

Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol

2026

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Introduction

Police play a vital role in supporting schools and their communities to be safe places to learn and to work. In addition to responding to and investigating school-related incidents, police are essential partners in crime prevention and school safety. School boards are required to work with local police services to provide them with access to school premises, permit them to participate in school programs and implement school resource officer programs where such programs are available.

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 that requires a commitment to collaboration, co-operation, and effective communication from all parties involved.

Pursuant to subsections 301(7) and 301(9) of the *Education Act*, the Minister of Education requires that all school boards in the province:

- Implement the *Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol*
- Follow all requirements for training, drills, and reviews in place to promote student safety and the safety of the school community in the *Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol*

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Solicitor General remain steadfast in their shared commitment to adhere to the Ontario *Human Rights Code* in all instances, including the implementation of this model.

School boards are required to implement the *Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol* (the "Provincial Model") and must:

- Ensure police and school personnel have a clear understanding of their respective roles, procedures, and decision-making authority as they relate to school safety
- Promote dialogue and establish and maintain effective relationships
- Address unique factors and/or considerations for specific local school and community contexts and service-delivery arrangements

Note to readers: A glossary of terms is provided in Appendix A of this document. An asterisk (*) following an italicized word or phrase at its first use in the text of the document signals that a definition of that word or phrase is provided in the glossary.

How to Use This Document

The Provincial Model recognizes that school boards and police services across the province operate in unique contexts. Despite local differences, provincial and federal legislation must be followed to promote school safety. School boards are also required to follow authorized Ministry of Education direction.

The Provincial Model provides a framework school boards are required to follow when working with police that includes:

- Twenty (20) elements that provide a consistent provincial approach to how school boards and police work together to respond to safety incidents
 - A description of each element is provided to assist boards in understanding the associated requirement(s)
- Two (2) appendices containing the provincial policies and procedures for:
 - Lockdown, hold and secure and shelter in place
 - Bomb threats

The Provincial Model also sets out the expectations where school boards must work with police and/or other partners to make local decisions with respect to key responsibilities, including:

- Determining local procedures for emergency planning, including planning for lockdowns and bomb threats
- Establishing a process for communicating safety incidents that involve police to parents and the public
- Establishing partnerships to implement violence-prevention policies and initiatives in schools
- Adopting a multi-disciplinary/multi-agency approach to threat management
- Developing procedures for notifying police of emergency and non-emergency incidents, including specific information that police will require to properly respond to an incident
- Providing training to school staff in collaboration with police, where possible

When working together, school boards and police services must consider all applicable laws, including, but not limited to, the following:

- *Anti-Racism Act, 2017*
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

- *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*
- *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019*
- *Criminal Code*
- *Education Act*
- *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997*
- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- *Missing Persons Act, 2018*
- *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code*
- *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004*
- *Provincial Offences Act* (specifically Part VI, “Young Offenders”)
- *Victims’ Bill of Rights*
- *Youth Criminal Justice Act*

Required Elements of the Provincial Model

1. Statement of Principles

School boards must work with local police services to:

- Provide a clear understanding of police, school board and school roles and responsibilities
- Promote respect and civility in the school environment
- Maintain safety through an approach that includes prevention, intervention, support, and timely and effective responses when incidents occur

2. Purpose of the Provincial Model

School boards and police services have the following responsibilities for the safety of all students, staff, and members of the school community:

- Police have the responsibility for maintaining the public peace, preventing crime and investigating alleged criminal offences
- The school board has the responsibility for maintaining order and discipline in its schools and ensuring the safety of people in their schools
- All members of the school community, including students and parents/guardians have the responsibility to abide by school and school board policies, including the Provincial Code of Conduct, and all applicable provincial and federal laws

The purpose of the Provincial Model is to:

- Maintain and support the safety and protection of students, teachers, principals, staff, and volunteers in schools
- Ensure police and school personnel have a clear understanding of their respective roles, procedures, and decision-making authority as they relate to school safety
- Promote dialogue and establish and maintain effective relationships between schools and police
- Support constructive, ongoing, and responsive partnerships between police, the school board and the school community in violence prevention and maintaining a safe school environment

- Reinforce the importance of a coordinated and multifaceted approach on the part of schools and police in their interactions with parents/guardians and the community, in an effort to promote the safety and well-being of all students
- Facilitate appropriate sharing and disclosure of information in accordance with privacy laws, including the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- Ensure that the obligations and requirements of both the education and police systems are met in alignment with Ontario's *Human Rights Code* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- Ensure a consistent approach across a school board's jurisdiction in the way police and schools respond to a school-related occurrence

3. Role and Mandate of Police Services

In cases of emergency circumstances when immediate action is required to respond to urgent safety needs, police will assume primary responsibility as may be necessary to ensure school safety. If a school resource officer is present at the school at the time of an urgent safety incident, they may respond in their capacity as sworn officers.

The specific roles and responsibilities of the local police service related to students and the school community include:

- Engaging and working proactively in partnership with school board officials and school administration to ensure the effectiveness of the Provincial Model
- Protecting public safety and preventing crime
- Enforcing laws and regulations at the federal, provincial, and municipal level, including the federal criminal law and procedure outlined in the *Criminal Code*, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, and other criminal-law statutes
- Assisting victims of crime
- Conducting investigations

In partnership with the school board and other community-based service providers, police and school resource officers also play an important role in supporting a positive school climate, such as:

- Building relationships with students and the school community through intentional interactions and engagements
- Being a visible and supportive presence within the school community

- Being a positive adult role model for students
- Promoting and fostering the prevention and reduction of crime, both against and committed by students
- Providing information and presentations on community and student safety issues such as road safety, drug awareness, internet safety, human trafficking or other relevant topics
- Assisting with lockdown drills or other emergency preparedness training
- Participating in threat and/or violence risk assessment processes
- Providing advice to the school/school board on the physical layout and safety of the school building and premises

4. Role and Mandate of School Boards

In cases of emergency circumstances when immediate action is required to respond to urgent safety needs, the police or school resource officer, if present on school premises, will assume primary responsibility as may be necessary to ensure school safety. The principal¹ will continue to have a role consistent with their statutory responsibility for the health and welfare of all students and to maintain discipline in the school.

The school board and principals must:

- Engage and work proactively in partnership with police services to ensure the effectiveness of the Provincial Model
- Welcome frontline police officers, including school resource officers, and all first responders into schools as partners and trusted adults with specialized skills and training who support school and community safety in ways that can complement school-based strategies to promote positive behaviour
- Clearly communicate the board's lockdown, hold and secure and bomb threat procedures, and code of conduct to school staff, students, parents/guardians
- Ensure that all staff, including occasional, part-time, or itinerant teachers, have the training and resources to implement the provisions of the Provincial Model that may apply to them, including the ability to lock their classroom doors during a lockdown (see Appendix B)

¹ In this document, the term *principal* refers to the principal or the principal's designate.

- Provide opportunities for staff to acquire knowledge, skills, and perspectives necessary to maintain a school environment in which conflict and differences can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility
- Comply with the requirements related to the duties of principals and teachers under the *Education Act* and regulations
- Comply with the requirements legislated under the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* (e.g., “duty to report”)
- Comply with the duties of employers and supervisors under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, including consultations with the Joint Health and Safety Committee on matters related to health and safety
- Respect and enforce the board’s code of conduct and all board policies established under s.302 of the *Education Act*
- Ensure that resources (e.g., on bullying prevention) are accessible to assist school staff in promoting a positive school environment with students and parents/guardians
- Ensure that all staff have opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to promote safe, equitable, and inclusive school environments

It is important to note, in addition to the above, that principals must investigate all reports of serious student incidents submitted by board employees, as outlined in subsection 300.2(3) of the *Education Act*. In conducting investigations of incidents for which *suspension** or *expulsion** must be considered under the *Education Act*, principals must consider *mitigating and other factors**, as set out in Ontario Regulation 472/07. For students in junior kindergarten to grade 3, who are not to be suspended according to Ontario Regulation 440/20, the principal continues to use school supports and consequences to address the inappropriate student behaviour and to build upon strategies that promote and foster positive behaviours.

5. Partnerships Between School Boards and Police Services

School boards must work with local police services to support safe and inclusive school communities.

a) Police Participation in School Programs

School boards must provide local police services with access to school premises to participate in school programs that support the safety of the school community and build relationships between students and police.

In accordance with subsection 170.0.2 (1) of the *Education Act* and O. Reg. 176/26, school boards must permit local police services to participate in school programs prescribed by the regulation, whether uniformed or in plain clothes, and implement school resource officer (SRO) programs, where such programs are made available in the board's primary language of instruction.

School programs may include career days, fundraisers, school-related events, workshops, and programs related to youth engagement as well as school and public safety, among other activities, events and programs set out in the regulation. School administrators will also work with police officers to hold routine training and drills related to lockdown procedures and other emergency preparedness exercises, as referenced throughout this document.

b) Memorandum of Understanding

Section 2 of O. Reg. 176/26 requires school boards to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with local police services to set out the details of how they will work collaboratively to implement SRO programs.

Pursuant to the *Education Act*, school principals and vice-principals are responsible for the overall administration of the school and for ensuring the safety of students and staff, including matters related to student conduct and discipline. It is not the role of SROs to enforce such conduct and/or discipline. School administrators must exercise their duties in accordance with the *Education Act* and all applicable policies, including Policy/Program Memorandum 128 (The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct) and any local code of conduct.

For greater clarity, members of local police services, including SROs, are not subject to ministry direction applicable to "guest speakers" or "third party speakers."

See Appendix F for ministry expectations for school boards and a sample template MOU to support the implementation of SRO programs.

6. A Coordinated Approach to Violence Prevention

Schools must adopt a coordinated and multifaceted approach to violence prevention that includes parents/guardians, families, and community partners.

School boards and principals must develop, promote, and maintain strong partnerships with police to implement violence-prevention policies, particularly where those policies pertain to addressing risk factors associated with criminal behaviour and victimization. Police are encouraged to also offer support in a consulting role, to assist school personnel in determining appropriate action when dealing with non-emergency but potentially criminal incidents. Proactive consultation may provide an opportunity for school administration to clarify whether incidents meet a criminal threshold and may reduce unneeded police involvement in school incidents. This will provide opportunities for police to explain what police investigations for a non-emergency incident would include.

Police may work in partnership with schools and other community-based service providers to administer crime-prevention and community safety programs, including programs that:

- Focus on areas such as peer mediation or conflict resolution
- Provide education on safety topics such as road safety, cyber safety, human trafficking, drug awareness or other relevant community safety issues
- Include referrals to appropriate community resources (e.g., those providing counselling or mentoring services, substance use awareness/ education programs)
- Promote positive adult role models and establish positive relationships

7. Occurrences Requiring Police Notification (Students Aged 12 and Older)

Police notification or the threat of police involvement must not be used as a part of, or a substitute for, progressive discipline.

For students aged 12 and older, the types of incidents listed below require a *mandatory* notification to police.

For students receiving special education programs and/or services, school boards must identify circumstances where police notification is not necessary or appropriate. Refer to section 9 for further information on responding to incidents involving students with special education needs and students with disabilities.

Note that mandatory police notification does not mean that police will respond, investigate and/or lay charges in every situation; however, for the incidents listed below, police *must* be notified.

The incidents listed include those that happen at school or during school-related activities in or outside school, or in other circumstances if the incident has a negative impact on the school climate.

Mandatory Notification of Police

The police must be notified when any of the following incidents occur:

- All deaths
- Physical assault causing bodily harm requiring immediate treatment by a medical practitioner (e.g., licensed medical doctor or nurse practitioner, and/or registered nurse in isolated areas when a doctor or nurse practitioner is not available or if the injury requires a response from paramedics)
- Assault with a weapon
- *Sexual violence** including sexual assault
- *Robbery**
- *Criminal harassment**
- *Intimate partner violence**
- *Human trafficking**
- Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm
- Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person
- *Trafficking** in weapons or in illegal drugs
- Possessing an illegal drug
- *Hate crimes**
- *Gang-related occurrences**
- *Extortion**
- *Non-consensual sharing of intimate images**
- Bomb threats
- Giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor
- Being under the influence of cannabis (unless the student is a medical cannabis user), illegal drugs or alcohol
- *Threats** of bodily harm, including threats made on *social networking sites** or through instant messaging, text messaging, email and so on

- Incidents of vandalism
- Incidents of trespassing

8. Occurrences Involving Students Under Age 12

Students under 12 cannot be charged with an offence under the *Criminal Code* or with a provincial offence. If police are notified by the school about acts of harm allegedly committed by students in this age group, they may respond by taking reports, making referrals to other community services or other appropriate responses.

