

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2022

Public Session: 5:30 p.m. (Virtual Meeting)

AGENDA

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

C. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

D. NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. New Niagara Falls Public School – Elementary Boundary and Temporary Holding at James Morden Public School**
[S. Veld](#)
- 2. Overview of Toolkit for Supporting Students who have Experienced Sexual Violence**
[M. St. John](#)
- 3. New Elementary Science and Technology Curriculum Update**
[M. Reimer Friesen](#)
- 4. New Primary and Junior EQAO Assessment Overview**
[M. Reimer Friesen](#)

E. OTHER BUSINESS

F. ADJOURNMENT

G. NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 3, at 5:30 p.m.

New Niagara Falls Public School – Elementary Boundary and Temporary Holding at James Morden Public School

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

BACKGROUND

Enrolment at Kate S. Durdan PS has been growing steadily since 2014 from new subdivision development in the Garner South secondary plan area. The school reached capacity in 2017 and has been over-capacity since. This prompted the Board to submit a Capital Priority request for a new NF elementary school to serve students in the Garner South area, and relieve capacity pressure on Kate S. Durdan PS. The Ministry approved the Board's request, and the new elementary school is expected to open in 2024/25.

The new elementary school's boundary will include the Garner South area which includes some of the students currently boundaried to Kate S. Durdan. As the development continues at a fast pace, we have to temporarily assign a holding school as Kate S. Durdan PS cannot accommodate the additional students. This report details the temporary holding school until the new elementary school opens and includes the boundary for the new school.

PROPOSED BOUNDARY AND HOLDING SCHOOL

Kate S. Durdan PS has an on-the-ground (OTG) capacity of 337 students and an enrolment of 651 students (October 31, 2021). There are 12 portables on-site to accommodate students. New housing construction continues in the Garner South area and enrolment at Kate S. Durdan PS is expected to increase to 704 students for the 2022/23 school year and 746 students for the 2023/24 school year. This would require 14 portables on site for the 2022/23 school year and 16 for the 2023/24 school year.

Additional portables, however, are no longer a solution to the capacity pressures. Once more than 12 portables are located on a school site, the Ontario Building Code requires additional fire safety measures such as hydrants, fire lanes, and significant separation from the existing portables. The provision of these measures would be costly, and the school site may not be large enough to support more portables once required separation distances are introduced.

Boards often designate holding schools in areas where large subdivision developments are occurring and a new school to serve the area is expected in the future. Students from the new subdivision areas would attend the holding school until the new school opens. This helps manage enrolment by directing students to a school with space and families in the area are aware that their children will eventually attend a different school.

A new elementary school will be open shortly to serve students in the Garner South area and its new boundary, as well as the Kate S. Durdan PS new boundary, is shown in Appendix A. In the meantime, designating James Morden PS a holding school for the new school area would stop additional enrolment pressures at Kate S. Durdan PS and

PROGRAM AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

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redirect students to a school where there is available space. Accordingly, it is proposed that the school boundary for the new Niagara Falls elementary school be established as shown on Appendix A and future students moving into the boundary attend James Morden PS until the new school opens.

The change would redirect 53 students expected in the new boundary area to James Morden PS in the 2022/23 school year and another approximately 40 students in the 2023/24 school year. James Morden PS has an on-the-ground (OTG) capacity of 420 students and an enrolment of 301 students (October 31, 2021). The school would have space to accommodate the students for the two school years, and additional capacity pressures at Kate S. Durdan PS would be avoided. When the new school opens all students in the new boundary area would return from James Morden PS and be redirected from Kate S. Durdan PS to the new school. Enrolment at Kate S. Durdan PS will return to within the school's capacity.

TRANSPORTATION

Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS) reviewed the proposed boundary change and advised that two buses will be needed between now and the September 2022/23 school year at a cost of \$52,000 each. Additional buses may be required if additional families opt to attend James Morden PS. The new boundary area will have students attending both Kate S. Durdan PS and James Morden PS making planning for, and maximizing the efficiency of, bus transportation a little more challenging. Ride times are expected to be longer to service the entire area but within DSBN policy.

TIMELINE

The boundary changes, if approved, can take effect on the day after Board approval.

APPENDED DATA

Appendix A: Elementary Boundary Change Map

RECOMMENDED MOTION

"That the Board of Trustees approve the elementary boundary change to establish the boundaries for Kate S. Durdan PS and the new Niagara Falls elementary PS as shown on Appendix A;

That the boundary change takes effect on the day after the Board of Trustees approval and all new registering students within the Niagara Falls elementary school boundary will attend James Morden PS until the new school is open after which students will attend their respective home school;

That existing students within the new Niagara Falls elementary school boundary currently attending Kate S. Durdan PS have the option to temporarily attend James Morden PS;

That the school boundaries be updated accordingly."

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Respectfully submitted by:

Stacy Veld, Superintendent of Business Services





Darren VanHooydonk, Superintendent of Education - Area One

April 5, 2022



For further information, please contact Stacy Veld, Superintendent of Business Services.

Proposed Boundary Districts for New Elementary School & Kate S. Durdan PS

Legend

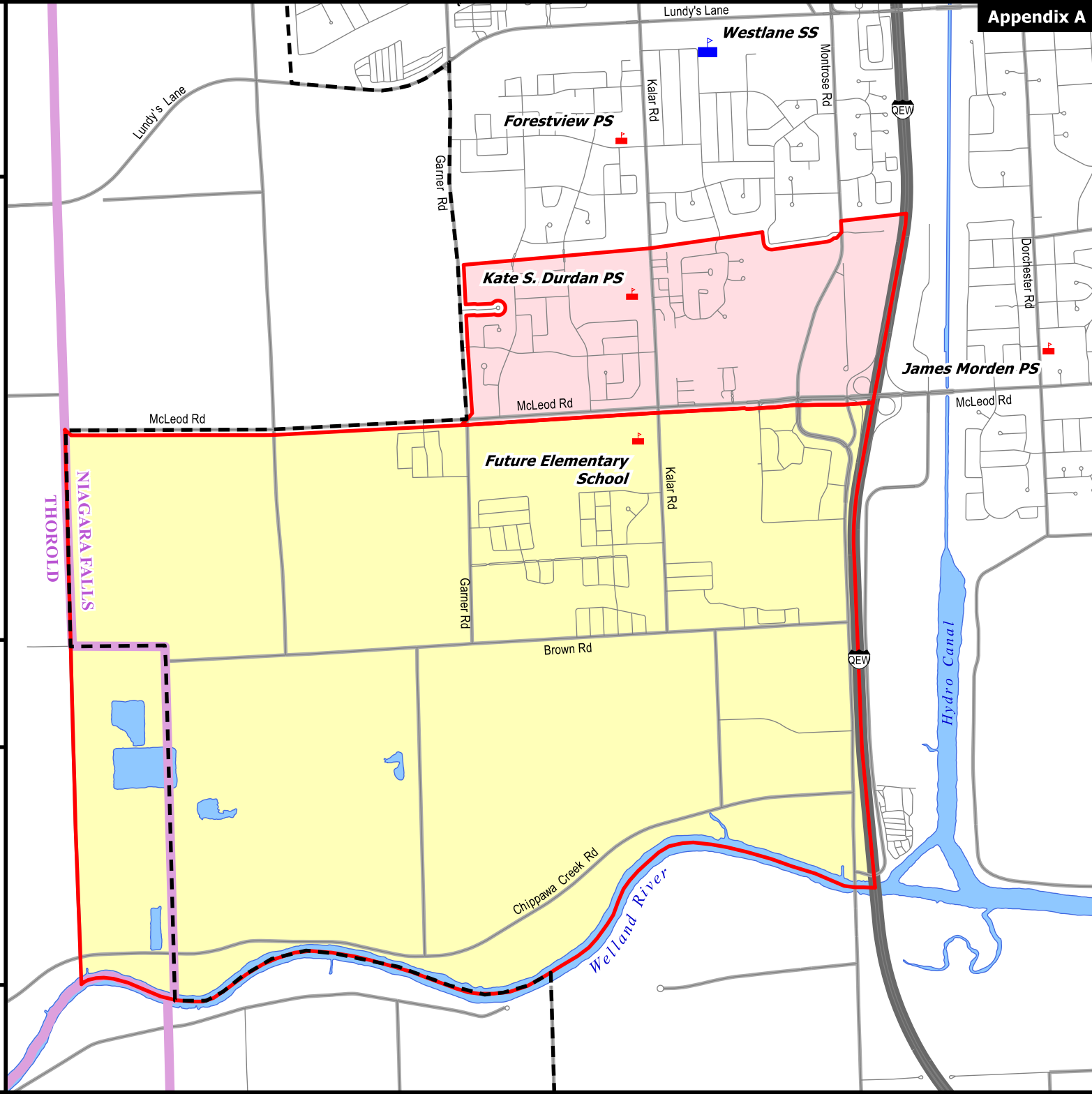
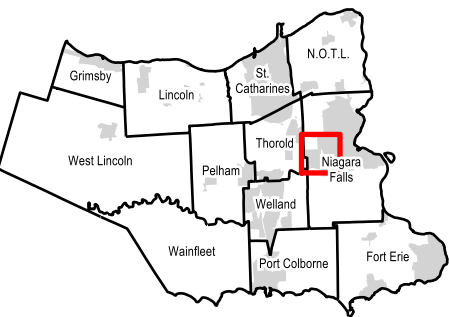
-  Elementary School
-  Secondary School
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Urban Area Boundary

