about how such devices can be used in the event of an incident.

The protocol should emphasize the importance of reminding all responders of the danger of using radio communication in a bomb threat situation.

Media

Plans shall include provisions for dealing with media in the event of an incident. Please consult the section on [Media](#) in [Appendix B](#).

Communication with Parents, Guardians, and The Community

Please consult [Communication with Parents, Guardians, and The Community](#) in [Appendix B](#).

OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Procedures should outline how to notify and instruct staff and students who are outdoors when a bomb threat is received, a suspicious device or package is found, or an explosives incident occurs. It's crucial for staff and students to know where to gather or go in such situations.

Effective Practices

Staff and students who are outside the school buildings should never re-enter the school unless they are in close proximity to an identified threat location and have been directed to do so.

Although notification of those who are outside the school building(s) is important, the use of an exterior PA system may not be the best option, as it may cause panic and/or bring unnecessary attention from members of the community. The use of a personal messenger to identify the off-site evacuation location(s) is recommended. Once at the location, staff and students shall remain at that location until further advised by the principal, vice-principal, designate, or police. Plans should include the taking of attendance at the off-site evacuation location(s).

TRAINING

Plans should address initial and ongoing training of all staff as well as students and, where possible, visitors to the school.

Mandatory Requirement (Ministry of Education)

Each board must ensure that its staff, students, and other stakeholders are aware of their obligations and responsibilities within the individual school plans.

Effective Practices

Orientation for new staff should include mandatory training in bomb threat responses. Schools should establish a method to conduct bomb threat review training for all staff during each school year. Such training should be conducted as early in the school year as possible.

Schools may opt to conduct assemblies to educate secondary students on bomb threat procedures, explosives incident protocols, and associated evacuation plans. Given the younger age of elementary students, it's advisable for classroom teachers to conduct training sessions tailored to their level. Any training provided to students with special education needs should align with the accommodations specified in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

In many situations, it may be impractical to try to provide training to school visitors. However, when the visitor is in the school over an extended period, as in the case of a service provider, it is necessary to inform the visitor of the school's bomb threat procedures and explosives incident evacuation procedures.

Where possible, it is advantageous to have police partners present to assist with the training of staff and students. Fire department and EMS personnel could also be invited to training sessions.

DRILLS

Please consult the section on [Drills](#) in [Appendix D](#) in the event of a fire, bomb threat or explosives incident.

SCHOOL RECOVERY FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT

Plans should include provisions related to recovery after an incident involving a bomb threat, a suspicious package or device, and an explosion.

Effective Practices

Recovery procedures will differ significantly depending on the nature of the incident. In some situations, a debriefing should occur following the receipt of a bomb threat or following the location of a suspicious device or package. A debriefing should always take place following an explosives incident. The nature and severity of the incident will dictate who should be included in the debriefing.

When a bomb threat or a suspicious package or device is found to be a hoax, controlled communication, including communication relating to any debriefing conducted to evaluate actions, is important so that further incidents are not encouraged.

In serious situations following the location of a suspicious package or device or an explosives incident, the school board's Trauma Response Plan will normally be initiated. In all cases, communication with students and parents is vital.

PLAN REVIEW

Each school plan, as well as the board plan, shall be thoroughly reviewed annually.

Effective Practices

The plan should incorporate a dedicated page for documenting the date of review, the reviewing personnel, and a space for their signatures. If the board utilizes a web-based platform to log drill completions, a separate section can be allocated within the system to record the annual review date of the plan.

APPENDIX D: GUIDELINES FOR EVACUATIONS IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE, BOMB THREAT, OR EXPLOSIVES INCIDENT

Every school plan must detail procedures to facilitate a safe and effective partial or full evacuation of the facility. Plans should also detail the process to end any partial or full evacuation. Although an evacuation for a fire incident or a bomb threat are very similar, there are some particular elements to consider for each.

In the event of a fire, any staff member can trigger the fire alarm. On hearing the fire alarm, staff and students are to evacuate the building following the evacuation procedures.

In all other cases, the decision to evacuate will be made by the principal, vice-principal, or designate. The decision to direct an evacuation should be made only after careful consideration of the risks. In the event of a bomb threat, the principal, vice-principal, or designate must keep in mind that, because the most likely location for a bomb is in a common area, evacuation through common areas can increase risk.

Effective Practices

The notification process for both a partial and a full evacuation of each facility is to be included in each school plan. Staff should be aware of who is authorized to order evacuation of and re-entry to the facility. The notice to evacuate must be unambiguous, and the evacuation location(s) must be clearly understood. Evacuations should be conducted in a quiet and systematic way, considering the threat location and students and staff most at risk.