In situations where there is an immediate threat to school or student safety (such as possession of illegal drugs or a weapon), principals are required to notify police regardless of a student's age.

When responding to incidents involving students under 12, principals must use progressive discipline and make referrals to school and community-based supports. Involving parents/guardians and other appropriate partners as early as possible may facilitate the provision of appropriate intervention and support.

For occurrences involving students under the age of 12, school boards must:

- Notify the child's parent/guardian before contacting police
 - Except in emergency circumstances when immediate action is required to respond to urgent safety needs, in which case the parent/guardian should be contacted as soon as possible
 - Unless, in the principal's opinion, notification of the parents/guardians would put the student at risk of being harmed by the parents/guardians. If that is the case, the parents/guardians must not be contacted (*Education Act*, s. 300.3(3))
- Report children suspected to be in need of protection to the local children's aid society (CAS) in accordance with subsection 125(1) of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* (e.g., when there are reasonable grounds to suspect abuse or neglect, or the risk thereof, or when the child has committed serious acts and the child's parents/guardian are not providing appropriate treatment)
- Provide accommodations and/or modifications for students with special education needs and students with disabilities

Refer to section 15 for recommendations around involving local CAS and/or Indigenous child and family well-being agencies in the implementation of this section.

9. Incidents Involving Students with Special Education Needs and Students with Disabilities

When an incident that requires police notification involves a student (or students) who may have or is known to have special education needs and/or a disability, the principal must:

- Communicate to the police if a student may have or is known to have special education needs or a disability
- Accommodate the student, especially when interviewing is necessary
 - Review the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and other relevant student records in order 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

10. Information Sharing and Disclosure

School administrators must only disclose personal information to a law *enforcement agency** when permitted by law, such as when a law enforcement agency requires the information to aid a criminal investigation or in response to a court order. Ongoing or informal arrangements for the automatic disclosure of personal information to law enforcement agencies are not permitted. In all cases, school administrators should make their own assessment of the circumstances before deciding whether to disclose personal information to a law enforcement agency. If uncertain, the school administrator should seek direction from their Superintendent, who may also seek legal advice, before releasing any information.

A number of different statutes deal with information sharing and disclosure. These include federal legislation (the *Criminal Code*, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*) and provincial legislation (the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Education Act*, the *Missing Persons Act, 2018*, the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*, and the *Anti-Racism Act, 2017*).

Refer to Appendix D for further details on legislative requirements related to information sharing.

11. School Procedures for Notification of Police

School boards must develop procedures for notifying police of emergency and non-emergency incidents. School procedures for notification of police should be included in required training for school staff.

Emergency:

- Procedures for notifying police and other emergency responders of emergencies constituting an imminent threat to the safety of students and/or staff (cross-reference the school's Emergency and Crisis Response Plan)
- Emergency points of contact should be listed, including 911 and any other local emergency contact numbers
- Information that police will require, such as:
 - What has happened/is happening and where
 - If anyone is injured and what the injuries are
 - The identity and location of the caller
 - Where the information came from (e.g., whether the caller is providing first-hand information or relaying information from another witness, such as a student or teacher)
 - Any weapons involved (regardless of whether a weapon was seen or its existence was only implied), including the type, where they are, and who has them
 - Who is involved (including names, dates of birth) and how many people
 - When the event took place
 - Any additional information and support that police will require, upon arrival, from school personnel (e.g., particular disability-related needs and/or mental health and well-being concerns)
- Police may request other information not listed above

Non-Emergency:

- Procedures for notifying police of non-emergency incidents including internal processes for reporting incidents to the principal
- Clarify who will notify police of non-emergency incidents (i.e., principal responsible for initial police notification)
- Points of contact for non-emergency police notification including the general inquiry phone number or any other contact information provided by the police service

12. Initial Police Response

School boards must engage their local police services on an annual basis about their process for reviewing and responding to requests for assistance from schools. It is important for school boards to understand the type of response to expect for different incident thresholds, such as:

- Incidents where there is a threat to student or school safety
- Incidents of possible criminal behaviour but no immediate threat to student or school safety
- Incidents where there is no alleged criminal behaviour or threat to student or school safety

In emergency circumstances when immediate action is required to respond to urgent safety needs, police will assume command and control of the response and investigation. They will liaise and work closely with the principal and other emergency services throughout the process. In non-emergency situations principals will suggest alternatives that limit the disruption to the school day and where possible minimize stigma for the student(s) involved, including options for addressing the situation outside of school.

When a police response at a school occurs, principals must:

- Contact parents/guardians of students under the age of 18 (see section 14(a)) unless the situation/factors warrant otherwise
- Wait for the police, or designate someone to greet the police and, upon arrival at the school, confirm identification of responding officer(s)
- Confirm the purpose and rationale for the in-person visit at the school
- Provide officer(s) with information about the student or staff involved (e.g., regarding any accommodation needs for students or staff)

If the principal is under investigation these duties must be assumed by the appropriate superintendent or their designate.

13. School and Police Investigations of Incidents

Principals must follow the procedures outlined below when both the principal and the police are investigating the same incident at the same time. Principals must respect students' legal rights, particularly as they relate to search and seizure and detention as further described below. This section also references legislated police requirements for clarity and to provide context to principals during a joint investigation.

a) Parallel Investigations

	Principal	Police
Legislation	<i>Education Act</i>	<i>Youth Criminal Justice Act, Criminal Code</i>
Initial Considerations	It is important that the principal not prejudice the police investigation. Upon notifying police of an alleged criminal incident, school staff shall separate the students involved and wait for police to respond or provide direction. Notify a parent/guardian or other trusted adult to support the student. If during the course of conducting an investigation, the principal suspects that a criminal offence has been committed for which they will exercise discretion to call, or it constitutes a mandatory call to police, they shall discontinue any student interviews or statements immediately and notify police.	It is important that the police recognize and respect the principal's obligations under the <i>Education Act</i>.
Information sharing for the purpose of parallel investigations.	Principals may make their own notes as to what an officer has told them about a matter, for the purpose of addressing their obligations under the <i>Education Act</i>. Principals must comply with the restrictions on disclosing information and records under the YCJA, including prohibitions on subsequent disclosure, in addition to complying with any requirements under MFIPPA.	Police must comply with the restrictions on disclosing information and records under the YCJA, in addition to complying with provincial privacy legislation (FIPPA or MFIPPA as applicable). The YCJA permits police officers to disclose information from police records regarding youth justice matters in some circumstances, including where it is necessary for the officer's investigation of an

	Principal	Police
Legislation	<i>Education Act</i>	<i>Youth Criminal Justice Act, Criminal Code</i>
		offence (s. 125 (1)), or where the disclosure is to a representative of a school or school board and it is necessary to ensure the safety of staff, students or other persons (s. 125 (6) (b)), assuming the applicable access period has not ended.
Reinterviewing of students	A principal may re-interview a student, but this should not be done unless there is a strong and pressing rationale to do so. Principals should also first discuss the decision with the police, so as to minimize the possibility of jeopardizing the police investigation and any subsequent proceeding. In serious matters, students should not be re-interviewed by the principal without first discussing the matter with police and the student's parents/guardians. Principals should be aware that re-interviewing students may: • Re-victimize them, such as in cases of sexual assault or intimate partner violence • Create multiple statements from one witness, creating the potential for a more difficult cross-examination in a criminal proceeding • Place the principal in a position of becoming a witness in proceedings	

	Principal	Police
Legislation	<i>Education Act</i>	<i>Youth Criminal Justice Act, Criminal Code</i>
Requirements	A decision regarding expulsion of a student must be made within 20 school days from the date when the student was suspended. In cases where a principal does not have police clearance to conduct a school investigation in parallel with a police investigation, the principal may be unable to issue a suspension, a suspension pending possible expulsion, or an expulsion within 20 days of a suspension. In such cases, a principal may temporarily refuse to admit to the school (exclude) a student who allegedly caused harm, if in the principal's judgment the student's presence in the school would be detrimental to the physical or mental well-being of students, subject to appeal to the board under subsection 265(1)(m) of the <i>Education Act</i>.	Police investigation must comply with O. Reg. 395/23 Investigations and O. Reg. 394/23 Major Case Management and Approved Software Requirements under the <i>Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019</i>, as well as any other applicable standards for adequate and effective policing.

b) Legal Rights

In the investigation of school-related incidents where a young person is a suspect, particular attention should be given by the principal and police to procedures that are consistent with the following provisions:

- Parent/guardian notification upon arrest (s. 26, YCJA)
- Right to counsel (s. 25, YCJA)
- Procedural rights for taking a statement from a youth believed on reasonable grounds to have committed an offence (s. 146, YCJA)
- Protection of privacy (s. 110, YCJA)
- Legal rights under the Charter including the right to silence (not to make a statement) (*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*)

c) Search and Seizure

Where investigations involve search and seizure, the police and the principal should pay particular attention to the following procedures and responsibilities:

- Procedures to be followed in personal and premise searches, in accordance with police service's policies and procedures pursuant to O. Reg. 392/23: Adequate and Effective Policing (General) regarding search of the person and search of premises, and relevant legislation
- Legal obligations of police and school personnel in conducting searches of persons or property pursuant to applicable legislation, including the Charter
 - A principal, who has reasonable grounds to do so, may conduct a search of a student or their possessions in carrying out their duties to maintain order and discipline in the school.² "Reasonable grounds" in this context has been interpreted to mean a "reasonable suspicion" that a school rule has been violated and evidence of a breach will be found³
 - In order to search a student or their possessions on school premises, police must either have a warrant or be otherwise authorized by law to conduct the search. Generally speaking, police must have "reasonable and probable grounds" – a higher standard than "reasonable suspicion" – to conduct a lawful search on school premises. This higher standard also applies to school officials acting as agents of the police⁴
 - In all circumstances, any search conducted by either school authorities or police must be conducted in a manner that is reasonable (sensitive and minimally intrusive)
- Police should notify the principal before conducting searches on school premises⁵
- The continuing responsibility of the principal for students even when police are on school premises
- The need for police to act in accordance with all relevant legislation including the Charter
- The expectation that police will respect the dignity of the student and minimize disruption to the school when it is necessary to conduct a search of a student at school

² *R. v. M. (M.R.)*, [1998] 3 S.C.R. 393 at para 50, and the Ontario Court of Appeal in *R. v. J.M.G.* (1986).

³ *R. v. Chehil*, [2013] 3 S.C.R. 220 at para 23, fn 1; *R. v. A.M.*, [2008] 1 S.C.R. 569 at paras 45, 77 *per* Binnie J.

⁴ *R. v. A.M.*, [2008] 1 S.C.R. 569 at paras 45–47 *per* Binnie J.

⁵ *R. v. M. (M.R.)*, [1998] 3 S.C.R. 393 at paras 51–54.

The school board must ensure that students and staff are informed of the school's right to search school property (e.g., lockers and desks).

d) Detention and Arrest

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

- Police policies and procedures related to the detention and/or arrest of suspects
- The legal grounds for police to enter on to school property and detain and/or arrest a suspect, and the rights to be afforded to detained and/or arrested individuals, pursuant to applicable legislation, including the Charter
- 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 (e.g., the notification of parents/guardians under s. 26 of the Act)
- The expectation that police will respect the dignity of the student and minimize disruption to the school when it is necessary to detain or arrest a student at school

e) Supports for Victims

It is important that police and the principal be aware of the following with respect to providing support for victims:

- Standards respecting assistance to victims per O. Reg. 392/23: Adequate and Effective Policing (General)
- Roles and responsibilities of police and school personnel, such as:
 - The obligation that the principal inform the parents/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 opinion, doing so would put the victim at risk of harm from the parents/guardians (*Education Act*, s. 300.3(1) and O. Reg. 472/07)
 - The requirement that all 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)
- Notice to victims and (when applicable) their parents/guardians of the services available to them and other considerations, such as:
 - Police services for victims

- Office of the Children’s Lawyer (when under 18 years of age)
- Student support services of the local school board, such as social workers, psychologists and other caring adults in the school community that a student may have a relationship with
- Services offered by other municipal, community, and social service agencies, including legal services
- Access to information
- Confidentiality of victim and witness identity including any publication bans that may apply in the circumstances (e.g., s. 111, *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, s. 486.31 and s. 486.4, *Criminal Code*)

14. Police Interviews of Students

School boards must work with police to develop procedures that guide how police interview students when responding to safety incidents at schools.⁶

Police interviews of students should not be conducted at the school unless one or both of the following conditions are met:

- The student being interviewed requests to be interviewed at school and the principal and the police have no reason to deny this request
- It is absolutely necessary to interview a student at the school due to an emergency that requires immediate action to respond to urgent safety needs

Where appropriate, determining the location of an interview should be a collaborative process with consideration of input from all parties. Any decision regarding the location of an interview should respect the rights and ensure the safety and privacy of everyone involved.