Proposed Boundary Districts

-  Kate S. Durdan PS
-  Future Elementary School



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OVERVIEW OF TOOLKIT FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

BACKGROUND

The DSBN's *Toolkit for Supporting Students Who Have Experienced Sexual Violence* is a resource for staff and administrators. This toolkit has been used as a comprehensive resource by administrators in the DSBN. An overview of the toolkit will be presented this evening.

SUMMARY

The purpose of the toolkit is to assist DSBN staff in responding to student disclosures of sexual violence, as outlined in the Ministry Safe Schools: Reporting and Responding Guideline, and to ensure that all students receive sensitive, appropriate, and evidence-based supports at school.

- The first five sections of the toolkit focus on capacity building for staff in understanding the definition, prevalence, and impact of sexual violence, including information about consent and disclosure.
- The latter sections are designed to equip teachers and administrators to receive and respond to student sexual violence disclosures and information around other sensitive matters.
- The guidance provided in the toolkit helps school staff to respond in a step-by-step manner that ensures and maintains privacy, equity, dignity, and respect for all parties involved.
- Staff are also provided with a detailed list of school and community supports and resources to assist students and their families.
- The appendix of the toolkit includes further guidance for staff to provide to students who are wishing to support a peer.

AUTHOR

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CONTRIBUTORS AND PARTNERS

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Niagara Regional Police Services

Family and Children's Services Niagara

Niagara Sexual Assault Centre, Carsa Inc.

PROGRAM AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2022



Submitted by: Michael St. John, Superintendent of Special Education and Mental Health & Well-Being

Recommended Motion: "That the Board support the DSBN Toolkit for Supporting Students who have Experienced Sexual Violence."



District School Board of Niagara

Toolkit for Supporting Students Who Have Experienced Sexual Violence 2022

Program and Planning Meeting April 5, 2022

Presenters:

Amanda Sherman, Mental Health Lead

Jennifer Feren, School Board Lawyer

Fred Louws, Principal, Greater Fort Erie Secondary School

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What is Sexual Violence?

Sexual violence is a broad term. According to *Bill 132*, it describes, “any sexual act or act targeting a person’s sexuality, gender identity or gender expression, whether the act is physical or psychological in nature, that is committed, threatened or attempted against a person without the person’s consent, and includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism and sexual exploitation.” In general, according to the *Criminal Code of Canada*, sexual violence is any form of non-consensual sexual contact.

Sexual violence is the most underreported of all violent crimes. Fewer than 10 percent of all incidents of sexual violence are reported to police. False reports of sexual violence are extremely rare. They are not more common than false reports of any other type of crime (2 to 4 percent of all cases).

Sexual violence, by definition, is gender-specific and gender-based. Thus, the majority of sexual violence is perpetrated by males against females. Sexual violence is extremely common; more than one third of Canadians who identify as female will experience sexual violence in their lifetime. Girls and young women ages 15 to 24 years are most often targeted. Sexual violence is also more likely to impact individuals who belong to certain groups or communities, such as Indigenous women and girls, 2SLGBTQI individuals, racialized women, newcomers or refugees, women with low household incomes, homeless individuals, and women with disabilities. Although it is less common, boys and men can and do experience sexual violence.

Sexual violence often occurs between individuals who know each other (e.g., family member, romantic partner, friend), in a home, vehicle, or place of study or work. Sexual violence may be premeditated, involving planning, coercion, force, or threats. Sexual violence is often facilitated by substance use. Sexual violence can be perpetrated in person and/or online (e.g., texting and social media can be used to bully, harass, stalk, or intimidate individuals).

Sexual violence also includes sexual harassment which may occur in private or public spaces. Sexually harassing behaviours could include repeatedly asking for dates, and not taking “no” for an answer, making unnecessary physical contact, including unwanted touching, making sex-related comments about a person’s physical characteristics or actions, saying or doing something because you think a person does not conform to sex-role stereotypes, or bullying based on sex or gender. Sexual violence and harassment that occurs in online spaces includes:

- Receiving unwanted emails, social media posts, DMs, or texts of a sexual nature
- Being sent unwanted, sexually suggestive or explicit photos or video or demanding that explicit photos or video are posted or sent in return
- Receiving threats or being coerced to comply with requests for explicit content
- Being pressured to share passwords

A significant proportion of unwanted sexual behaviours and sexual harassment that occurs in public spaces and online is perpetrated by strangers or acquaintances, who are most often men. Women, gender diverse, 2SLGBTQI individuals, Indigenous and racialized people are most likely to experience these forms of sexual violence. Recognizing and responding to these behaviours by labelling them as

forms of sexual violence, educating about the harms of these behaviours, and taking steps to end such behaviour is important to addressing sexual violence.

Online Safety

Many people take protective or avoidance measures online (e.g., limiting internet use, blocking others, deleting accounts) to try to protect themselves against sexual violence. These measures are often only somewhat successful. It is nevertheless good practice to teach online safety.

It is important that students are reminded that an individual loses control of their content, whether it's in written format, photos, or videos, after it is posted online or sent to another person. Even if it is sent to someone who is trusted, content can still be hacked, stolen, or forwarded by someone else using their device. It is also good practice to be mindful of phone and social media privacy settings. Students should never share their passwords with anyone aside from parents, not even a best friend or romantic partner.

Sometimes individuals meet friends exclusively online through social media or gaming and may be curious to meet in person. These online relationships can also develop into romantic relationships that feel healthy and safe. When initially meeting in person, individuals should arrange to meet in a public place, and have someone they know accompany them for the first few meetings. If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. Individuals should always use and listen to their intuition and judgment around staying safe.

SUMMARY - WHAT IS SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

- Sexual violence is any form of non-consensual sexual contact
- Includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, and sexual exploitation
- Very common and severely underreported
- More likely to impact individuals who belong to certain groups or communities
- Can happen through technology such as texts, emails, and social media

Understanding Consent

Broadly speaking, giving consent involves voluntarily agreeing to a proposal or desire made by someone else. According to the *Criminal Code of Canada*, as it relates to sexual activity, consent is the voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity with another person. There are widespread misconceptions about consent to sexual activity, which tend to be exploited by perpetrators of sexual violence to coerce victims or to justify their actions. To be clear, consent:

- can only be given by the individual, not by someone else on their behalf,
- is active and ongoing; an individual can change their mind to yes or no at any time, without giving a reason,
- is never assumed or implied; silence or the absence of “no” is not consent, it must be a clear “yes”,
- cannot be given by an individual who is impaired or incapacitated (e.g., under the influence of a substance, unconscious),
- cannot be given by someone who is being threatened or coerced (e.g., feeling like saying no will break up your relationship), or when a position of authority, trust, or dependency is being misused to obtain consent, and
- cannot be generalized from one sexual act or instance to another, even with the same partner.