Staff and students should be directed to quietly leave the location, proceed in a calm and orderly manner, and assemble in the designated evacuation location(s). Evacuees should not attempt to bring personal belongings with them.

In the event of a bomb threat, evacuees should be directed not to return to their lockers but to bring with them any personal belongings (e.g., bags, lunches, laptops) that are in the immediate area, if it is safe to do so. Removing these articles will assist police with any subsequent search of the area, by decreasing the number of suspicious packages or devices.

Plans should address practices for ensuring that evacuation routes and alternate routes are clear from obstructions. Designated stairwells that are identified in the school plan should be used. Provisions should be in place to assist with the evacuation of physically challenged staff and students. Because of the risk of power failure, elevators should never be used for evacuation. If, however, stand-by power is provided to an elevator, consideration should be given to using that elevator for the evacuation of physically challenged staff and students.

Evacuation routes and locations should be inspected prior to, or immediately upon, the arrival of evacuees to ensure that a secondary explosive device has not been placed in these areas. At the evacuation location, attendance should be taken, and all students and staff accounted for. The command post is to be notified when the evacuation is complete. Students and staff should be directed to remain in the evacuation location.

All staff and students evacuating the premises must promptly gather at the designated evacuation site. Ensuring proper control and supervision of the students is essential. Attendance should be taken, and records cross-checked with daily attendance and class schedules to account for as many

individuals as possible. Designate one staff member and an alternate to collect any witnesses or individuals who can provide information to emergency personnel. While shielding students from distressing scenes is important, it's crucial not to disturb any crime scene evidence.

Plans should include provisions for the care, control, and well-being of evacuated persons. The use of school buses should be considered to shelter staff and students during inclement weather.

Other duties at the evacuation or family reunification site should be assigned to staff members not involved in the direct supervision of students. These duties could be pre-assigned with two alternates for each task. They are:

- logistics officer: working with police logistics personnel in obtaining necessities for students;
- parent liaison: assigned to handling parent inquiries at the family reunification site;
- records manager: receiving and processing attendance records; and
- reception area manager at the family reunification site: directing the activities in the reception area, overall control of the students, ensuring that students are divided into homeroom groups and attendance is taken, other duties as necessary.

Have a sign-out sheet to monitor which students have been picked up by their parents and guardians. Do not dismiss students to unknown care. As soon as possible, take a head count to determine which students, staff and teachers are accounted for and which ones are not.

RE-ENTRY PROCEDURES

Each school plan must include procedures for ending evacuations and ensuring safe re-entry into the school. Plans should clearly indicate that the decision to end a partial or full evacuation shall be made by the school principal, vice-principal, or designate in consultation with the on-scene incident commander.

Effective Practices

Plans should encompass procedures for communicating the conclusion of a partial or full evacuation. These procedures may differ depending on the facility and whether evacuees are located off-site.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWING AN EXPLOSIVES INCIDENT

Every plan must include procedures for dealing with an explosives incident that occurs within a school building or in the school yard. Explosives incidents may occur without warning or after a bomb threat has been received. Explosives incidents do not always require a full evacuation of the school. Under certain circumstances, and if it is determined that there is no fire, a partial evacuation of the building may be appropriate.

Plans for responding to an explosives incident should address the following:

- criteria for full or partial evacuation;
- considerations related to the provision of emergency care;
- considerations related to the notification of emergency services; and
- containment of the explosion scene.

Effective Practices

When an explosives incident occurs, the school principal, vice-principal, or designate should be notified immediately and informed of any action taken. Personnel designated in the plan should report to the command post location to carry out their duties, many of which will be taking place simultaneously.

The following items are considerations to be addressed as part of the response to an explosives incident and in plan development.

EVACUATION CONSIDERATIONS

The area around the explosion scene should be immediately evacuated, and evacuees should be directed to a designated evacuation location. Emergency first aid should be provided to any persons injured in the incident. Information regarding injuries should be communicated to the command post. Attendance should be taken and a list of any missing staff or students should be communicated to the command post.

It should be determined whether an evacuation of the entire site is necessary, or whether a partial evacuation of the area around the explosives incident will suffice. A fire resulting from the incident can make staying in the building unsafe, so partial evacuation should be considered only if it is certain that no fire has started. The school principal, vice-principal, or designate shall work with emergency services personnel to evaluate the need to relocate evacuees and/or command posts.