Police are to conduct interviews related to criminal investigations of incidents that involve students as alleged perpetrators, victims, or witnesses. For interviews of youth who are arrested or detained, or when there are reasonable grounds to believe that the young person has committed an offence, police should provide the appropriate caution and right to counsel upon arrest or detention. Police should also take into account legal considerations respecting the admissibility of statements made to persons in authority, as per the obligations set out in s. 146 of the YCJA.

⁶ Police have clear legal obligations that must be followed pertaining to youth interviews. Depending on the circumstances, the *Criminal Code* and YCJA contain specific stipulations around parental notification and presence during interviews, rights to counsel, Charter-compliant procedural safeguards, and other provisions so no students’ rights are inadvertently violated. Local police services are well versed in these legal obligations, which guide their conduct in different scenarios.

When police interview a student, the principal must:

- Recommend that police consider alternatives to conducting interviews at the school, unless one or both of the following conditions are met:
 - The student being interviewed requests to be interviewed at school and the principal and the police have no reason to deny this request
 - It is absolutely necessary to interview a student at the school due to an emergency that requires immediate action to respond to urgent safety needs
- Contact parents/guardians as soon as possible before the interview (see also section 14(a), “Timely Notification of Parents/Guardians”, below)
- Ensure that a parent/guardian or the principal (or their delegate) be present, unless the student is 18 or older or the student is under the age of 18, can waive and has waived the right to have an adult present
 - Where practicable, students should have the ability to consult with another trusted adult who is in a position of guardianship or authority in the student’s life (such as a grandparent, an aunt or an uncle) as an alternative to their parent/guardian, who can ensure the waiver of adult presence during an interview is an informed choice
- Consider having the vice-principal or an administrator from an outside school conduct any further investigation(s) required pursuant to the *Education Act* if, in their role, the principal has supported a student to the extent that it may bias their judgment with respect to an investigation
- Recommend a process for police to follow in requesting permission to conduct interviews on school premises
- Recommend including the local children’s aid society (CAS)⁷ in a joint interview if the student is a child who is suspected to be in need of protection
- Assist police in making the required preparations (e.g., securing a quiet room, providing and supporting accommodations and establishing a time for the interview)

⁷ In some jurisdictions, children’s aid societies are also called child and family services agencies or Indigenous child and family well-being agencies.

a) Timely Notification of Parents/Guardians

It is the principal's responsibility to contact any parent/guardian of a student who falls under any one of the categories summarized below:

- A student who has been harmed as the result of an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered, and of the student(s) who the principal believes engaged in the activity that resulted in the harm, as soon as is reasonably possible (*Education Act*, s. 300.3(1))
 - Unless, in the principal's opinion, notification of the parents/guardians would put the student at risk of being harmed by the parents/guardians. If that is the case, the parents/guardians must not be contacted (*Education Act*, s. 300.3(3))
- Students receiving a suspension, make all reasonable efforts to inform the parent/guardian within 24 hours and to ensure written notice is given promptly (*Education Act*, s. 311(1)(b) & s. 311(2))
- All other students being interviewed by police during an investigation as soon as possible

In a situation where a principal has attempted to contact a parent, guardian or other emergency contact and is unable to reach them, the principal should contact another trusted adult who is in a position of guardianship or authority in the student's life (such as a grandparent, an aunt or an uncle) as an alternative to their parent/guardian.

Principals are not required to contact parents/guardians (or other trusted adults) if:

- The principal is otherwise directed by police because of emergency circumstances
- The parents/guardians are the suspects of a crime about which the student is being interviewed
- Directed by police that contacting the parents/guardians could interfere with the police investigation
- The student is 18 years of age or older (unless the student consents to or requests such contact or is incapable of providing consent)
- The student is 16 or 17 years of age and has withdrawn from parental control (unless the student consents to or requests such contact or is incapable of providing consent)

If a CAS is involved, school and police officials and the student involved should discuss and come to agreement with the CAS regarding the timing and procedure for notifying the parents/guardians.

If a student is arrested and charged or detained in custody, the police will notify their parents or guardians unless the student is 18 years of age or older or another adult has been notified in the circumstances designated under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.

15. Reporting of Children Suspected to Be in Need of Protection

School boards are required to ensure adherence to section 125(1) of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017* as amended (“duty to report” child in need of protection) and [PPM 9: Duty to Report Children in Need of Protection](#).

School boards must work with all local CAS and/or Indigenous child and family well-being agencies to support a shared understanding between the CAS and/or Indigenous child and family well-being agencies, the police, and the school board. For additional information, refer to the document [Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect](#), published by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

16. School Board Communication Strategy

Develop a communication plan to promote knowledge and understanding of the contents of the Provincial Model as well as consistency in its application, along with a process for informing the public of local response procedures and of a school incident involving the police.

a) Informing the School Community of Local Response Procedures

School boards must develop a proactive communication strategy and encourage schools to communicate with the school community at the beginning of each school year to provide information about:

- The Provincial Model
- What can be expected of school staff
- Situations in which police will be called
- Lockdown and bomb threat procedures
- Expectations of students and parents/guardians

Key targets of the communication strategy are students and their families, who need to be aware of the range of situations at school or during school-related activities in which police may be called. Communications materials should use plain language and be available in multiple languages (prioritizing the languages most spoken in their catchment areas) and accessible formats, as appropriate.

b) Informing the Public of an Incident

School boards must establish a clear process with police to determine how to communicate with the public during and after a school incident that involves police at a local level. A key objective must be to ensure parents and guardians receive timely, coordinated updates during a major safety incident at a school.

The process will clarify:

- Who communicates with news outlets and when
- Who publishes updates on social media channels and when
- Who determines what information can or should be shared with the public

Any sensitive information whose publication may compromise the safety of the school community or disclose confidential procedures should be excluded from public-facing materials.

17. Threat Management/Awareness Services

Incidents of violence in schools may be preventable through early intervention in response to threatening behaviour or conduct that may pose a risk of violence. School boards must take the necessary steps to identify students engaging in behaviour that may pose a risk of violence through early and ongoing assessment and intervention strategies.

A multi-disciplinary/multi-agency approach to threat management (e.g., Violence Threat Risk Assessment; Behavioural Threat Assessment and Management; Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines; others) that is trauma-informed can be a highly effective means of preventing and managing situations that could otherwise negatively affect the safety of students and/or school staff.

Multi-disciplinary teams should be formed by school boards in collaboration with police and other community-based service providers, such as mental health agencies, Youth Justice Probation Services, and other youth-focused agencies. Teams must develop procedures and protocols to facilitate timely intervention in situations where a threat has been made or an individual is engaging in behaviour that may pose a risk of violence. Having a multi-disciplinary team and a protocol in place provides for the sharing of information and makes a coordinated and timely response possible.

Where no multi-disciplinary team exists, the school board may want to contact local situation tables for support. The Ministry of the Solicitor General provides general guidance around information sharing in the context of situation tables.

In situations where a multi-disciplinary team has determined that a student may pose a risk of violence, the team should contact police for assistance.

Threat management protocols must be reviewed annually or more frequently, if needed.

18. Emergency Planning and Threats to School Safety

Every school is required to establish an Emergency and Crisis Response Plan, in keeping with school board and ministry policies. The response plan must include, but is not limited to, (1) a *lockdown** plan and procedures to be followed after a lockdown or similar emergency (see Appendix B), and (2) a plan and procedures for dealing with bomb threats (see Appendix C).

The Emergency and Crisis Response Plan must be responsive and consider the diversity of student needs by reducing barriers for students, particularly those with disabilities, to successfully participate in response processes to mitigate the impacts of an emergency event on students with disabilities. Plans and procedures must be consistent with standards set out in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Teachers, staff, parents/guardians, and students, including those with disabilities, should be involved in the development and monitoring of the Emergency and Crisis Response Plan, and the plan should be fully communicated to members of the school community, police services, and the fire department. Mechanisms for sharing the Emergency and Crisis Response Plan with police services and the fire department must be determined at the local level.

The Emergency and Crisis Response Plan should be available in more than one location in the school, in case the primary location is compromised during a safety incident and updated regularly.

19. Training

School boards must provide training on the Provincial Model to their staff at a minimum of **once a year** and ideally at the start of the school year. Best efforts should be made to include all staff, including part-time, itinerant, and occasional staff, in this training.

Training should be ongoing, collaborative, and implemented whenever changes are made to policies. Alternative training opportunities must be provided to staff who are unable to attend training sessions.

To improve collaboration between local police services and schools, where possible, the training should be delivered jointly by police and school board personnel.

20. Definitions/Explanations of Terms

Police services and school boards should identify terms that need to be defined, and, where appropriate, adopt definitions that have already been used in related ministry, board, school, or police policy documents. This practice will help maintain consistency among interrelated policies and protocols.

Appendix A of this document provides definitions of some of the terms in this document.

Appendix A: Glossary

The purpose of this glossary is to explain the terms that are used in the present document. The definitions are only to be used in the context of this document. Although some of the definitions are based on language used in the *Criminal Code*, they are not to be taken as the official legal definitions. For legal definitions, please refer to the Code itself. These definitions have been developed with input from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Solicitor General, along with their partners.

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.

criminal harassment. Criminal harassment occurs when: (1) a person repeatedly follows an individual or anyone known to the individual from place to place or repeatedly communicates, directly or indirectly, by any means (including electronic means), with an individual or anyone known to the individual, or watches the home or place of work of an individual or anyone known to the individual, or any place the individual or anyone known to the individual happens to be, or engages in threatening conduct directed at a person or a member of that person's family; and (2) the harassing conduct caused the victim to fear for their safety or the safety of someone they know and that fear was reasonable in all circumstances.

expulsion. The removal of a student from their 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 subsection 310(1) of the *Education Act*.

extortion. The use of threats, intimidation, or violence towards a person to obtain something of value from that person or someone else, or to cause that person or someone else to do something.

extra-judicial measures. Measures used by police to hold a young person accountable for their alleged criminal behaviour, 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 their 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.

gang-related occurrences. Incidents involving one or more members of a criminal organization (or gang), which is a group that consists of three or more persons, however organized or geographically situated, who are collectively engaged in the ongoing commission of criminal activities for the benefit of the organization. These incidents may include, for example, participation in the activities of recruitment for a criminal organization as well as commission of or instructing commission of an offence for the criminal organization.

hate crime. A criminal offence committed against a person or property that is motivated in whole or in part by, prejudice, bias or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or gender identity or expression, or on any other similar factor.

human trafficking. Involves actions taken to exploit a person for profit, usually for sexual reasons or forced labour. These actions can include recruiting, transporting, transferring, receiving, holding, concealing or harbouring a person, and/or exercising control, direction or influence over their movements. It may involve the use of force, physical or psychological coercion, or deception, and is a form of sexual exploitation and one form of trafficking criminalized under the Criminal Code. See PPM 166: Keeping Students Safe: Policy Framework for School Board Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocols for school board requirements related to anti-sex trafficking.

intimate partner violence. Refers to a range of harmful conduct by a person towards their intimate partner, including a dating partner and a former partner. Common IPV offences include assault, sexual assault, threats, criminal harassment and distribution of intimate images. These offences are often accompanied by other forms of harm such as emotional or psychological abuse, coercive control, and financial abuse.

law enforcement agency. A body engaged in policing or conducting investigations that could lead to proceedings in a court or tribunal where penalties could be imposed. Other organizations that conduct investigations, such as insurance companies and private security firms are not law enforcement agencies.