In Canada, the age at which a person can legally consent to sexual contact is 16 years old. Sexual activity with an individual under age 16 is considered non-consensual and illegal. When the sexual activity is considered exploitative (e.g., prostitution, pornography) or occurs in a relationship of authority, trust, or dependency (e.g., teacher, coach), an individual must be 18 years old to legally consent.

For young people who are close in age, there are exceptions to the age of consent. Twelve- and thirteen-year-olds can consent to sexual activity with a partner who is no more than two years older than they are. Fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds can consent to sexual activity with a partner who is no more than five years older than they are. However, these exceptions are invalid if the young person is being exploited or if there is a relationship of trust, authority, or dependency.

SUMMARY – UNDERSTANDING CONSENT

- Consent is the voluntary, clear, and ongoing agreement to engage in sexual activity with another person
- There are widespread misconceptions about what constitutes consent
- The legal age of consent in Canada is 16 years old, although there are several notable exceptions

The Impact of Sexual Violence

Experiencing sexual violence can have significant physical and psychological consequences. It can be traumatizing, and it can impair an individual's ability to function in their day-to-day life. Individuals experiencing sexual violence use a range of strategies to respond to violence and its impact. These responses show the strength and resilience of survivors. Sometimes ways of responding are helpful in the immediate aftermath of sexual violence, but are problematic later on (e.g., dropping a required class in order to avoid a person who has been using sexual violence). The impact of sexual violence may be immediately apparent, or it may emerge insidiously over a longer period. The impact of sexual violence often persists for many years and may be lifelong, especially if the individual's experience is not properly acknowledged and supported. It is also possible, with the right supports, for an individual who has experienced sexual violence to learn to cope effectively and experience minimal long-term impacts. Resilience and recovery are powerful possibilities for everyone who is impacted by sexual violence.

Individuals who experience sexual violence face a wide range of emotions, including loneliness, embarrassment, fear, shame, anxiety, anger, sadness, betrayal, and powerlessness. Some individuals attempt to minimize or avoid the experience and may appear to others as though they have not been impacted at all. Often, people change their behaviour to try to avoid subsequent experiences or reminders of sexual violence. Many individuals have trouble concentrating, difficulty sleeping, and experience a loss of interest or pleasure in activities that they formerly enjoyed. Increases in risk-taking, self-harm, or suicidal thoughts and behaviours are also possible. In some cases, sexual violence can also cause physical injuries, reproductive health effects, and chronic health conditions related to stress.

The individual's unique interpretation of the sexual violence, and sense of meaning that he or she makes from it, will have a significant influence on the severity of its psychological impact. If an individual has a history of past sexual violence or other trauma, the impact of the sexual violence may be intensified. The identity of the perpetrator and the frequency of contact with him or her may also impact the individual's ability to attend or feel safe in their typical settings and environments. Responses from others following a report or disclosure will also influence the individual's ability to cope with the impact of the sexual violence.

SUMMARY – THE IMPACT OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- The experience of sexual violence can cause severe and longstanding physical and psychological effects
- There are many ways that individuals may experience and react to sexual violence
- A variety of factors can impact the severity of the impact on an individual

Common Myths and Stereotypes About Sexual Violence

Many stereotypical or false beliefs about sexual violence exist in our cultural milieu. These misconceptions are prevalent and shape how sexual violence is understood and interpreted by those who experience it, by the families and friends of survivors and perpetrators, by helping professionals, and by the public. Myths and stereotypes also influence the willingness of individuals to disclose or report sexual violence, and if they do, whether the response is supportive or harmful.

The following chart presents some frequently studied myths and facts. More information about the supporting empirical evidence may be found in Baker, Campbell, and Straatman (2012).

MYTH	FACT
Behaviour or attire can provoke sexual violence	Sexual violence is never justified; behaviour or attire are irrelevant
Sexual violence is perpetrated by strangers	Individuals often know their perpetrator of sexual violence
It is not considered sexual violence if it occurs in the context of a romantic or intimate relationship	Sexual violence is often perpetrated by a romantic partner. Sexual assault of an intimate partner is an offense under the <i>Criminal Code of Canada</i>
People lie about experiencing sexual violence	Sexual violence is severely under-reported, and when it is, the allegations are no more likely to be false than for any other violent crime

SUMMARY – COMMON MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Misconceptions about sexual violence are very prevalent in our society
- Myths and stereotypes shape how sexual violence is interpreted and responded to
- It is crucial that evidence-based facts are understood and disseminated widely

What is a Disclosure?

A disclosure is the sharing of information about the experience of sexual violence with another individual. Typically, a disclosure is made to someone whom the person trusts. When a person chooses to disclose their experience, there is sometimes a delay of weeks, months, or years after the event. If it happens at all, disclosure is often a gradual process. Disclosure might start slowly, with hints or hypothetical questions, as an individual tests the waters. If the person continues to feel safe and supported, more information may be shared.

There are many reasons why individuals choose to disclose their experiences of sexual violence. For some, they are aware of the impact it has had on them and are seeking assistance or support to cope with and recover from the experience. Some individuals may be motivated by the responsibility to protect themselves and others from the perpetrator, to seek justice, or to raise awareness about sexual violence in general. For others, they may simply wish to share their experience to release the burden, and do not wish for any further action to be taken.

There are also many reasons why individuals choose *not* to disclose sexual violence. In fact, following sexual violence, individuals usually face at least one barrier that prevents them from ever telling anyone about their experience.

Barriers to Disclosure

Barriers to the disclosure of sexual violence may include:

- strong feelings of shame, embarrassment, humiliation, guilt, self-blame, or vulnerability.
- concerns about confidentiality, privacy, judgment, or scrutiny.
- lack of awareness or understanding that sexual violence has been perpetrated against them.
- misconceptions about sexual violence due to myths and stereotyped beliefs.
- conflicted feelings about the perpetrator being punished.
- fear for safety due to threat of retaliation by the perpetrator.
- fear of consequences or reprisals (e.g., being punished for underage drinking, gossip, ostracism, shame to family or disruption to family dynamics).
- bringing undue attention to themselves; some individuals would prefer for the situation to be forgotten or to go away.
- negative past or intergenerational experiences with formal supports and various systems (e.g., discrimination by healthcare, justice, education, or child protection system).
- distrust or worry about being heard or believed, that no action will be taken, or that they will not be in control of what happens next.
- fear of re-victimization or re-traumatization due to having to re-tell their experience to multiple individuals.
- lack of awareness of or access to resources, especially to culturally competent services.

Power and Trust Dynamics in Disclosures

In Canada, discrimination occurs on individual, institutional, and systemic levels. People experience discrimination based on factors such as race, indigeneity, creed, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical ability, health status, and social class, among countless others.

We have known for some time that interrelating systems of discrimination pose significant barriers to the disclosure of sexual violence. Bograd (1999) noted that, “these systems of discrimination shape the relative social locations of every member of society. They shape the meaning and nature of violence, how it is experienced by the survivor, how it responded to by others and how personal and social consequences are represented including how and whether safety can be obtained.”

It is important to remember that both the individual who has faced sexual violence and the person who receives the disclosure will have their own lived experiences with discrimination. Other lived experiences, such as abuse and other forms of trauma, may also impact an individual’s comfort with disclosing or receiving a disclosure. Due to their membership in particular social groups, some individuals may experience relative or perceived social power. An individual’s position of authority or gender may impact whether they are likely to receive disclosures or reports of sexual violence (e.g., a female student may feel more comfortable reporting to a female principal than a male principal).

At the same time, school board employees are automatically in a position of power and trust in most disclosure situations. Acknowledging how dynamics of power and trust can impact disclosure will help to facilitate more supportive experiences for individuals who have experienced sexual violence.

Effective and Ineffective Ways to Respond to Disclosures

The well-being of an individual who chooses to disclose sexual violence can be greatly impacted by the type of response that is received during the act of disclosing. Much can be learned from research findings about how to provide safe and supportive responses to those who disclose experiences of sexual violence, and how to avoid unsupportive or potentially harmful responses. When it comes down to it, being supportive and helpful is simpler than one might think and should be the goal of every individual who is fortunate to be trusted to receive a disclosure.

