



MEMORANDUM

Memo No. 20-011

TO: Trustees
Student Trustees

FROM: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary of the Board
Brett Reynolds, Associate Director of Education (ext. 8252)

DATE: 24 January 2020

RE: **Child Sexual Abuse Policy**

The purpose of this memo is to address questions that arose during the discussion of Report No. 20-005 on the draft policy P.142.SCO Child Sexual Abuse Prevention during the Committee of the Whole meeting of January 7th, 2020.

The report indicated that a “risk assessment” had been undertaken as part of the District’s work with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. Questions arose regarding the nature and findings of that assessment. Commit to Kids is a program developed and supported by the Centre aimed at helping organizations create a culture dedicated to reducing the risk of child sexual abuse and exploitation. The Centre provides an implementation guide to help organizations adopt and implement this program. One of the recommended activities in that guide is a “risk assessment”. The risk assessment is essentially a series of questions aimed at identifying gaps or concerns in existing organizational culture, policies, the physical environment, practices and programs which may increase the risks of child sexual abuse occurring or going unaddressed. A multi-disciplinary team including senior staff, principals, Risk Management, Human Resources, Board Services, Labour Relations, Facilities, Learning Support Services and others completed this assessment.

The assessment did reveal a number of areas which may require attention going forward, including, but not limited to;

- that employees do not have a fulsome understanding of child sexual abuse, how it has changed over time and the conditions under which it can occur;
- that issues such as professional boundaries, inappropriate adult/child interaction, grooming behaviours need to be better understood; and
- that there are a number of barriers/challenges which may be hindering the ability and willingness of staff to report concerning behaviours to supervisors such as limited understanding of what to report as well as what may happen as a result of reporting.

In order to address these risks, a number of recommendations were made including:

- mandatory training of all school-based employees on the Commit to Kids program, which would provide an understanding of child sexual abuse, healthy boundaries

between employees and students, grooming, disclosure, and the duty to report, create a culture of openness, transparency and accountability;

- create an annual declaration for all staff and ongoing yearly review as well as cyclical training; and
- ensure that there are clear policies and procedures in place to support the above and which help set the conditions to ensure a culture that actively supports the prevention of child sexual abuse.

Also raised in the discussion at Committee was the availability of resources to support survivors of child sexual abuse. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection has a [comprehensive set of resources for survivors](#) which the District will make available in our communications materials. These materials also address some of the issues raised during the Committee discussion around the use of the words “victim” and “survivor” and how to address the sensitivity of these questions.

cc Director’s Executive Council
Board Services
Corporate Records