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 for details.)

mitigating and other factors. Circumstances that must be considered by the board and school administrators in situations involving suspension and/or expulsion of a student, as required by the *Education Act* and as set out in Ontario Regulation 472/07 (quoted below):

Mitigating factors

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:

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.

Other factors

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:

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,
 - i. whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified in the pupil's individual education plan,

- ii. whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided, and
- iii. whether the suspension or expulsion is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the pupil's behaviour or conduct.

negative impact on school climate. A possible result of inappropriate activities or behaviours, whether those activities/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.

non-consensual sharing of intimate images. Knowingly publishing, distributing, transmitting, selling, making available, or advertising an intimate image of another person while knowing that the person depicted in the image did not give their consent, or being reckless as to whether the person gave their consent. The term "intimate image" refers to a visual recording such as a photograph, film, or video recording of a person in which the person is nude, partially nude, or is engaged in explicit sexual activity, and which was created in circumstances that gave rise to a reasonable expectation of privacy.

parent/guardian. 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 except for a student who is 16 or 17 years of age but has withdrawn from parental control.

personal information. Recorded information about an identifiable individual. It includes information such as name, address and phone number. It can also include school photos, videos, health information and students' records.

possession of drugs. Having knowledge of and control over a controlled substance (e.g., a drug or narcotic, as set out in the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*) even if it is not in the person's immediate possession. It includes personal possession of an illegal drug or possessing it jointly with others, including knowingly possessing an illegal drug elsewhere.

robbery. The use of violence or threats of violence to steal or with the intent to steal money or other property from the victim or stealing from any person while armed with a weapon or imitation weapon.

sexual violence. Offences that capture an act or acts committed in circumstances of a sexual nature such that they violate the sexual integrity of the victim. It captures conduct done without the victim's consent (meaning their contemporaneous, communicated agreement to engage in the sexual activity in question) or in circumstances in which the victim legally cannot consent. These circumstances include, for example: 1) The victim is unconscious; 2) The victim is incapable of consenting due to their age, level of intoxication, mental or physical disability, or any other reason; 3) The victim engages in the sexual activity due to the application of force to the victim or another, or threats or fear of same; or 4) The victim engages in the sexual activity due to fraud, the exercise of authority, or the abuse of a position of trust, power or authority. Examples of sexual violence include sexual assault, sexual harassment and an indecent act of a sexual nature.

social networking sites. Various internet-based forms of communication including, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Discord, etc.

suspension. The removal of a student from their 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) of the *Education Act*.

threats. Any statement, act, or communication by any means, including electronic means, that conveys an intent to cause death or bodily harm (including psychological harm) to any person, to burn or destroy property, or to harm an animal or bird belonging to any person.

trafficking. Assisting in any manner with the distributing of a controlled drug or substance, as set out in the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*, or with the distributing of certain weapons specified under the *Criminal Code*.

weapon. Any article used, designed to be used, or intended to be used in causing death or injury in any manner to any person or for the purpose of threatening, intimidating, or injuring a person. All firearms, including replica firearms and imitation firearms, are always considered weapons. Any knife that has a blade that opens automatically by gravity, by centrifugal force, or by hand pressure applied to a button, spring or other device in or attached to the handle of the knife (butterfly knives, switchblades, etc.) is a prohibited item and is considered a weapon.

- Any article can become a weapon if it is used to threaten, intimidate or injure.
- The use of a Swiss Army knife serves as a good example of purpose and intent. When used as a multi-purpose camping tool, it is not a weapon. However, if it is used to threaten, intimidate, or injure, it becomes a weapon.

young person. A person who is or, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, appears to be 12 or older but younger than 18 and who is charged with or found guilty of an offence under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (Canada) or the *Provincial Offences Act*.

Appendix B: Provincial Policy on Lockdown Procedures for Elementary and Secondary Schools in Ontario

Introduction

The possibility of a major incident of violence is a reality that cannot be overlooked.

Given the dynamic, complex, and fluid nature of such incidents, continuous communication, assessment, and coordination by first responders and school administrators are of paramount importance in ensuring an effective response. School board 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 (see section 18 of this document).

Purpose

All Ontario schools must have lockdown plans that:

- Meet basic emergency preparedness requirements
- Are consistent with all other school lockdown plans across the province

This policy will help school staff and emergency services personnel work together to deal with lockdown situations quickly and effectively.

Signatories to the Lockdown Procedures Protocol

Indicate the parties to the agreement (e.g., school board(s), police service(s)) and obtain the signatures of their designated representatives to indicate acceptance of these procedures.

Mandatory Requirements

While much of what is provided below is termed “Effective Practices”, the Ministry of Education specifies two mandatory requirements, as follows:

1. All publicly funded school boards in Ontario must ensure the development and implementation of individual school lockdown plans that are consistent with this provincial policy
2. A minimum of two lockdown drills must occur each school year at every school

When to Lock Down / Terminology to Be Used

Terminology is very important. Plans must clearly identify when “lockdown” versus other terminology is to be utilized. Terminology used to order a lockdown must be plain language, clear, and leave no room for misunderstanding as to what is expected. No secret passwords should be used.

“Lockdown” must only be used when there is a major incident or threat of school violence within the school, or in relation to the school. The overuse or misuse of “lockdown” will result in staff/students becoming desensitized and not taking lockdowns seriously.

“Hold and Secure” 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., if a bank robbery occurs near a school but not on school property). In this situation, the school continues to function normally, with the exterior doors being locked until such time as the situation near the school is resolved.

“Shelter in Place” should be used for an environmental or weather-related situation, where it is necessary to keep all occupants within the school to protect them from an external situation at or near the school. Examples may include chemical spills, blackouts, explosions, or extreme weather conditions.

Boards must use the above terminology in establishing local plans, to ensure consistency across the province. The policy outlined in this appendix focuses primarily on “lockdowns”.

Rationale

The use of common language across the province allows for easy integration when staff, students, and emergency service personnel are transferred from one jurisdiction to another.

Note

Some school boards have developed internal response processes to keep students in classrooms and maintain clear hallways. These responses assist in the overall management of student behavioural issues, student dysregulation or with medical responses. The rationale for these processes is usually to protect the privacy and dignity of the student or staff member involved and to allow staff or responders to focus on supporting the situation without an audience. These response processes may be informal (teachers are contacted and advised to keep students in classrooms) or formalized (through terminology such as 'clear halls'). It is important that these internal processes remain separate from the processes outlined in this policy to maintain the integrity and consistency of the lockdown procedures. If a board decides to formalize an internal response process this should be included in the board's Caring and Safe Schools policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and expectations are critical in emergency situations. At a minimum, plans must include expectations with respect to staff, students, parents/guardians, and police. Plans must also address issues such as accessibility and communications for students with special education needs and students with disabilities.

Effective Practices

Principal – The principal is responsible for overall planning and the final content of the school plan. The principal is also responsible for scheduling drills; for making police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) aware of planning and drills and inviting them to participate; for training students; and for the overall safety of staff and students. In an actual incident (not a drill), the police are responsible for management of the threat and subsequent criminal investigation; however, the principal shall provide full co-operation with police.

Staff – School staff, and in particular administrators, have the overall responsibility for the training, safety, and well-being of students. During a violent incident, administrators 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 crisis situation. Any student with information on or prior knowledge of anyone or anything that may be associated with or result in a violent incident should come forward with that information as soon as possible. This is also the case during an incident.

Police – Through Ontario Regulation 393/23: Active Attacker Incidents, chiefs of police are required to have procedures that address responding to incidents involving an active attacker at schools, including procedures regarding the following:

- i. How emergency protocols and resources of schools should be accounted for in the response to the active attacker
- ii. Liaising with school at the scene of the incident

During a violent incident, police will assume command and control of the response and investigation but will liaise and work closely with the principal and other emergency services throughout the process.

Parents/Guardians – Parents and guardians must be informed of the existence of this plan and should be encouraged to reinforce with their children the responsibilities students have with respect to following directions during a crisis and disclosing any information they may have prior to or during a crisis situation.

Floor Plans

It is important for schools to have accurate, up-to-date floor plans to effectively plan for and respond to lockdown situations.

Effective Practices

Floor plans should be colour-coded as follows:

- Red indicates danger areas of the school that cannot be locked down safely
- Green identifies areas where staff and students are to proceed to safely lock down
- Blue areas identify command post locations that may 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 must be identified in the individual school plan, to be used in the event that neither on-site command post location is available. Off-site evacuation locations must also be identified and included with copies of the floor plans.

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.

Police should be provided with both hard copies and electronic copies of floor plans.

Rationale

It is vitally important that police have current, accurate information about the school layout and that this information be available in electronic format as well as in hard copies that can be used in the event of computer malfunctions.

Identification of Buildings, Exterior Doors, 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 must be clearly identified, on all sides, with a building identifier, such as a number. All portables must be clearly identified as well. All exterior doors must be clearly identified – for example, as Doors A, B, C, and so on. All rooms within the building must be clearly marked with room numbers.

Police and schools must plan in advance how police will gain access to the school in the event of a lockdown. Floor plans and facility master keys must be up to date and available for emergency services responders who may be involved in any type of search of the premises. It is particularly important that those elementary schools that have opted to lock their doors during the school day have a plan for making keys available to emergency services personnel.

Rationale

This information is essential so that police can identify the location of rooms and buildings and safe access routes for responding emergency personnel.

Initiating Lockdown

During a major incident of school violence, a school must initiate a lockdown as quickly as possible.

Effective Practices

At the first indication of a major incident of school violence, staff must secure the area and immediately notify the administration office who will then announce a lockdown. Where feasible and safe to do so, the following information should be provided to the office:

- Location and number of suspects
- If the suspect is moving or stationary
- Suspect's identity
- Description of physical appearance (clothing, build, etc.)
- Description of weapons
- Possible motive or threats made
- Any known injuries and location of casualties

Announcing Lockdown

When information is received in the office of a situation requiring a lockdown, the person receiving that information will immediately:

- Activate lockdown notification as defined in the local plan
- Activate the school's Public Address (PA) system (both interior and exterior) to announce the lockdown
- Announce clearly and calmly on PA system:
 - "EMERGENCY/ EMERGENCY/ EMERGENCY INITIATE LOCKDOWN"

The actual sequence and wording announcing a lockdown should be affixed on or near the microphone, so that it is clearly visible and can be read by the person announcing the lockdown. If the PA system has the capability of pre-recording messages, the lockdown message should be pre-recorded so it can be activated with the push of a button.

Upon hearing the lockdown announcement, staff will immediately initiate the lockdown procedures:

- Call 911 immediately and provide the following information, if known:
 - Identity of caller, the school name, and full address
 - Incident details as they were reported to the office

Boards must consider both auditory (PA) and visual notification systems inside and outside the school to announce a lockdown. These PA systems must be designed to be easy to hear above the ambient background noise of the environment with no distortion or feedback. For the safety of hearing-impaired individuals and in situations where noise levels in open areas, such as cafeterias and outside the school, may prevent staff and students from hearing a PA announcement, consideration must be given to the use of visual indicators and visual equivalents of information, in addition to the PA system. These indicators must be consistent with standards set out in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Rationale

In emergent stressful circumstances, even the most composed individuals may have difficulty remembering exact words. By pre-printing the announcement and practicing it, the person delivering the message can ensure that the content is delivered accurately.

Classroom/Other Secure Areas – Procedures during Lockdown

School-level plans must provide detailed procedures to be used when locking down a classroom or other secure areas.

