

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

07 January 2020

Report 20-005 CONSULTATION PLAN FOR DRAFT POLICY P.142.SCO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION

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PURPOSE:

1. To seek approval from the Board for a consultation process and timeline for the staff-recommended draft policy P.142.SCO, Child Sexual Abuse Prevention.

CONTEXT:

2. The District has made a strong commitment to fostering safe and welcoming schools for students. Part of this commitment has been ongoing work in preventing student sexual abuse and exploitation. An important part of this work is the establishment of policies and procedures regarding student sexual abuse prevention to operate in tandem with existing policies on reporting and investigating allegations of student sexual abuse. The District has a well-established process for reporting and addressing alleged misconduct by staff as outlined in procedure [PR.542.HR Alleged Employee Misconduct Towards a Student](#). The purpose of this proposed policy and accompanying procedure is to further develop a culture committed to preventing abuse and misconduct.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. Work Undertaken to Date
The District began working with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (the Centre) in 2018, with a goal of enhancing measures to reduce the risks of student sexual abuse and exploitation. To date this work has included:
 - an initial training session for all principals, vice-principals, managers, senior staff and bargaining unit presidents on the nature of child sexual abuse, the Centre's work and programs, and key considerations for schools;
 - the forming of a District steering committee comprised of school leaders and central staff;
 - training of over 7000 school-based staff in the Commit to Kids program developed and delivered by the Centre; and

- a risk assessment of the District's policies and procedures to identify gaps from a student protection perspective.

4. Policy Development

As a result of the risk assessment, it was determined that a new policy should be created to guide staff in creating the conditions through which student sexual abuse and exploitation could be prevented.

The draft policy P.142.SCO, Child Sexual Abuse Prevention (Appendix A) addresses such areas as:

- providing definition and clarity for concepts such as appropriate contact, concerning behaviour and grooming behaviours;
- training requirements for staff;
- ensuring processes are in place for the reporting and addressing of concerning behaviours;
- setting the requirement for an annual declaration for all staff working directly with students that they understand and will follow the policies and procedures for preventing child sexual abuse and exploitation; and
- providing authorization for the Director of Education to issue such procedures as necessary to support this policy.

The approval of a District policy aimed specifically at the prevention of student sexual abuse and exploitation will represent a significant step forward in the ongoing commitment to provide our students with the safest learning environments possible.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5. The consultation and finalization of the proposed policy can be achieved with current resource allocation within central departments.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

6. Policy P.001.GOV, Policy Development and Management, requires that consultation and input be built into new policy development. To date, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, senior staff, principals and vice-principals have been consulted in the development of the draft policy and procedure and will continue to have input as the work progresses.

An important part of the consultation process will include building awareness of this issue among parents, students and staff. During the consultation process, the District will promote resources developed by The Canadian Centre for Child Protection to support this. The Centre has recently created a video for individuals working with children, as well as for parents/guardians. This video, Commit to Kids: An Introduction to Safeguarding Children from Sexual Abuse covers the following topics:

- the scope of child sexual abuse;
- barriers to disclosure;
- grooming and boundary transgressions; and
- how protective adults can help safeguard children from sexual abuse.

These resources are designed to create awareness and inform feedback on the policy consultation. Additionally, if approved, the proposed consultation plan will provide opportunities for staff, students, parents/guardians, members of the community, subject matter experts and Board advisory committees to provide input to guide the final shaping of the proposed policy.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

7. The creation of a policy aimed at the prevention of student sexual abuse and exploitation will further the strategic objective of creating a culture of caring and promoting a safe and caring community, as well creating a culture of social responsibility.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the consultation plan for draft policy P.142.SCO, Child Sexual Abuse Prevention, attached as Appendix B to Report 20-005, be approved.

Brett Reynolds
Associate Director

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Draft policy P.142.SCO Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

Appendix B - Consultation Plan for draft policy P.142.SCO Child Sexual Abuse Prevention