Supportive, helpful reactions include:

- **demonstrating emotional support and acceptance** – tell them that they are not to blame, comfort them, actively listen and communicate understanding, make eye contact, don’t rush or interrupt, treat them with dignity, and tell and show them that they are believed. Communicate that sexual violence is never the responsibility of the survivor.
- **providing tangible aid and information** – provide them with credible resources to get information about what they have experienced, and if they agree/if applicable, help them get medical care, make a report to the police, and seek mental health support.

- **respecting the individual's right to choose** – do what is possible to respect their choices about next steps. This includes respecting their choice as to what and how much they disclose, respecting their right to choose the services they feel are most appropriate, and by providing clear information about confidentiality and its limits.

Unsupportive, harmful reactions include:

- **minimizing or questioning** – tell them that it's not a big deal, encourage them to just forget about it and move on, try to find holes or inconsistencies in their story, note that their reaction seems strange to you
- **distracting** – try to distract them from thinking or talking about the experience, encourage them not to tell anyone else.
- **taking control** – make decisions or do things for them, tell others without consulting/notifying them, minimize the seriousness of the experience, tell them that you already know how they feel, treat them as incompetent or weak, make them feel like they can't take care of themselves.
- **blaming and judgment** – say they could have prevented it from occurring, state that they were irresponsible or reckless, tell them it was their fault, communicate that they should be ashamed, question why they did or did not act in certain ways during and after the event.
- **responding egocentrically** – express shock or horror, ask for unnecessary details because of your own interest, focus on your personal feelings more than theirs, tell them about your own experience with sexual violence, express anger or distress to the point where they have to calm or comfort you, communicate that you feel personally wronged, seek reassurance from them, tell them that you want to get revenge for them.
- **treating differently** – act as if something has changed and they are different now, avoid talking to or spending time with them, focus on your own needs rather than theirs.

SUMMARY – WHAT IS A DISCLOSURE?

- A disclosure is the sharing of information about the experience of sexual violence with another individual
- Often a gradual process, can occur up to years after the experience
- Numerous barriers to disclosure exist, which prevent most individuals from ever disclosing
- Systems of discrimination and power and trust dynamics are significant barriers to disclosure
- The reaction that an individual receives to their disclosure is crucial – with awareness, it is relatively easy to provide a supportive, helpful response

What to Do When Sexual Violence Occurs: Guidance for School Staff

Responding to All Forms of Sexual Violence

One of the challenges in responding to sexual violence has been the perceived or actual need to reach a particular threshold of violence before there is a response. A more proactive approach, one that recognizes a full spectrum of sexual violence and unwanted sexual behaviours, opens greater opportunities for responding, educating, preventing and, ultimately, changing the culture around sexual violence. Instances of sexual violence, even those that may seem to some to be “less serious” (e.g., unwanted sexual comments), should be responded to without judgement and with supportive resources and should be brought forward for discussion and response. By actively and pro-actively addressing all forms of sexual violence, we will create a culture of greater safety in our schools.

Receiving a Disclosure from a Student

How a staff member reacts to a student disclosure is crucial in ensuring that the student feels supported and safe. If you sense that a student has something important and personal to tell you, remember that the student has chosen you for a reason; you are their trusted adult.

- Ensure that the location you are in is private
- Express that you are pleased that the student is comfortable talking to you
- Let the student take the lead, at their own pace. Be patient and try not to interrupt
- Use body language to show that you are actively listening; nod, face the student, make eye contact, keep an open body stance with uncrossed arms
- Periodically tell the student that you hear and understand what they are saying

During the disclosure, the student may become visibly distressed. It is important that you model calmness and encouragement.

- Suggest a break but encourage the student to return shortly
- If the student wishes to end the conversation while distressed, ensure that they are not alone when they leave
- To help the student regulate their emotions, encourage them to practice simple grounding techniques, such as slow, deep breathing, or naming objects in the room that invoke each of the five senses
- Do not pressure the student to proceed with the disclosure until they demonstrate that they are feeling less distressed

Respect the student's personal space.

- Never touch them, even if you think that they would benefit from a comforting pat on the hand or shoulder

- If they are crying, you may offer the student a glass of water or a box of tissue
- If they are shaking, offer something to keep them warm, like a blanket or your sweater or coat

Validate the student's feelings and assure them that their reaction is normal, whatever it may be.

- Do not promise the student that everything will be ok, but instead, assure the student that it was not their fault
- Tell them that you will do whatever you can to get them the support they need

Talk about next steps, which include school procedures, professional support, and support in the classroom.

- Too much information at once may be overwhelming for the student
- Always start with ensuring that the student is safe and has someone to support them once they leave school for the day

Receiving a disclosure of sexual violence and subsequently supporting the student can be a difficult experience. It may be helpful to debrief with someone (while keeping the information confidential) or seek your own professional support, for example, through the board's Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP).

Confidentiality

While it is important that students feel comfortable disclosing to any staff member, students must also be made aware that the staff member may not be able to keep the information completely confidential, especially if the perpetrator is also a student at the school. Under the Education Act, it is mandatory that all school board employees report, as soon as possible (typically by the end of the school day) to their principal, when a student commits physical or sexual assault at school.

The principal will immediately investigate the circumstances and determine whether disciplinary action is needed, as well as to determine whether it is appropriate to inform both student's guardians, the police, or the children's aid society. The staff member may offer to support the student, following the disclosure, by speaking to the principal first and accompanying the student to support them in speaking to the principal about next steps.

Staff who receive a disclosure also have the professional responsibility of ensuring that the student is safe at school and in the community/at home. This will be accomplished in consultation with a school administrator, as soon as possible. Depending on the situation and the student's age, staff may need to make a report to the NRPS (see [AP 3-08 Police Protocol](#) – page 13 – Mandatory Reporting) and/or Family and Children's Services of Niagara (FACS) (See [AP 3-10 FACS Protocol](#) – page 6 – Duty to Report Child in Need of Protection), inform the student's guardian or other supports, facilitate arrangements for medical care, or assist the student in finding alternative housing. The school social worker or school youth counsellor are also key individuals to consult with in these situations.

Information about a student's experience of sexual violence should only be shared with school staff who require this information to provide supports at school. In this case, the student should be consulted around what information they are comfortable with their teachers knowing, and what information they

would like to be kept private. School staff should never share information about occurrences of sexual violence with students who are not directly involved in the event or investigation. As well, information about a student under age 18 that is suspected of, charged with, or found guilty of a crime cannot be communicated due to the publication ban requirements under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (as set out in the *School Investigations and Discipline* section, below).

Support in the Classroom

At school, it is important that students who experience sexual violence are offered accommodations to support their learning. Students may be absent more frequently for appointments at school or in the community and will benefit from extra support to catch up on what they miss. Students may experience challenges with concentration and memory, for which extra time and extended deadlines may be helpful. Students may also benefit from being given the ability to leave class without permission, should they become distressed. In these cases, it is a good idea to proactively arrange a safe space in the school where the student may go to practice coping strategies until they are ready to return to class.

If the perpetrator is in the same class, this will require careful consideration of what actions can be taken to help the student feel safe and supported. In some situations, the student may be unable to physically return to the class, and the school should make every effort to support the student in achieving the credit. Students who request that the perpetrator be removed from the class will be offered dedicated time with the principal to discuss the legal obligation of schools to provide education to all students. The principal will ensure that appropriate educational accommodations and supports will be provided to all individuals involved.

Addressing and Educating about Sexual Violence in the Classroom

Reducing the prevalence of sexual violence requires changes in attitudes and behaviours, which can start at school. However, staff are cautioned about addressing and educating about sexual violence when there has been a recent disclosure of sexual violence made by a student in the class. In these cases, it may be “too soon” for the student and their peers to be mentally prepared to process and discuss issues related to sexual violence. Instead, addressing and educating about sexual violence should be undertaken in a preventative, proactive manner.