Effective Practices

All staff, including occasional, part-time, or itinerant teachers, must have the ability to lock their classroom doors. It is recommended that, before locking a door, staff should gather everyone in the immediate vicinity into their classroom or other secure area, but only if it is safe to do so. Once inside a secure area, staff and students must:

- Stay away from doors and windows
- Turn off lights
- Close blind
- Be aware of sight lines
- If the classroom door has a window, consider covering the window

- Take cover if available (get behind something solid)
- Remain absolutely quiet
- Take attendance (to be done by teachers)
- Not use cellphones unless it is necessary to communicate regarding the incident. Phones that are being used for this purpose should be put on vibrate and all others should be shut off (see note below)
- Consider *barricading** doors where possible, in addition to locking them. Barricading can sometimes provide additional protection against an intruder

Consideration should also be given to developing strategies for ways in which staff are to assist students in coping with an extended lockdown or “hold and secure”. For example, staff members must have access to all necessary emergency medications for prevalent medical conditions such as anaphylaxis, diabetes, asthma, and epilepsy. ‘Lockdown bags’ to support students with IEPs may also be useful. The bag can include favourite items, snacks, activities, or other things to keep students occupied and quiet. Suggestions include stuffed animals, stress balls, and headphones to help lessen anxiety. Include needed medical supplies and some snack items. For other strategies to support students with disabilities during emergency procedures please see [*Supporting Student With Disabilities During School Crises: A Teacher’s Guide* \(2014\)](#).

Rationale

Restricting an intruder’s access (through multiple measures, if possible) to students, staff, and visitors gives the police more time to respond to and resolve a lockdown incident. Additionally, if a classroom is secured and those in it remain out of sight, silent, and behind cover, an intruder is more likely to move on.

Note: School boards, schools, and local police should jointly develop a preferred course of action regarding the use of social media (e.g., for an emergency information network) when establishing local school plans and board lockdown procedures. In addition, students and parents/guardians must be educated beforehand as to why it is important to stay quiet and switch off their cellphones in the event of a lockdown. Communications officers in school boards and police services can help with the development of a social media action plan.

Portables – Procedures during Lockdown

Plans must address how to effectively and safely lock down a school portable.

Effective Practices

School-level plans must recognize unique issues with portables. Because of the thin wall construction of portables, it is recommended that all desks be arranged in a circle and tipped onto their sides with desktops facing out, and that students/staff gather within the circle and remain down on the floor, below the top edge of the desks.

Rationale

The desktops will act as an additional barrier to a round from a firearm that may have penetrated a portable wall.

Washrooms – Procedures during Lockdown

School-level plans must address what staff/students should do if they are in a washroom when a lockdown is called.

Effective Practices

Washrooms cannot be locked, and therefore should be identified during planning as a danger (red) area. In the event of a lockdown, students need to evacuate washrooms if at all possible and get to an area that can safely be locked down (green).

For elementary schools, it is recommended that plans designate adults who normally work in close proximity to student washrooms check the washroom(s), if it safe to do so, prior to locking down themselves. After gathering students in the immediate vicinity of their classroom door into their classroom, they should quickly check washrooms to which they have been assigned in the planning phase, and take any students found in the washrooms into their classrooms to lock down.

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 for 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.

Rationale

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.

Open Areas Inside the School – Procedures during Lockdown

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 in school-level plans 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.

Rationale

Having various options for securing open areas can enhance the safety of those who are in these vulnerable areas when a lockdown is called.

Child Care and Other Facility Occupants

As many schools have licensed child care centres and/or other tenants and community groups using school premises, sometimes outside of regular school hours, those organizations or individuals should be taken into consideration at all stages, including planning, training, and drills, and they must be informed of the need to follow lockdown procedures.

Effective Practices

Principals must make best efforts to ensure that the appropriate staff from organizations sharing school facilities are included in the development and implementation of lockdown procedures and that these organizations participate in relevant aspects of planning, training, and drills, whenever possible.

Rationale

Due to proximity issues, the need to be prepared is as important for other occupants as it is for staff and students of schools. Planning should take into consideration all after-school programs, night school, sports programs, and so on.

Outside of School Buildings – Procedures When a Lockdown or “Hold and Secure” Is Called

Procedures must address where staff, students, and others who are outside the school building(s) should go in the event of a lockdown, including a lockdown that occurs during recess or during arrival or dismissal times. These procedures must also address how people who are outside the school building will know where the evacuation sites are located. Instructions for bus drivers and parents/guardians who might arrive at the school during a lockdown must be included in the procedures.

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. PA systems should be designed to accommodate all users. Consideration should also be given to include technology for an exterior visual equivalent of information and indicators (e.g., strobe lights) that can be used to indicate that a lockdown has been called for individuals with hearing loss/hard-of-hearing who may not hear an audible public address system.

Those who are outside the school when a lockdown is called shall not re-enter the school but shall proceed immediately to the predetermined off-site evacuation location(s). Once at the location, staff, students, and any visitors who may be present shall remain at that location until further advised by the principal or police. Plans must include taking 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

In the event of a prolonged situation, or a situation where the threat has been contained (e.g., the individual issuing the threat has been barricaded), plans should include provisions for a controlled evacuation of areas of the school that are not in the vicinity of the contained area.

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. Evacuation will normally be done on a room-by-room basis, with evacuees being escorted by police to the evacuation location.

Fire Alarms

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

Effective Practices

In the event that 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 in order to ensure their own safety.

Rationale

There is a desire not to create a situation where staff and students run into danger when responding to a fire alarm. At the same time, staff and students should not ignore the fact that fire may occur intentionally or otherwise during a lockdown and that there is a need to respond to the most immediate threat.

Procedures to End a Lockdown

Plans must include how a lockdown will be terminated and by whom (e.g., the police or the principal).

Effective Practices

Plans to conclude a lockdown will vary by location. Procedures may include a general announcement via the PA system by the principal, or a room-to-room visit from police and /or the principal, with some sort of an identification process, so that the occupants of a locked room know that whoever is giving them the all-clear is in fact authorized to do so. Local plans should include procedures for ending lockdowns at off-site evacuation locations. In all cases where police have responded, plans must clearly indicate that the decision to end a lockdown shall be made only after approval of the on-scene police incident commander.

Rationale

There is a need to bring the same level of authority to ending a lockdown as to initiating one.

Training

Plans must address initial and ongoing training of all staff and students.

Effective Practices

Orientation for new staff must include mandatory lockdown training. Schools must establish a method to conduct lockdown review training for all staff during each school year, as early in the school year as possible.

Schools should consider holding assemblies to train secondary students on lockdown procedures. It is suggested that classroom teachers be responsible for training students at the elementary level. Any training provided to students with disabilities or special education needs should be developmentally appropriate and consistent with the expectations and accommodations outlined in their IEP.

Best efforts should be made to include all staff, including part-time, itinerant, or occasional staff, in this training. When conducting training, schools should consider how best to include all stakeholders in the school, including community groups, any municipal services that have space in the school, bus drivers, parents/guardians, and child care staff.

It is advantageous to have police partners present during training to assist with the training of staff and students. Fire department and EMS personnel should also be invited to training sessions.

Rationale

People can be expected to respond properly under stressful and emergent circumstances when properly trained.

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 Requirement (Ministry of Education)

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

Effective Practices

School personnel should work co-operatively with police partners on drills whenever police are able to assist. The principal is responsible for setting the date of drills and for overseeing the drills, with police support/assistance when available. Schools should also consider including fire department and EMS personnel during drills, so they can become familiar with lockdown plans. Staff, students, child care workers, and community partners or other visitors who may be in the school should be given some warning of an impending drill. Notifying parents/guardians in advance of drills is also an important consideration. Consideration could be given to conducting one of the two required annual drills as a planned “non-routine” drill, such as one that takes place during recess.

Procedures should include a plan to alert neighbouring schools about lockdown drills, especially if fire department and EMS personnel have been invited to participate. Both drills must be used to practice lockdown procedures. Drills for Hold and Secure and Shelter in Place are not required nor are they substitutes for lockdown drills.

To identify areas for improvement, a short debriefing must be included after all drills. A page should be included which allows for documentation of who organized the drill, the date, police/fire or EMS partners who participated, a short description of lesson learned from the debrief and a signature area.

Rationale

In order for staff and students to respond properly, plans must be practiced to ensure that complacency is avoided.

Media

Plans shall include provisions for dealing with media.

Effective Practices

Police are responsible for addressing media with respect to a criminal incident and the police response to the incident. Principals/board personnel are responsible for dealing with media on issues pertaining to staff and student safety. It is strongly advised that media personnel from police and school boards share press 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 co-operation is highly recommended, and police and school/board officials are encouraged to work closely with each other on media issues.

Rationale

Coordinated and consistent messaging from all partners is essential in maintaining public confidence.

Communication with Parents/Guardians and the Community

Communication with parents/guardians, and the community in general is important so as 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/guardians of lockdown procedures and to encourage parents/guardians to reinforce with their children the importance of understanding the procedures and following staff direction.

Parents/guardians need to be informed of where they should proceed in the event of an actual incident involving a lockdown. Given the dynamic, complex, and fluid nature of these incidents, communication with parents/guardians around the importance of lockdowns is vital. Information for parents/guardians may be presented in newsletters, on school or board websites, and/or at an evening session on lockdown plans. Parents/guardians should be informed of what is expected if they happen to arrive at the school during a drill, or if they are in the school when a lockdown is called.

In all instances of a lockdown that was not a drill, it is recommended that a communication to parents/guardians be sent as soon as possible. Schools should also send additional communication home with each student at the conclusion of the school day or as soon as possible thereafter. In the absence of official communication from the school or police, in an actual lockdown, social media will allow for the rapid spread of misinformation or non-sanctioned information in school and broader communities.

Parents/guardians 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.

Rationale

It is helpful if parents/guardians see lockdown drills as essential elements to prevent injury. Good communication is required to eliminate fears and concerns. In the absence of official communication, parents/guardians will be exposed to alternate narratives that will begin to circulate on social media and through parent/guardian networks. It is critical that schools communicate clearly and effectively as soon as they are able to. Parents/guardians play a key role in ensuring students' co-operation and participation in drills.

School Recovery Following a Lockdown

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

Effective Practices

A debriefing must occur in all situations following a lockdown. The nature and severity of the incident will dictate who should be included in the debriefing.

In serious situations where injuries or loss of life occurs, the board's trauma response plan will normally be initiated.

In all cases, communication with parents/guardians is vital.

Plan Review

Each school plan shall be thoroughly reviewed annually.

Effective Practices

A page must 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 each year when the plan was reviewed.

Appendix C: Provincial Bomb Threat Policy and Procedures for Elementary and Secondary Schools in Ontario

Introduction

To enhance safety and security, it is important that schools have plans for responding to bomb threats. Care should be taken to deal with each incident calmly and consistently.

Bomb threat response plans and procedures reflecting the following policy must be included in the school's Emergency and Crisis Response Plan (see section 18 of this document).

Given the dynamic, complex, and fluid nature of such incidents, continuous communication, assessment, and coordination by first responders and school administrators are of paramount importance in ensuring an effective response.

Purpose

All Ontario schools must have bomb threat plans that:

- Meet basic emergency preparedness/response requirements
- Are consistent with all other school bomb threat plans across the province

This policy will help school staff and services personnel work together to deal with bomb threat situations quickly and effectively.

Signatories to the Bomb Threat Procedures Protocol

Indicate the parties to the agreement (e.g., school board(s), police service(s)) and obtain the signatures of their designated representatives to indicate acceptance of these procedures.

Mandatory Requirements

While much of what is provided below is termed “Effective Practices”, the Ministry of Education, on the recommendation of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, specifies two mandatory requirements, as follows:

1. All publicly funded school boards in Ontario must ensure the development and implementation of individual school bomb threat plans that are consistent with this provincial policy
2. Each board must ensure that its staff, students, and other partners are aware of their obligations/responsibilities within the individual school plans

Roles and Responsibilities

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

Effective Practices

Principal – The principal is responsible for the overall development and final content of the individual school plan. The principal is also responsible for inviting police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) to participate in plan development and for making them aware of planning and drills; for the training of staff and students; and for the overall safety of staff and students. The principal (and, it is understood, their designate) must be completely familiar with the school’s bomb threat plan and with the scope of the authority vested in, and the responsibilities associated with, the principal’s position as defined in the plan.

During the initial stages of a bomb threat, the principal will be the authority responsible for the initial assessment and related decisions, including those regarding visual scans and evacuations. For ongoing or substantiated incidents, the police are likely to assume authority and responsibility for management of the threat and any subsequent criminal investigation. However, the principal will co-operate fully with police and strive to ensure that all staff and students do the same. During an incident, after the principal has been relocated to a place of safety, they should continue to exercise their duties, to the extent possible, in support of the emergency responders’ management of the situation.