As staff and students are evacuating, they should continue to follow proper evacuation procedures. They should be asked to keep their eyes open for unusual packages, and, where possible, staff who are designated to conduct visual scans should visually inspect the areas that are being evacuated and areas along the evacuation route. If a suspicious package/device is noticed, it should be reported to emergency responders immediately on arrival at the evacuation location.

EMERGENCY SERVICES NOTIFICATION

The fire department, emergency medical services (EMS), and police should be called immediately. An explosives incident can often result in the spread of fire and smoke.

CONTAINMENT OF THE EXPLOSION SCENE

Once the area has been evacuated, staff and students should not re-enter an explosion scene. Not only may additional packages or devices be present, but the area will be subject to a substantial crime scene investigation and therefore should not be disturbed.

COMMUNICATIONS

Having primary and secondary communication systems allows for accurate transmission of information between officials, staff, students, and emergency services personnel.

Effective Practices

Plans should specify designated primary and secondary communication systems, with provisions for internal communication with staff and students and external communication with emergency

services personnel. The external communication plan should have provisions for communication with parents, or other stakeholders during extended incidents and after incidents.

In most cases, intercoms and telephones will be used as primary communication systems. Radios and walkie-talkies are *not* recommended as secondary systems, given that radio signals may detonate sensitive explosive devices. Runners, loud hailers, or other methods should be used for secondary communication systems. Local police services should be consulted regarding the use of cell phones, and staff and students should be educated about how such devices can be used in the event of an incident.

The protocol should emphasize the importance of reminding all responders of the danger of using radio communication in a bomb threat situation.

Media

Plans shall include provisions for dealing with media in the event of an incident.

Please consult the [Media](#) section in [Appendix B](#).

Communication with Parents, Guardians, and The Community

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CHILDCARE AND OTHER FACILITY OCCUPANTS

Many schools have licensed childcare centres and/or other tenants and community groups using school premises, sometimes outside regular school hours. These organizations or individuals must be taken into consideration when planning and when conducting training and drills, and they must be informed of the need to follow school board procedures.

Effective Practices

It is important that principals make best efforts to ensure that the appropriate staff from organizations who share school facilities are included in the development and implementation of procedures, and that these organizations participate, whenever possible, in relevant aspects of planning, training, and drills.

TRAINING

Plans should address initial and ongoing training of all staff as well as students and, where possible, visitors to the school.

Mandatory Requirement (Ministry of Education)

Each board must ensure that its staff, students, and other stakeholders are aware of their obligations and responsibilities within the individual school plans.

Effective Practices

Orientation for new staff should include mandatory training in evacuation procedures. Such training should be conducted as early in the school year as possible.

In many situations, it may be impractical to try to provide training to school visitors. In other cases, however, when the visitor is in the school over an extended period, as in the case of a service provider, it is necessary to inform the visitor of the school's evacuation procedures.

Where possible, it is advantageous to have police partners present to assist with the training of staff and students. Fire department and EMS personnel could also be invited to training sessions.

DRILLS

Fire drills have long been accepted as an important and effective tool in preparing staff and students for procedures to be followed in the event a fire breaks out in a school. As with fire drills, drills and education related to evacuation following a bomb threat can help maintain order in the event of an incident. Such drills can be held as part of a school's emergency evacuation drills. Provincial regulations require schools to practice evacuation procedures six times a year.

Effective Practices

School personnel should work cooperatively with police and fire department partners on drills. The principal is responsible for setting the date of drills and overseeing the drill, with police and or fire department support/assistance. Staff, students, childcare workers, and community partners or other visitors who may be in the school should be given some warning of an impending drill. When developing plans, consideration should be given as to whether or not to notify parents in advance. Plans should include procedures for alerting neighbouring schools of drills, especially if fire and EMS personnel have been invited to participate.

A short debriefing should be held after all drills to identify areas for improvement. Many boards have established a tracking system to record drill dates.

SCHOOL RECOVERY FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT

Plans should include provisions related to recovery after an incident involving a fire or an explosion.

Effective Practices

Recovery procedures will differ significantly, depending on the nature of the incident. A debriefing should always take place following a fire or an explosives incident. The nature and severity of the incident will dictate who should be included in the debriefing.

PLAN REVIEW

Each school plan, as well as the board plan, shall be thoroughly reviewed annually.

Effective Practices

The plan should incorporate a dedicated page for documenting the date of review, the reviewing personnel, and a space for their signatures. If the board utilizes a web-based platform to log drill completions, a separate section can be allocated within the system to record the annual review date of the plan.