[*Drawing the Line on Sexual Violence: A Guide for Ontario Educators*](#) (2017) is a resource written by Ontario educators in partnership with White Ribbon and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF). It is intended to support teachers in raising student awareness about topics related to sexual violence prevention. The guide presents engaging lessons that draw on curriculum expectations to address topics such as consent, healthy relationships, and the role of bystanders in sexual violence prevention.

[DontGetSextorted.ca](#) is a resource from the Canadian Centre for Child Protection that uses humour to teach students about the dangers of sexting and sharing private photos and how to prevent themselves from being sextorted. The website includes a lesson plan for educators that further explores the topic of

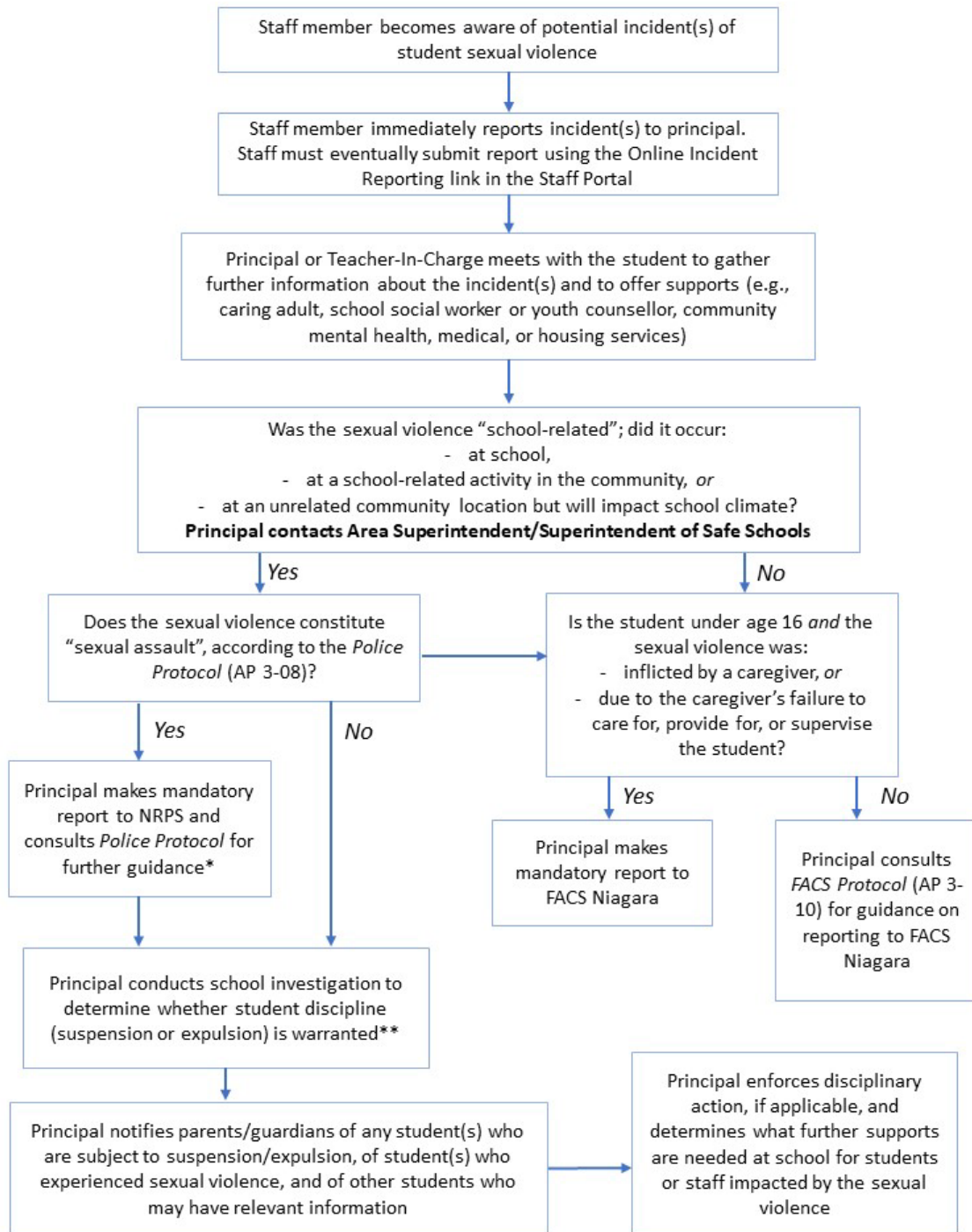
sextortion, including tips on how youth can respond safely to coercive behaviours and where to get help if they are impacted by the sharing of private pictures or content.

The Niagara Sexual Assault Centre (CARSA) employs public education coordinators who visit our schools to provide free classroom presentations and workshops on various topics related to sexual violence prevention. A current list of their programs and contact information may be found on their [website](#).

**SUMMARY – WHAT TO DO WHEN SEXUAL VIOLENCE OCCURS:
GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL STAFF**

- When a staff member receives a disclosure from a student, there are specific ways to help the student feel comfortable and safe
- School procedures around confidentiality and notifying the authorities are set out by the *Education Act*
- Students will benefit from being given the opportunity to understand why certain actions are taken (or not taken) by the school
- Teachers can provide helpful supports in the classroom for students who experience sexual violence
- Education can change attitudes and behaviours to help reduce the prevalence of sexual violence
- Social Workers and Youth Counsellors are available for support

What to Do When Sexual Violence Occurs: Guidance for School Administrators



*including information on police interviews at school and submitting a violent incident report to the Ministry of Education.

**if NRPS or FACS also undertake an investigation, the parallel school investigation/discipline will be paused while Legal Services coordinates timing with NRPS or FACS. Without direction from NRPS, the principal does not disclose that a police report has been made.

Reporting to Niagara Regional Police Service

A Protocol between the NRPS and the four local school boards outlines situations when there is a necessity for schools to report an incident to the NRPS ([AP 3-08](#)). The Protocol defines sexual assault as, “any type of unwanted sexual act done by one person to another that violates the sexual integrity of the victim. The term refers to a range of behaviours that involve the use of force or control over the victim. In some cases, no overt physical force is used – instead, the victim may be threatened with words or pressured into doing something he or she doesn’t want to do.”

It is mandatory that incidents of sexual assault be reported by the school principal to the NRPS when the incident happened at school or during school-related activities (in or outside of school). If the incident happened in the community but the administrator believes that it will have a negative impact on school climate, it is also mandatory that it be reported to NRPS.

In addition, the Protocol specifies that relationship-based violence and non-consensual sharing of intimate images must also be reported as violent incidents to the Ministry of Education through OnSIS if they occur at school or at school related activities.

The NRPS officer who responds to the principals’ report will meet with the principal to obtain information about the student before making contact with the student and will contact, or make arrangements with the principal to contact, parents or guardians of students under age 18 years, when required to do so.

The principal’s ability to inform any of the impacted students of families that a report to the police has been made by the school will be dependent on the direction received from the police. When the report is made, principals are advised to ask NRPS what information can be disclosed and to who. This direction is necessary to ensure that the police investigation is not compromised.

Reporting to Family and Children’s Services of Niagara

A Protocol between FACS and the DSBN ([AP 3-10](#)), as well as the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, outlines situations where DSBN staff have a duty to report to FACS. A report should be made immediately if the student is under age 16 years and if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the sexual violence was inflicted by a person having charge of the student, or that the sexual violence was caused by or resulted from the caregiver’s failure to care for, provide for, or supervise the student.

The mandatory duty to report does not apply to students who are 16 or 17 years old, but a staff member may choose to make a report if there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the student may be in need of protection.

School Investigations and Discipline

As part of the principal’s duty to maintain proper order and discipline in the school, the principal shall investigate complaints that a student has engaged in an incident that is subject to a suspension pending expulsion under the *Education Act* to determine whether to recommend to the board that the student be expelled.

Investigations can relate to incidents or behaviours that occur at school, at a school-related activity, or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate. The school climate is the sum total of all of the personal relationships within a school and a positive climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted.