Staff – School staff, and in particular administrators, have the overall responsibility for the training, safety, and well-being of students. During a bomb threat incident, administrators 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/device, or an explosives incident should come forward with that information as soon as possible.

Parents/Guardians – Parents and guardians must be informed of the existence of this plan. Parents/guardians 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 and other emergency services throughout the process. The police must be notified of all bomb threat incidents, regardless of other actions taken by the schools. The criminal investigation of bomb threats by the police may lead to the apprehension of persons responsible. The investigation itself may also serve as a deterrent for future “copycat” incidents.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) – EMS personnel will provide urgent medical care in the event of an explosives incident.

Fire Department – The fire department can be present during bomb threat incidents in the event that fire suppression operations are needed and will provide fire suppression and rescue operations in explosives incidents. Further, the fire department (Assistants to the Fire Marshal) must report all explosions to the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM). The OFM provides a 24-hour response for all explosions. The OFM is notified immediately of all fatal fires, explosions, and incidents causing serious injuries so that an OFM investigator can be assigned.

Floor Plans

All schools must have accurate, up-to-date floor plans to effectively plan for and respond to bomb threats and explosives incidents.

Effective Practices

Floor plans must 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.

Floor plans must clearly identify entrances and exits as well as routes that staff and students are to take during an evacuation. Command post locations and off-site evacuation locations should not be identified on posted or publicly circulated copies of the floor plans.

Floor plans should be available to all emergency service responders who may be involved in a search of the premises when they arrive on the scene.

Police should be provided with both hard copies and electronic copies of floor plans.

Rationale

It is vitally important that police have current, accurate information about the school layout and evacuation locations and that this information be available in electronic format as well as in hard copies that can be used in the event of computer malfunctions.

Identification of Rooms and Buildings, and Facilitation of Access

To assist police in responding to an incident, it is important to identify buildings, entrances, and all rooms within buildings and to ensure that facility master keys are up to date.

Effective Practices

In situations where more than one building exists on school grounds, each building must be clearly identified, on all sides, with a building identifier, such as a number. All portables must be clearly identified as well. All exterior doors must be clearly identified – for example, as Doors A, B, C, and so on. All rooms within the building must be clearly marked with room numbers. This site plan should be consistent with the fire safety plan that school boards are required to provide to the fire department for emergency fire response.

In addition, it is important to ensure that facility master keys are current and available for emergency service responders who may be involved in a search of the premises. It is particularly important that those elementary schools that have opted to lock their doors during the school day have a plan for making keys available to emergency services personnel.

Rationale

This preparation is vital for responding emergency personnel, as it allows them to identify the location of rooms and buildings that have been reported as potentially unsafe, and to identify safe access and/or evacuation routes. Ensuring that responders have access to all rooms and buildings for searches or other purposes is also critical.

Command Post

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

Effective Practices

Normally, the main office will be the primary command post location, with another area within the school identified as an alternate (secondary) command post location. The individual school plan must identify a third off-site command post location, to be used in the event that neither on-site command post location is available.

Information regarding command post locations must not be publicly circulated. This will help to ensure that the command posts do not become locations for the placement of explosive packages/devices or for secondary incidents.

Rationale

Having a dedicated command post provides a central location from which officials and emergency services can evaluate incidents and control the emergency response.

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 must detail proactive measures in a number of areas. In developing their plans, schools must:

- Determine likely locations in and around the school for the placement of suspicious packages/devices
- Provide for controlled access to critical areas of all facilities (e.g., the main office, electrical rooms, mechanical rooms)

- 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
- Consider other potential threats

Rationale

The development and implementation of proactive strategies may deter bomb threat incidents and enhance/expedite agency response to actual incidents.

Bomb Threat Intake Procedures

Bomb threats, whether made by telephone, mail, online or by other means, should be taken seriously. School staff in positions that make them most likely to receive bomb threats should be identified in school plans and must receive training in proper procedures.

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.

Staff must be trained to record precise information and ask specific questions during a bomb threat call, including the following:

Information to record	Questions to ask
• The exact wording of the threat • The time and date of the call • The phone number or line on which the call was received • The caller's number, if shown on call display	• What time will the bomb explode? • What is the exact location of the bomb?

Information to record	Questions to ask
• Whether the caller is male or female and the caller's approximate age • Any unique speech characteristics of the caller • Any background noises (e.g., traffic, music, laughter) • The condition or emotional state of the caller (e.g., whether the caller seems to be intoxicated, excited, angry) • Whether the call taker recognizes the voice of the caller • The time when the caller hangs up	• What does the bomb look like? What type of explosive device is it (e.g., pipe bomb, truck bomb)? • Where are you calling from? • Why did you place the bomb? • What is your name?

If possible, the call taker should attempt to notify the school principal during the telephone call. If not, the principal must be notified immediately after the call. All pertinent details of the call must immediately be relayed to the principal and documented.

Following the call, the call taker should immediately “trace” the phone number of the received call, using *57, if this feature is available through the local telephone provider. It is suggested that the “trace” process be posted at all phones that can receive incoming calls (see Appendix E).

School plans must address who will contact the local police service and fire department and provide details about the bomb threat. It is recommended that, unless there are urgent safety reasons, this should be done after the school principal has been provided with available information and after both the initial assessment (see the next section) and the decision whether or not to evacuate have been made.

With the proliferation of social networking and school use of Internet sites for external communication, plans must also address bomb threats that are received through electronic means. These procedures should address bomb threats received via external email, posted on electronic bulletin boards, or received by a staff member or student via text or other means. Procedures must include how to immediately isolate the received message, remove it from any external posting, and communicate the information to the school principal during and after school hours, including on weekends and holidays.

Rationale

The overall safety of all staff and students can be maximized – and the disruption of activities and atmosphere of anxiety minimized – if the employee who receives the bomb threat knows what procedures to follow.

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 and/or an evacuation. Many bomb threats are hoaxes intended to disrupt school exams or daily classes. Hasty decisions to evacuate or to initiate a high-profile emergency response may encourage further incidents. However, the safety of students and staff is paramount during a bomb threat and therefore every threat must be assessed individually, based on known information.

These guidelines cannot prescribe when to conduct a safe, visual scan and/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 and evacuation are made after a thorough assessment of known information and are continually re-evaluated throughout a bomb threat incident.

Effective Practices

Plans must identify in detail the information that needs to be immediately assessed by the principal 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”, above)
- 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 time/date
- 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
- Whether a suspicious device/package has been located

Once the initial assessment has taken place and decisions have been made regarding a visual scan and/or evacuation, the police must be notified. Initial contact with the police may be made while the principal is conducting the assessment and making decisions. Although it is important to provide police with information beyond simply that a bomb threat has been received, initial contact should not be delayed.

The fire department must also be notified of the bomb threat. A predesignated phone number should be used, rather than 911, which is restricted to emergency calls to the police. When notifying the fire department, it is important to clarify that no explosion has occurred and that the police have been informed.

School plans must specify who will contact the police and fire department when a bomb threat is received. Police must be contacted in every incident of a “bomb threat”, regardless of whether a decision has been made to conduct a partial or full evacuation, or not to evacuate.

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

- The information recorded on the bomb threat checklist (see “Bomb Threat Intake Procedures”, above)
- 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
- The in-school contact person for the police, once they are on the scene

Plans should include procedures for ongoing assessment during an incident. Regardless of whether a partial or full evacuation is ongoing or no evacuation has been directed, whether a scan is underway, or whether police and fire department are responding to the incident, plans should include procedures for the continual assessment of the situation and for relaying further information to update the principal. Specifically, the principal needs to be informed:

- If a suspicious package/device is located
- Of any interference with any type of evacuation that is underway

- If an explosives incident occurs

Rationale

Having a comprehensive list of items to be assessed when a bomb threat is received provides decision makers with the best opportunity to evaluate and respond to the bomb threat, and to continually assess any additional information and take appropriate action.

Visual Scans

Every school's plan 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 may decide that a safe, visual scan of the school and/or classroom for suspicious devices or packages must be conducted. Every school plan must 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 and therefore are best suited to recognize suspicious devices/packages.

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.

Procedures

Principals should receive training to enable them to make sound decisions as to whether, and when, a safe, visual scan is appropriate. Local police services may be of assistance. The staff member(s) designated to conduct scans must be given basic information about conducting safe, visual scans.

What to look for when searching your immediate work area:

- Something that should not be there
- Signs of forced entry in the area
- Object similar to description from bomb threat

- Object or package is suspicious in
 - Size
 - Shape
 - Labelling
 - Location
 - Volume
- Presence of tape, wire, or explosive's wrappings
- Signs of tampering with electrical installations

Under no circumstances should a staff member conducting a visual scan touch a suspicious device or package.

If a suspicious package or device is detected, the area must immediately be evacuated of staff and students and the package or device reported to the principal.

For threats to the entire facility, plans should identify and prioritize areas to be visually inspected. These areas include:

- The building exterior and parking lots
- Entrances
- Large gathering areas within the school (e.g., cafeterias, auditoriums)
- Hallways, stairways, and elevators
- Washrooms
- Classrooms, the main office, and staff rooms
- Service and mechanical rooms and spaces

When prioritizing areas to be searched, consideration should be given to accessibility by a potential suspect, evacuation routes, evacuation locations, command posts, and staging areas for emergency services personnel. Local police services will be able to provide assistance with prioritizing the areas to be visually inspected.

School plans must identify a process for documenting areas that have been inspected.

Rationale

Having established plans for inspection and designated staff to conduct safe, visual scans helps ensure that scans are conducted in a timely, systematic, and thorough manner.

Procedures Following the Location of a Suspicious Device/Package

Every school plan must include procedures regarding actions to be taken if an explosive device or a suspicious device/package is located any time before emergency service responders arrive on the scene.

Effective Practices

When a suspicious package/device is located, appropriate procedures include the following:

- Isolation/containment of the device/package, ensuring that it is not touched
- Immediate communication of the discovery to the principal and to police and the fire department
- Immediate re-evaluation of any evacuation decisions in light of the discovery

Regardless of whether the package/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 must be notified immediately of the discovery of a suspicious package/device and of any action taken to that point.

Police must be notified or updated when confirmation is received regarding the precise location of the package/device. Once the police have been notified, fire department and EMS personnel must be contacted so that they will be nearby or on the scene in stand-by mode.

The school principal 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/ package. This must be done by making inquiries, not by handling the package/device.

Rationale

Ensuring that staff and students are acutely aware that suspicious devices/ packages must not be moved limits the possibility of an explosives incident.

Containing and reporting a suspicious package/device, and immediately re-evaluating evacuation, notification, and search decisions, depending on the information received, reduces the risk of harm to staff and students.

Evacuation Procedures

Every school plan must detail procedures to facilitate a safe and effective partial or full evacuation of the facility. Plans must also detail the process to end any partial or full evacuation.

Although bomb threat drills and fire drills will involve evacuation plans that are similar in many ways, the two plans must be treated and practiced separately.

The decision to direct an evacuation should be made only after careful consideration of the risks. 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 must 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. Fire alarms must not be used to signal an evacuation in response to a bomb threat, as this may cause confusion regarding the nature of the emergency. When announcing an evacuation, it is advisable to use clear, concise language rather than codes. Evacuations should be conducted in a quiet and systematic way, with consideration to 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 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 the police with any subsequent search of the area, by decreasing the number of suspicious packages/devices.

School 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 must be in place to assist with the evacuation of staff and students who have disabilities and those with mobility devices. 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 staff and students as needed.

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 must 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 and to refrain from the use of electronic communication devices (other than disability-related technology).

Plans must 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.

Rationale

Clear and concise evacuation plans that are understood by staff and students help to ensure the safety of those being evacuated. Lack of planning may lead to panic and increase the potential risk to personal safety during an unorganized evacuation.

Re-entry Procedures

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

Effective Practices

School plans should include procedures for announcing the end of a partial or full evacuation. Such procedures may vary by facility and depending on whether evacuees are at off-site locations. Plans may include a general announcement via the public address (PA) system by a designated authority or may include a room-to-room visit from police and/or the principal, with some sort of identification process, so that evacuees know that whoever is giving them the all-clear is authorized to do so.

Rationale

There is a need to bring the same level of authority to ending a partial or full evacuation as to initiating one.