Pursuant to *Education Act* and the DSBN's [Policy G-28](#) and [AP 3-26](#) (Student Discipline), complaints of sexual violence could include committing sexual assault (ground #4), or an act considered by the principal to be significantly injurious to the moral tone of the school or to the physical or mental well being of others (ground #9) or activities engaged in by the pupil on or off school property that cause the pupil's continuing presence in the school to create an unacceptable risk to the physical or mental well being of other person(s) in the school or board (ground #11).

During the investigation, the principal will typically speak to the student whom the principal believes has experienced the sexual violence, the student the principal believes committed the sexual violence, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of both students, and any other person whom the principal has reason to believe may have relevant information.

During an investigation, the principal has the responsibility of ensuring that all students are treated fairly, even students who are accused of engaging in sexual violence. It is important that students understand that investigations into sexual violence that cannot be corroborated by a credible witness to or a recording of the event are more difficult and may prevent the principal from imposing discipline on the student accused of committing sexual violence. Where the principal does not discipline the student accused of engaging in sexual violence, it is important that the principal advises the student making the complaint that the failure to discipline the other student does not mean that the principal does not believe them but instead it might mean that there is not enough evidence to prove the allegation. If a police report is made, this may allow the principal to take disciplinary action in situations where it was otherwise not possible.

Where the police and/or FACS undertake an investigation, the school investigation and possible discipline will be paused initially while legal services coordinates the timing of DSBN's parallel investigation.

The principal's investigation shall not make any mention of the police investigation due to the confidentiality requirements under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* which prohibit sharing information related to a young person, if it would identify that they have been suspected of, charged with or found guilty of a crime and also prohibits sharing information of young victims or witnesses of crimes alleged to have been committed by youth. For more information, see [Department of Justice Fact Sheet on Youth Justice Publication Bans](#).

Reporting to Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Under the *Education Act*, if the principal is considering suspension or expulsion of a student, they must inform the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student who the principal believes engaged in the sexual violence and is subject to the suspension and the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the student who the principal believes has experienced the sexual violence. An exception may be made if the principal feels that doing so would put the student at risk of harm from the parent or guardian such that the notification is not in the student's best interests. In this case, the principal should document the

rationale for their decision (including in Aspen) and inform other school staff that the parent or guardian is not to be notified. The principal should also consider whether the student is in need of protection and, if so, make a report to FACS.

NRPS Interviews at School

If the NRPS is investigating a school related incident, an officer may wish to visit the school to interview the student who experienced sexual violence or the student who is believed to have committed sexual violence. However, under the Police Protocol, “NRPS should not use the school as a place of convenience in which to interview or arrest students for matters that do not pertain to the school.” Ultimately, the Police Protocol confirms that the principal has the legislative right to determine if an interview takes place at the school or not.

Guidance on contacting the parent(s) or guardian(s) is set out below in each section. There may be cases where the principal is directed by the NRPS not to inform the parent(s) or guardian(s) because of exigent circumstances (i.e., urgent, pressing and/or emergency circumstances) or where the NRPS believe a parent or guardian may be implicated. The principal should not inform the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students age 18 years or older, or of students 16 or 17 years who have withdrawn from parental control, unless the student requests that they be notified or is incapable of providing consent for the interview.

Interviews of Victims or Witness

When the incident is related to school, if the student victim or witness is under 18 years old, the principal will first contact the parent or guardian for permission. If the parent agrees, the NRPS will conduct the interview at school in a private area with the parent or guardian present (preferred) or the principal present (if the parent or guardian is not present).

If the parent does not give permission, or the student or witness does not wish for the principal to be present, the NRPS must conduct the interview off school property.

Interviews of Suspects

When the NRPS requests to interview a student under age 18 years as a suspect, the principal will advise the student that they may request their parent or guardian to be in attendance during the interview with the officer. The principal, in consultation with the NRPS, will attempt to contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) prior to any questioning by the NRPS. The NRPS will wait for the parent or guardian to attend within a reasonable time and then will conduct the interview at school in a private area with the parent or guardian present (preferred) or the principal present (if the parent or guardian is refuses to attend or cannot be located). If the student does not want the parent or guardian or the principal to be present when they are being interviewed as a suspect by the NRPS, the NRPS must conduct the interview off school property.

Arrest of Student on School Property

If the NRPS is investigating a school-related incident, an officer may wish to visit the school to arrest a student believed to be involved in sexual violence. The officer shall contact the principal to request a meeting with the student for the purpose of making an arrest. The NRPS shall attempt to contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) to advise them that their child has been arrested and must advise the student of their legal right to parental notification upon arrest, right to counsel, right not to make a statement, and protection of privacy.

If the student is arrested, the principal shall also attempt to contact the parent(s) or guardian(s) to advise them of the arrest.

SUMMARY – WHAT TO DO WHEN SEXUAL VIOLENCE OCCURS: GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

- Principal contacts Area Superintendent/Superintendent of Safe Schools for consultation
- Sexual assault must be reported by the school principal to the NRPS when the incident happened at school, during school-related activities, or outside of school if it will negatively impact the school climate
- For students under 16 years, a report to FACS should be made immediately if the sexual violence was inflicted by a caregiver, or that the sexual violence was caused by or resulted from the caregiver's failure to care for, provide for, or supervise the student. While not mandatory, if the student is 16 or 17 years of age, a report may be made to FACS
- Where the police and FACS undertake an investigation, the school investigation and possible discipline will be paused initially while legal services coordinates the timing of DSBN's parallel investigation
- Students may be suspended or expelled from school for committing sexual assault
- If the principal is considering suspension or expulsion, parents or guardians of all affected students must typically be notified
- When there is a police investigation, students may be interviewed by police officers at school, subject to the specifics as detailed above

Professional Supports for Sexual Violence

At School

All secondary schools have access to a full- or half-time social worker with a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. These individuals are trained mental health professionals who can work with the student at school to ensure that their mental health is supported and that they are coping well. School social workers can also assist with connecting the student and their family to resources and services in the community.

Some secondary schools have access to a part-time youth counsellor with a diploma in Child and Youth Care, Social Service Work, or the equivalent. School youth counsellors are ideal individuals to provide caring individual support at school and to connect students with other resources when needed.

All secondary schools also have access to a Niagara Region Public Health Nurse, who can provide sexual health services and supports to students.

In the Community

Mental Health Services

Niagara Region Sexual Assault Centre (CARSA)

Phone CARSA's 24-hour Confidential Crisis and Information Line at 905-682-4584 if you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence either recently or in the past. A support counsellor will offer you non-judgmental support, understanding, information, and options specific to your concerns.

CARSA offers counselling services to individuals age 16 years and older as well as survivor support groups.

Pathstone Mental Health

Pathstone Mental Health is Niagara's lead children's mental health agency. Phone their 24-hour Crisis and Support Line at 1-800-263-4944 for immediate mental health support for children and youth and their families up to age 18 years. Their [Hear & Now Walk-In Clinics](#), open daily at locations across Niagara, are an option for in-person or virtual same-day mental health support.

Design for a New Tomorrow

Design for a New Tomorrow provides supports for individuals who have experienced violence or abuse in an intimate relationship. Their services are available to women age 16 years or older in St. Catharines, West Lincoln, Niagara Falls, Welland, Fort Erie, and Port Colborne. Phone 905-684-1223 ext. 1.

Medical Care

Niagara Health Sexual Assault Domestic Violence (SADV) Treatment Program

The SADV Treatment Program provides specialized care for individuals who have experienced recent sexual violence or intimate partner abuse. Nurses provide immediate medical care within 12 days of the event through Niagara Health emergency departments. Social workers also provide short-term trauma counselling to individuals age 16 years and older who have experienced sexual violence or intimate partner abuse within the past two years. Counselling may be accessed through the emergency department visit or by phoning 905-378-4647 ext. 45300.

Niagara Region Sexual Health Centres

If the sexual violence occurred more than 12 days ago, medical attention may be sought from a public health nurse or nurse practitioner at a Niagara Region Sexual Health Centre in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, or Welland. Services include birth control and pregnancy support, sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment, and vaccinations against Hep A, Hep B and HPV. For an appointment, call 1-800-263-5757.

Emergency Shelters & Housing

Gillian's Place offers a shelter in St. Catharines for all women and Two-Spirit, gender queer, trans, and non-binary people ages 16 years and older who are leaving a violent living situation. Call or text 905-684-8331.