Procedures Following an Explosives Incident

Every school 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
- Considerations related to the provisions of the approved fire safety plan
- Containment of the explosion scene

Effective Practices

When an explosives incident occurs, the school principal must be notified immediately and informed of any action taken. Personnel designated in the plan must report to the command post location in order 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 explosives incident. Information regarding injuries must be communicated to the command post. Attendance must be taken and a list of any missing staff or students must 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 shall work with emergency services personnel to evaluate the need to relocate evacuees and/or command posts. In the event of a fire the approved fire safety plan for the facility must be consulted.

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 must be reported to emergency responders immediately on arrival at the evacuation location.

Emergency Services Notification

The fire department, emergency medical services (EMS), and police must 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 must not re-enter an explosion scene. Not only may additional packages/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

School plans must 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 must have provisions for communication with parents/guardians and 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 hailer, or other methods should be used for secondary communication systems. Local police services should be consulted regarding the use of cellphones, and staff and students should be educated about how such devices can be used in the event of an incident.

Local plans must emphasize the importance of reminding all responders of the danger of using radio communication in a bomb threat situation.

Rationale

Accurate and timely transmission of pertinent information is imperative for making informed decisions during an incident and for ensuring the safety of all persons during evacuations or an emergency response.

Child Care and Other Facility Occupants

Many schools have licensed child care centres and/or other tenants and community groups using school premises, sometimes outside regular school hours. These organizations or individuals should 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.

Rationale

Due to proximity issues, the need to be prepared is as important for other occupants as it is for staff and students of schools. During planning, consideration should be given to after-school programs, night school, sports programs, and so on.

Outside of School Buildings

Procedures must address the notification of, and the actions to be taken by, staff and students who are outside the school building(s) when a bomb threat is received, a suspicious device/package is located, or an explosives incident occurs. Staff and students need to be aware of where they should go in the event of such an incident.

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 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/responsibilities within the individual school plans.

Effective Practices

Orientation for new staff must 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 should consider holding assemblies to train secondary students on bomb threat procedures as well as explosives incident procedures, and related evacuation plans. It is suggested that classroom teachers be responsible for training students at the elementary level. Any training provided to students with special education needs and students with disabilities should be developmentally appropriate and consistent with the expectations and accommodations outlined in their Individual Education Plans.

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 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 should also be invited to training sessions.

Rationale

People can be expected to respond properly under stressful and emergent circumstances when properly trained.

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 or explosives incident can help maintain order in the event of an incident. Such drills can be held as part of a school's emergency evacuation drills.

Effective Practices

School personnel should work co-operatively with police partners on drills whenever police are able to assist. The principal is responsible for setting the date of drills and overseeing the drill, with police support/assistance when available. Schools should also consider including fire department and EMS personnel during drills, so they become familiar with the school's bomb threat procedures. Staff, students, child care 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/guardians in advance. Plans should include procedures for alerting neighbouring schools of drills, especially if fire and EMS personnel have been invited to participate.

Emergency exits will include the same accessibility features as other doors. All exit doors shall be accessible with a level threshold and clear floor space on either side of the door. The doors and routes should be accessible to all individuals. Alternative audio and visual signage should be considered to assist in locating exits.

In the event of fire when elevators cannot be used, areas of rescue assistance shall be provided especially for individuals with physical disabilities and those who have difficulty traversing sets of stairs. Areas of rescue assistance will be provided on all floors above or below the ground floor.

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

Rationale

When emergency plans are practiced regularly through drills, staff and students are aware of how to respond properly in a potential emergency, and their safety is enhanced.

Media

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

Effective Practices

Police are responsible for addressing media with respect to any criminal incident and the police response to the incident. Principals/board personnel are responsible for dealing with media on issues pertaining to staff and student safety. It is strongly advised that media personnel from the police department, school boards, the fire department, and EMS share press releases prior to their release to the media, so that all officials are aware of what the other agencies are saying. A spirit of co-operation is highly recommended, and school officials, police, and other services are encouraged to work closely with each other on media issues.

Rationale

Coordinated and consistent messaging from all partners is essential in maintaining public confidence.

Communication with Parents/Guardians and the Community

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

Effective Practices

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

Parents/guardians need to be informed of where they should proceed in the event of an actual incident. Given the dynamic, complex, and fluid nature of these incidents, communication with parents/guardians around the importance of procedures is vital. Information for parents/guardian may be presented in newsletters, on school or board websites, or at an evening session on bomb threat plans. Parents/guardians must be informed of what is expected should they arrive at school during a drill, or if they are present within the school when an evacuation is called.

In all incidents resulting in an evacuation that was not a drill, it is recommended that a communication to parents/guardians be sent as soon as possible as well as home with each student at the conclusion of the school day or as soon as possible thereafter.

Parents/guardians 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.

Rationale

Parents/guardians need to know that plans are in place to respond to bomb threats and explosives incidents. Good communication is required to eliminate fears and concerns. Parents/guardians play a key role in ensuring students' co-operation and participation in drills.

School Recovery Following an Incident

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

Effective Practices

Recovery procedures will differ significantly, depending on the nature of the incident. A debriefing should occur in some situations following the receipt of a bomb threat or following the location of a suspicious device/ package. A debriefing must 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/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/device or an explosives incident, the board's trauma response plan will normally be initiated. In all cases, communication with students and parents/guardians is vital.

Plan Review

Each school plan shall be thoroughly reviewed annually.

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 each year when the plan was reviewed.

Appendix D: Information Sharing Requirements

Please see below for information on requirements related to information sharing.

Criminal Code

The police can access a student's Ontario Student Record (OSR) by providing a valid court order or subpoena, or with the written consent of a parent/guardian or of the student, if the student is 18 years of age or older. In exigent circumstances, the police can access a student's OSR without a warrant, under section 487.11 of the *Criminal Code*.

Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)

The YCJA sets out specific procedural requirements for dealing with young persons charged with federal criminal offences. (Refer to Part 6 (ss. 110 to 129) of the YCJA, "Publication, Records and Information")

There may be occasions when it is necessary for police to share records or information protected under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* with school officials. The following provisions of Part 6 of the YCJA are of particular relevance for the local implementation of the Provincial Model:

- Subsection 110(1), which states that no person shall publish the name of the young person or any information that would identify the young person as a young person dealt with under the YCJA
- Subsection 111(1), which states that "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"
- Section 118, which states that no person shall be given access to a record kept under section 114 to 116 of the YCJA, and no information in the record shall be given to any person, where to do so would identify the young person as a young person dealt with under the YCJA, except as authorized or required under the YCJA
- Section 119, which specifies the persons who may receive access to a record protected under the YCJA during the enumerated access period, and the circumstances in which they may receive access

- Subsection 125(1), which states that “[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”
- Subsection 125(6), which permits a provincial director, youth worker, peace officer, the Attorney General or any other person engaged in the provision of services to young persons to disclose to a representative of a school board or school any information kept in a record under sections 114 to 116 of the YCJA if the disclosure is necessary:
 - To ensure compliance with an authorization under s.91⁸ or an order of the youth justice court
 - To ensure the safety of staff, students, or other persons
 - To facilitate the rehabilitation of the young person
- Subsection 125(7), which requires information disclosed to a school under subsection 125(5) to be kept separate from the education records relating to the young person. A person to whom information is disclosed under subsection 125(6) shall: (a) keep the information separate from any other record of the young person (b) ensure that no other person has access to the information except if authorized under this Act, or if necessary for the purposes of subsection 125(6); and (c) destroy their copy of the record when the information is no longer required for the purpose for which it was disclosed
- Section 129, which prevents subsequent disclosure of YCJA records. No person who is given access to a record or to whom information is disclosed under this Act shall disclose that information to any other person unless the disclosure is authorized under this Act
- Subsection 138(1), which states the consequences of violating certain provisions under Part 6 of the YCJA. The improper release of a young person’s identity, personal information or records protected under the YCJA may result in criminal charges, and an individual found guilty could be liable up to a term of imprisonment not exceeding two years

Pursuant to the YCJA legislation noted above and referencing the Ontario Student Record (OSR) Guidelines, [Section 9](#), no record of student involvement with the YCJA should be disclosed in the OSR.

⁸ A s. 91 authorization allows the provincial director to release a young person from custody for certain enumerated purposes which may include to attending school and subject to any conditions the director considers desirable.

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

This legislation regulates the collection and disclosure of personal information. It is important to note that restrictions in the MFIPPA apply in addition to restrictions in the YCJA, and MFIPPA does not authorize disclosure of information where disclosure is prohibited by the YCJA. As part of the local implementation of Provincial Model, police services and school boards must 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 . . .”).

[Subsection 32](#) of the MFIPPA states where the disclosure of personal information to a law enforcement agency in Canada is allowable, such as provision (g)(i): the disclosure is to aid in an investigation undertaken by the institution or the agency with a view to a law enforcement proceeding, or provision (g)(ii): 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.

If the 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 the MFIPPA, release general information to the police officer including, but not limited to, the following:

- Name, address and phone number of the student or staff member
- Name, address and phone numbers of the parent or guardian of the student

The written request for information should include:

- Date of the request, name of requester, badge number, agency, investigation number, and contact information
- Detailed description of information sought
- In urgent circumstances and if more than basic contact info is requested, an explanation of why it is not feasible to seek a production order
- The law enforcement’s position on whether notification to the individual would interfere with the investigation or otherwise cause significant harm

Disclosure must only be done through a verifiable contact (not to a cellphone) such as through a dispatch/receptionist connection to voicemail or verified email address.

Disclosure by the principal must be documented and include:

- Date and method of disclosure (phone, email, etc.)
- What information was disclosed and format
- Principal's signature

Retention of the request and disclosure documentation is current year plus one year, stored centrally in the school office, not in the OSR.

Further information regarding the release of students' personal information can be found in the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner's [*A Guide to Privacy and Access to Information in Ontario Schools*](#). As well, the Information and Privacy Commissioner's fact sheet [*Disclosure of Personal Information to Law Enforcement*](#) (November 2018) provides details specific to when institutions can disclose information to law enforcement, if a notice of disclosure is necessary, documenting requests, public reporting, and disclosure policies.

Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 (CYFSA)

This legislation regulates the disclosure of personal information while reporting a child in need of protection.

Subsection 125(10) of the CYFSA states that although the information reported may be confidential or privileged no action for making the report shall be instituted against a person who acts in accordance with this section unless the person acts maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the suspicion.

Missing Persons Act, 2018 (MPA)

This legislation recognizes the importance of timely and effective measures being available to police to assist with locating missing persons.

If police are locating a missing person, as defined by this legislation, and in the absence of a criminal investigation, they may seek information from a school about a student in two ways:

1. An order issued under subsection 4 (1) for the production of records
2. An urgent demand made under subsection 5 (1) for the production of records

An order made under paragraph 4(2)(7) of the MPA, can require the principal to release records that relate to a student of an educational institution, including a pupil record described in clause 265 (1) (d) of the *Education Act*, despite the privilege that applies to the pupil record under subsection 266 (2) of that Act. When provided with a production order the principal shall follow the directions specified within that order or information can be provided orally if the member of the police service consents to it. When an urgent demand is made the principal shall provide copies of the records or if the member of the police service agrees, information can be provided orally.

School boards and police services are encouraged to establish procedures to support investigations of missing persons. Where applicable, school boards and police services should also identify local resources and initiatives available to schools to support this collaboration, such as a risk factor checklist to assess whether police should be called when a student absence may be an elopement.

Appendix E: Call Trace

Please see below for information on instructions for using Call Trace.

How to use Call Trace

- Hang up after receiving the threatening or harassing call
- Lift the receiver and dial ***57** (or 1157 on rotary phones)
- Wait for a recording to tell you whether the call was traced successfully and hang up

Tips

- Call Trace service works only on the last incoming call
- Call Trace service works on blocked calls
- The number of the traced caller will be released to the police by Bell if they request it

Note

Call Trace may not work on:

- A line that has the Call Trace block
- Some mobile phone numbers
- Calls from switchboard telephone numbers
- Calls from other local and long-distance service providers

There is a charge of \$5.00 for each successful use of Call Trace up to a maximum of \$10.00 per month per line. The charge applies whether or not the traced number is requested by the police. Using Call Trace does not guarantee that the police will accept your case or follow up on a Call Trace request.