Women's Place (Nova House) offers a shelter in Niagara Falls for all women and Two-Spirit, gender queer, trans, and non-binary people ages 16 years and older who are leaving a violent living situation. Call or text 905-356-5800.

The RAFT offers a hostel shelter in downtown St. Catharines for youth ages 16 to 24. Phone 1-833-984-4365.

The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara's Nightlight Youth Services provides a short-term shelter and longer-term housing support in Niagara Falls for youth ages 16 to 30. Phone 905-358-3678.

The Niagara Regional Native Centre in Niagara-on-the-Lake offers the Abbey House shelter to Indigenous women experiencing crises. Phone 905-688-6484.

Further Resources

[Canadian Public Health Association – Preventing Youth Dating Violence](#)

[DontGetSextorted.ca](#)

[Healthy Relationships Plus Program – Preventing Teen Dating Violence and Promoting Mental Health Through Relationships](#)

[Little Warriors](#)

[Love is Respect](#)

[Niagara Regional Police Service Online Safety Resources](#)

[One Love Foundation](#)

[PREVNet – Addressing Youth Dating Violence](#)

[Resources for Teens Who May Be Experiencing Gender-Based Violence](#)

[White Ribbon Draw-the-Line](#)

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- Youth Criminal Justice Act*, S.C. 2002, c. 1.

Western University Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children. (2021). *Responding to Disclosures on Campus*. <http://respondingtodisclosuresoncampus.com/>

White Ribbon. (2017). *Drawing the Line on Sexual Violence: A Guide for Ontario Educators*. <https://www.dtl.whiteribbon.ca/for-educators>

Appendix: Guidance for Students

Staff may find the following information useful in supporting students who have experienced sexual violence or who are supporting a peer who has experienced sexual violence. This information is also available for students to access on www.dsbn.org, under Safe Schools.

When sexual violence occurs, it is most important that the individual does not try to cope with it alone. As soon as possible, the individual should try to tell someone they trust – a friend, a family member, or an adult at school. If there is no one they trust right now, that is ok, they can always phone or text a support line, such as CARSA's 24-hour Confidential Crisis and Information Line at 905-682-4584.

If a friend or peer tells you that they have experienced sexual violence, here are some things that you can talk about and help them consider:

- What adults would you trust and feel comfortable disclosing the violence to?
- What people at school could you tell to make sure you and others are safe - teacher, principal, guidance counsellor, or school social worker?
- What other friends could you tell to help you remain safe?
- Do you need to change your locker location or lock?
- Do you need to start using a buddy system for travelling to and from school, classes, and after-school activities?
- Do you need to consider blocking the perpetrator's number from your phone, or changing your number?
- If stranded, who could you call for a ride home?
- If the sexual violence is ongoing, you may want to keep a journal or record of it in case you need provide evidence of what has happened to you
- What could you do or where could you go quickly to get away from the perpetrator?

The section below covers the many different options that individuals have when disclosing or reporting sexual violence.

Disclosing/Reporting Options for Students

There are several disclosure and reporting options available to individuals who experience sexual violence. A person may choose any combination of the following options, or none at all. If you are supporting a peer who has experienced sexual violence, it is important to encourage whatever choices they feel most comfortable with, regardless of what you think is best.

1) Telling an adult

The individual who has experienced sexual violence is highly encouraged to tell a trusted adult about what has happened. This could be a parent or adult sibling, extended family member, family friend, teacher, coach, religious leader, or healthcare professional. If you choose to make

a disclosure to a school staff member, it is important that you know that, depending on the circumstances, the staff member may be required by law to make a report to child protection services or inform the principal, who may need to make a report to the police or inform your parent or guardian. The staff member will inform you if they need to share your information with anyone.

2) Going to a hospital emergency department

Individuals who have experienced sexual violence can go to the nearest hospital emergency department any time to receive medical treatment and care. The hospital may collect a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit, ideally within 72 hours but up to 12 days after the sexual assault. The hospital will also call a support worker from the Niagara Sexual Assault Centre to come to the hospital to provide support and advocacy for you and your family

3) Reporting to the police

If the sexual violence just happened, or there is immediate danger, call 9-1-1. At any point after the sexual violence, the individual may make an official report to the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) by phoning 905-688-4111, pressing 1 to file a report of an incident, and then speaking with a dispatcher. After some basic information has been obtained, a uniformed officer will be sent to conduct a preliminary investigation with the individual to find out basic details about the incident. The officer may ask the individual to go to the hospital to treat injuries and to collect forensic evidence using a Sexual Assault Evidence Kit. The officer will ask the individual whether they would like Victim Services Niagara (VSN) to be contacted for immediate crisis and trauma support and services. The NRPS has a detailed [Guide for Sexual Assault Survivors](#) that outlines information on sexual assault investigations, possible outcomes, and the criminal court process.

4) Filing a civil claim

The individual may wish to contact a civil sexual assault lawyer to inquire about suing the perpetrator for damages suffered. This option may be pursued instead of, or in addition to, criminal charges laid by the police. For assistance in finding a civil sexual assault lawyer, contact The Law Society of Upper Canada's Lawyer Referral Service at 1-800-268-8326.

SUMMARY – GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

- The most important piece of coping with sexual violence is getting support – either from a trusted friend, family member, or other individual, or from a crisis phone line or community resources
- Students are encouraged to tell an adult as soon as they feel comfortable
- Students should be aware that school staff may not be able to keep their information completely confidential, as they are required by law to report specific situations
- There are several options for disclosure and reporting; individuals may choose to pursue as many or as few options as they wish

Notes

Elementary Curriculum/Resources

Grade 1 - Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

- Recognize caring behaviours and behaviours that can be harmful to physical and mental health (e.g., bullying, manipulative behaviours, sexually exploitative or abusive behaviours)
- Understand the importance of consent

Grade 2 – Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

- Explain the importance of consent, and demonstrate the ability to stand up for themselves and others, to enhance well-being and safety (e.g., stating boundaries, saying no, reporting exploitative behaviours)

Grade 3 – Human Development and Sexual Health

- Identify the characteristics of healthy relationships (e.g., accepting and respecting differences, being inclusive, establishing and respecting personal boundaries, showing mutual respect and caring) and describe ways of responding to bullying and other challenges and of communicating consent in their interactions with others

Grade 4 – Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

- Describe various types of bullying, abuse, and other non-consensual behaviour, including cyberbullying, and identify the impacts they can have and appropriate ways of responding

Grade 5 – Personal Safety and Injury Prevention

- Explain how a person's actions, either in person or online, including making homophobic or other hurtful comments, can affect their own and others' feelings, self-concept, mental health and emotional well-being, and reputation (e.g., making sexist or racist remarks, mocking appearance or ability, excluding others, sexual harassment [including online activities such as making sexual comments, sharing sexual pictures, or asking for such pictures to be sent])

Grade 6 – Human Development and Sexual Health

- Understand the impacts of viewing sexually explicit media, including pornography
- Make informed decisions that demonstrate respect for themselves and others and an understanding of the concept of consent to help build healthier relationships, using a variety of social-emotional learning skills (e.g., self-awareness and identity skills; emotion management skills; skills based on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultural teachings, or other cultural teachings)

Grade 7 – Personal Safety and Injury Prevention and Human Development and Sexual Health

- Describe benefits and dangers, for themselves and others, that are associated with the use of computers and other digital technologies (e.g., benefits: increased access to information; improved communication; dangers: negative impact on mental health; exposure to online predators, including those involved in sex trafficking and/or soliciting explicit sexual images), and identify protective responses
- Assess the potential impact on themselves and others of various types of bullying, abuse, exploitation, or harassment, including homophobic bullying or harassment and other forms of identity-based bullying, and of the type of coercion that can occur in connection with sexting and online activities, and identify ways of preventing or resolving such incidents

- Explain the importance of having a shared understanding with a partner about the following: delaying sexual activity until they are older; the reasons for not engaging in sexual activity; the concept of consent, the legal age of consent, and how consent is communicated; and, in general, the need to communicate clearly with each other when making decisions about sexual activity in a healthy, loving relationship

Grade 8 – Substance Use, Addictions, and Related Behaviours, and Human Development and Sexual Health

- Identify and describe the warning signs of problematic substance use and related behaviours for a variety of activities and substances, including cannabis, and the consequences that can occur (e.g., unhealthy expectations of intimacy from repeated exposure to unrealistic portrayals of sex online; aggressive behaviours related to alcohol use that can lead to gender-based violence, dating violence, or sexual assault; inability to make healthy decisions as a result of drug use; self-harming behaviours related to having a mental illness such as depression that are exacerbated by substance abuse)
- Identify and explain factors that can affect an individual's decisions about sexual activity (e.g., previous thinking about reasons to wait; self-concept; awareness and acceptance of gender identity and sexual orientation; physical or cognitive disabilities; legal concerns such as the legal age of consent; awareness of the risk of sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBIs); concerns about the risk of becoming a parent; use of alcohol or drugs)
- Understand abstinence, contraception and the use of effective and suitable protection to prevent pregnancy and STBBIs, and the concept of consent, as well as the skills they need to apply to make safe and healthy decisions about sexual activity
- Analyze the attractions and benefits associated with being in a healthy relationship, as well as the benefits, risks, and drawbacks, for themselves and others, of relationships involving different degrees of sexual intimacy (e.g., hurt when relationships end or trust is broken, risk of STBBIs, becoming a parent before you are ready, sexual harassment and exploitation, potential for dating violence)

<https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/schools/curriculum/default.aspx>

Secondary Curriculum/Resources

Healthy Living Learning Summary for Grade 9: Key Topics			
Topic	Understanding Health Concepts	Making Healthy Choices	Making Connections for Healthy Living
Healthy Eating	Connection to holistic health: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual	Healthy eating plans	Food and beverage choices – environmental, social factors
Personal Safety and Injury Prevention	Technology – benefits and risks, safe use		Mental health concerns – warning signs and responses Responding to bullying/harassment (including sexual harassment, gender-based violence, homophobia, racism)
Substance Use, Addictions, and Related Behaviours	Resilience – protective and risk factors		Social influences; decision-making, communication skills
Human Development and Sexual Health	Preventing pregnancy and STIs Factors affecting gender identity and sexual orientation; supports	Relationships – skills and strategies Thinking ahead about sexual health, consent, personal limits	

[Canadian Mental Health Association](#)

[Egale Training Workshops](#)

<http://niagarasexualassaultcentre.com/public-education>

[Kristen French Advocacy Center](#)

[Niagara Health: Domestic Sexual Violence](#)

[Ontario Mental Health Resources](#)

[OPHEA Sexual Violence Prevention Education](#)

[OPHEA: Approaches to Teaching Healthy Living Guide for Secondary Educators](#)

[Red Cross Healthy Youth Relationships](#)

[ROSEN - Teen Health Online Resource](#)

[Savis of Halton: Relationship & Sexual Health Education](#)

[Sexual Assault Center](#)

[The Raft](#)

New Elementary Science and Technology Curriculum

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

BACKGROUND:

In March 2022, the Ministry of Education (MOE) released a newly updated science and technology curriculum for Grades 1 to 8. Teachers will be required to start teaching the revised curriculum in September 2022.

The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1 to 8: Science and Technology, 2022 has been written with a focus on both STEM skills and fundamental science and technology concepts in order to reflect the skills that students will need to navigate our rapidly changing, scientific and technologically sophisticated world.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW:

The curriculum document is organized into five areas:

- STEM skills and connections
- Life systems
- Matter and energy
- Structures and mechanisms
- Earth and space systems

Within each area, essential concepts are woven throughout, such as:

STEM Skills and Connections

- Engages students in connecting and applying science, technology, engineering and mathematics concepts as they consider real-world issues related to our changing world including society, the economy, and the environment (i.e., exploring emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence through coding, exploring occupations such as skilled trades)

Engineering Design Process

- Provides students with opportunities to invent as they design and build innovative solutions to problems that can be solved by science and technology

Hands-on, Experiential Learning

- Includes hands-on learning opportunities to nurture and spark curiosity and wonder

Indigenous Knowledges and Perspectives

PROGRAM AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

- Comprises learning about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit knowledges, practices and perspectives in relation to science and technology

Contributions to Science and Technology

- Showcases the important contributions made to science and technology by people with diverse lived experiences and from various communities

Coding

- Includes the application of coding to investigate and model concepts

Food Literacy

- Builds understanding of the various food systems, connections with physical and mental health, the role the environment plays in how our food grows, and the importance of locally sourced food

Climate Change

- Fosters an understanding of the critical issues affecting all life on Earth and enables students to consider ways to address social, economic and environmental issues

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

The Curriculum Support Services Team is presently completing an analysis of the new Curriculum in order to determine what information, resources and professional development will be required for teachers to successfully begin implementation in the Fall of 2022.

In addition to resources, sample lessons/units, voluntary summer institutes and after school professional development, we will also be working with Administrators and Instructional Coaches to ensure they have a solid understanding of the new Science and Technology Curriculum and are able to provide job embedded support to staff as they begin this implementation journey.

Respectfully submitted by:

Marian Reimer Friesen, Superintendent of Curriculum and Student Achievement, Elementary

New Primary and Junior EQAO Assessment Overview

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

BACKGROUND:

This spring, our grade 3 and 6 students will once again participate in Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) provincial assessments of reading, writing and mathematics after a two-year pause. The format and content have changed considerably, with the most significant changes being digitalization and modernization, leading to a very different student experience.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES:

Digitization

This year, grade 3 and 6 students will complete the assessment using an e-assessment system. In this digital system:

- all the questions in the mathematics component are scored automatically (computer-scored).
- the selected-response questions in the reading and writing section are scored automatically (computer-scored), while only the open-response questions are scored by trained educators
- the student's outcome is assigned using a statistical procedure that takes into account the student's responses to the questions on the assessment and the characteristics of each question, such as difficulty.

Modernization

In addition to the changes noted above, the assessment format has changed in many ways. Changes include:

- the assessment is now much shorter
 - The language component is divided into four sessions requiring a total of approximately two to four hours.
 - The mathematics component contains four stages requiring a total of approximately two to four hours.
- the mathematics assessment is now based on the new 2020 curriculum
- the Assessment window offers a significantly longer scheduling timeframe
- only students attending in-person will participate in the assessments
- EQAO will only report outcomes on students who participate in the assessments

PROGRAM AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

Student Experience

Students completing the assessment will have a significantly different experience that has been designed with some key supports:

- Staff will share a sample test with students so they can familiarize themselves with the platform, including the various types of questions and the new features (e.g., rough notes, calculator)
- The platform has built-in accessibility tools such as zoom-in and zoom-out, a text-to-speech reader and a high-contrast view, which are available for all students to use during the assessment
- In addition to the assessment sessions/questions, students will also complete questionnaires to gather information about attitudes, demographics, etc.
- The assessment features a variety of types of questions (e.g., multiple choice, drag and drop, drop-down menu, short answer).
- Open-response questions can be completed digitally or on paper.
- The mathematics component of the primary-division assessment uses a multi-stage computer adaptive testing model that adapts to the individual student's performance as the student progresses through the stages. Therefore, the module that is presented to students is based on their achievement in the previous stage.

DSBN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

The Elementary Curriculum Support Services (CSS) team has completed an analysis of the new EQAO Assessments and Frameworks to determine what information, resources and professional development will be required for Administrators, LRTs, Instructional Coaches and Classroom Teachers to successfully implement the EQAO Assessments in May and June. Our team has also participated in extensive training with EQAO in order to best support the system with implementation.

The CSS Team has prepared support materials, video tutorials, and resources for staff and students that will be presented at a variety of workshops in the coming weeks. It is our goal to ensure every grade 3 and 6 student has a positive experience while participating in the EQAO assessments and that they are able to best demonstrate their knowledge, skill and understanding in this newly revised digital format.

Respectfully submitted by:

Marian Reimer Friesen, Superintendent of Curriculum and Student Achievement, Elementary