Appendix F: School Resource Officer Programs – Ministry Expectations for School Boards and Sample Template MOU

Introduction

School resource officer (SRO) programs aim to promote school safety and supportive learning environments, build positive relationships in school communities, provide education and resources on safety-related issues, and serve as a liaison between schools and local police services.

Pursuant to O. Reg. 176/26 made under the *Education Act*, where the local police services offer an SRO program in a board's primary language of instruction, the board must:

- Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local police services to set out the details of how they will work collaboratively to implement the SRO program.
- Ensure that students, parents and guardians are made aware of the program.
- Engage students, parents and community members to inform the implementation of the program.

Purpose

To support provincial consistency in the implementation of SRO programs, the ministry expects school boards to include the following supplementary sections in their MOUs:

1. Guiding Principles
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Information Sharing and Disclosure
4. School Orientation
5. Training
6. Communication
7. Monitoring
8. Feedback and Complaints

In addition, school boards may use the sample template MOU below, which includes regulatory requirements applicable to school boards.

Ministry Expectations for School Boards – School Resource Officer Programs

Purpose

To support consistent implementation of SRO programs across the province, it is the ministry's expectation that school boards work with their local police services to implement programs that incorporate the following elements and include them as sections in all local MOUs.

Elements of an MOU

1. Guiding Principles

School boards will work collaboratively with their local police services to uphold the following principles in support of the SRO program:

- a) As prescribed under O. Reg. 176/26, school boards will work with their local police services in a manner that:
 - Promotes student, school and public safety
 - Builds and maintains positive relationships between the local police services and the students and school communities
 - Is consistent with the Provincial Model
- b) School environments are safe, caring, welcoming, and inclusive spaces that promote the well-being, dignity, and belonging of all students, staff, and families.
- c) The implementation of the SRO program will be informed by the perspectives of all students, including Indigenous, racialized, equity-deserving students and students with disabilities, to ensure the program is inclusive, accessible, and responsive to diverse needs.
- d) All activities carried out under this MOU will be governed by and comply with all applicable legislation and policies of the school board and the local police services board/Solicitor General if the local police are the OPP, including but not limited to the *Education Act*, *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, *Community Safety and Policing Act*, 2019, *Ontario Human Rights Code*, *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

- e) Proactive education, prevention, and early intervention strategies will be prioritized to support students in making positive decisions, prevent and address violence, and, where appropriate, promote alternatives to formal involvement with the criminal justice system.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

a. School Board

School boards will:

- Designate a school board employee as the program liaison
- Engage students, parents and community members to inform the implementation of the program
- Involve students, parents, guardians and community members in the implementation of the program
- If requested by police services, engage in discussions to support the assignment of officers to local schools within the school boards' catchment area
- Communicate requirements set out in the MOU to school administrators and provide advice and support
- Ensure the MOU aligns with school board policies and procedures
- Monitor ongoing implementation of the program and collect and review feedback to support periodic updates to the MOU
- As requested by the Ministry of Education, submit information to support province-wide monitoring and/or evaluation (see "Monitoring")

b. School Administrator

School boards will direct school administrators to:

- Designate a school administrator as the primary contact for the program
- Ensure all school staff are aware of the program and understand the roles and responsibilities of the SRO. This may include sharing information in a general notice/newsletter to staff
- Share general information about the school population and local community with SROs (see "School Orientation")
- Ensure that students, parents and guardians are made aware of the program and any related presentations or workshops

- Monitor ongoing implementation of the program and collect and review feedback to support periodic updates to the MOU. Share information with the school board and the local police services as appropriate (see “Monitoring”)

c. Local Police Services and School Resource Officers

School boards will work collaboratively with their local police services to support the following roles and responsibilities, subject to the agreement and operational capacity of their local police services:

- Designate a police service member to serve as the program liaison. This function may be fulfilled by an SRO or another police service member, depending on local needs and capacity
- Assign police officers to work as SROs within school board schools in both elementary and secondary schools during the regular calendar year and, where applicable, during summer school
- Ensure that SROs assigned to school boards are able to effectively communicate with students in the school board’s primary language of instruction
- Provide SROs with initial training prior to deployment and ensure regular ongoing training (see “Training”)
- Share details with school boards regarding the operational deployment of SROs, including current schedules, duty assignments and any operational changes or amendments
- Monitor ongoing implementation of the program and collect and review feedback to support periodic updates to the MOU. Share information with school boards and school administrators as appropriate (see “Monitoring”)

School boards will work with their local police services to support implementation of a school resource officer program. Subject to the agreement of their local police services, program structure, and operational capacity, SRO roles may include:

- Engaging with students in a supportive capacity as mentors and role models, promoting positive behaviour and accountability
- Delivering presentations related to safety and crime prevention relevant to students
- Supporting and participating in school-based activities, events and programs
- Providing advice, information, and guidance to students, staff, and parents/guardians who seek support

- Serving as a liaison, as appropriate, with the criminal justice system, including victim services and community-based supports
- Carrying out additional professional responsibilities under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and *Community Safety and Policing Act, 2019* in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

3. Information Sharing and Disclosure

School boards will adhere to the requirements and protocols established with their local police services related to “Information Sharing and Disclosure” as outlined in the Provincial Model.

School administrators must only disclose personal information to a law enforcement agency when permitted by law, such as when a law enforcement agency requires the information to aid a criminal investigation or in response to a court order.

Ongoing or informal arrangements for the automatic disclosure of personal information to law enforcement agencies are not permitted. In all cases, school administrators should make their own assessment of the circumstances before deciding whether to disclose personal information to a law enforcement agency. If uncertain, the school administrator should seek direction from their Superintendent, who may also seek legal advice, before releasing any information.

A number of different statutes deal with information sharing and disclosure. These include federal legislation (the *Criminal Code*, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*) and provincial legislation (the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Education Act*, the *Missing Persons Act, 2018*, the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*, and the *Anti-Racism Act, 2017*).

4. School Orientation

School boards will work with their local police services to receive information about the SROs assigned to each school prior to the start of the school year.

School boards will, in turn, inform each school administrator of their assigned SRO and the anticipated schedule prior to the start of school.

Prior to the start of the school year, school administrators will meet with their assigned SRO to provide an orientation to the school. This orientation will include:

- A tour of the school (physical or virtual), where possible

- An introductory meeting between the SRO and school staff, including the school threat assessment team, where applicable
- An overview of school policies, schedules, code of conduct, and other relevant operational information
- General information about the school population and local community, such as demographic or census information and recent community or contextual events that have affected or may affect the school environment
- The establishment of a regular meeting schedule between the SRO and the school administrator to discuss program implementation, training needs and resource requirements

School boards will identify opportunities for SROs to participate in school-based activities, events and programs that support relationship-building and engagement with the school community, such as parent/guardian association events, career days, and information sessions.

All information sharing under this section will respect the privacy rights of students and staff and comply with all applicable legislation.

5. Training

Local police services are responsible for ensuring SROs receive initial and ongoing training required to effectively support and advance the objectives of the SRO program. This includes training that prepares SROs to work safely and appropriately within school environments and to engage with children and youth in a developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive and trauma-informed manner.

School boards will engage in regular discussions with their local police services to identify additional training needs or school-based learning opportunities that support SRO preparedness, including orientation to school-specific protocols, student supports, and local community contexts.

School boards and their local police services will collaborate to identify professional learning opportunities that promote positive and developmentally appropriate engagement with children and youth, reinforce principles of equity and inclusion, and model behaviours that reflect and support the safety and well-being of students and staff.

School boards and their local police services may jointly deliver or coordinate periodic training, workshops, or information sessions for SROs and school administrators, where such collaboration enhances program implementation, strengthens shared understanding of roles, and supports consistency across participating schools.

Training activities undertaken under this MOU will comply with all applicable legislation, including the *Education Act*, *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, *Community Safety and Policing Act*, 2019, *Ontario Human Rights Code*, and applicable privacy legislation.

6. Communication

a. Communication Protocols

School boards will work with their local police services to maintain open and timely communication of any changes, including but not limited to policy revisions, staffing adjustments, procedural updates, and emerging issues, that may affect the implementation or operation of the SRO Program.

b. Presentation Material

As prescribed in O. Reg. 176/26, school boards may request to review presentation materials developed by their local police services or to be used by the SRO, in advance of any school activity, event or program. School boards will not make local police services participation conditional on approval of any materials.

Where such a request is made, school boards will review the material within 10 business days to avoid unnecessary delays in the scheduling or delivery of SRO presentations. The review may be undertaken to help ensure that materials are appropriate for the intended audience and reflect local contexts.

c. Public Communication

School boards and/or school administrators will ensure students and parents/guardians are made aware of the SRO program and any related presentations or workshops.

This MOU must be publicly available and accessible on the school board website.

7. Monitoring

School boards will establish a process to monitor implementation of the SRO program. This includes engaging with their local police services, school administrators and SROs to discuss the impact of the program within schools and to identify and respond to feedback and/or complaints from students and parents/guardians (see “Feedback and Complaints”).

School boards will work with their local police services to make updates to this MOU based on the ongoing monitoring of the SRO program.

8. Feedback and Complaints

School boards will work with their local police services to collect ongoing feedback from students and parents/guardians to understand and assess how the SRO program is working.

School boards will regularly provide students and parents/guardians with information about local procedures for submitting any feedback or concerns related to police participation in school programs, including the SRO program.

This may include directing them to connect with principals or vice-principals, relevant school board administrators, school board Human Rights and Equity Advisors (HREAs) or Superintendents, or other local board processes that support the timely review and response to feedback and/or complaints.

School boards will also share information with students and parents/guardians about feedback and complaints procedures and protocols available through their local police services, as well as information regarding complaint mechanisms through the Ontario Law Enforcement Complaints Agency (LECA). Where appropriate, information may also be provided regarding the Office of the Ontario Ombudsman.

Sample Template: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

How to Use This Document

This MOU sample template has been developed by the Ministry of Education to support school boards in the implementation of SRO programs. Pursuant to O. Reg. 176/26 made under the *Education Act*, school boards are required to enter into an MOU with local police services to set out the details of how they will work collaboratively to implement SRO programs, where offered by local police services in the board's primary language of instruction.

This template is not intended to create legally binding obligations, rather the document sets out the regulatory requirements that must be included in all local MOUs and is a framework for co-operation between school boards and chiefs of police/local police services. School boards are expected to incorporate additional provisions as identified above, as well as any supplementary terms negotiated with chiefs of police/local police services regarding their roles, responsibilities, and obligations. All local MOUs must remain consistent with the Provincial Model.

As part of SRO program implementation and as prescribed in O. Reg. 176/26, school boards must also:

- Ensure that students, parents and guardians are made aware of the program
- Engage students, parents and community members to inform the implementation of the program

Disclaimer

This document does not constitute legal advice and should not be relied on as such. School boards are responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable legislation. If there is inconsistency between this document and applicable legislation, the legislation prevails. If the school board requires assistance with respect to the interpretation of the applicable legislation and its application, the school board may wish to consult its legal counsel.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Between

[School Board]

and

[Chief of Police]

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to set out how the [School Board] and the [Local Police Services] will work collaboratively to implement a school resource officer program in accordance with O. Reg. 176/26 under the *Education Act*.

2. Areas for Collaboration Pursuant to O. Reg 176/26 under the *Education Act*

2.1 Building and Maintaining Positive Relationships with Students

The [School Board] will work collaboratively with the [Local Police Services] to ensure that the [Local Police Services] builds and maintains positive relationships with students.

[school board to insert details]

2.2 Sharing General Information

The [School Board] will work collaboratively with the [Local Police Services] to share general information about the school population and the local community with school resource officers.

[school board to insert details]

2.3 Awareness of the School Resource Officer Program

The [School Board] will work collaboratively with the [Local Police Services] to ensure that students, parents and guardians are made aware of the school resource officer program and any related presentations or workshops, in accordance with s.2(3)(c) of O. Reg. 176/26 under the *Education Act*.

[school board to insert details]

2.4 Involvement of Students, Parents, and Guardians

The [School Board] will work collaboratively with the [Local Police Services] to involve students, parents and guardians in the implementation of the school resource officer program.

[school board to insert details]