



REPORT TO

GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

***WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROMOTE WORLD PEACE? GO HOME
AND LOVE YOUR FAMILY – MOTHER TERESA***

Created, Draft

April 25, 2016

Cristina Fernandes, Superintendent of Special Services
John Wilhelm, Chief Social Worker

First Tabling

September 13, 2016

Review

[Click here to enter a date.](#)

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

Vision:

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Mission:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community rooted in the love of Christ. We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge and to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.



R. McGuckin

Associate Director of Academic Affairs

A. Sangiorgio

Associate Director of Planning and Facilities

C. Jackson

Executive Superintendent of Business Services and Chief Financial Officer

Angela Gauthier

Director of Education

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The foundation of all Catholic social teaching is the belief in the inherent dignity of the human person because every human life is sacred and created in the image of God. It is the policy of the Toronto Catholic District School Board that employees shall comply fully with the Child and Family Services Act and report forthwith any suspicion of child abuse or neglect of pupils of the Board directly to a Children's Aid Society.

B. PURPOSE

To assist the TCDSB with its responsibility to communicate employees' legal requirement and ethical obligation to report suspected child abuse it is recommended that S. 17 Suspected Child Abuse Reporting, Regulation 2 be amended.

C. BACKGROUND

1. November 14, 2007 - The TCDSB Policy for Suspected Child Abuse Reporting (S.17) was approved.
2. In each October, during Child Abuse Awareness month, all board employees are reminded through e-mail of the TCDSB policy and their duty to report suspected child abuse. Furthermore, every three years all schools receive an in-service regarding the policy. Many schools request in-services on an annual basis.
3. February 14, 2014 - Following the 2013-2014 Coroner's inquest into the death of Jeffrey Baldwin, several recommendations were directed to The Toronto District School Board and The Ministry of Education regarding the review of policies and procedures; particularly related to the training of suspected child abuse.
4. April 29, 2016 - Following the 2016 Coroner's inquest into the death of Katelynn Sampson, 173 recommendations were directed toward government offices and organizations including The Ministry of Education and The Toronto District School Board. At the heart of the jury's recommendations is "Katelynn's Principle", which states that "the child must be at the centre, where they are the subject of or

receiving services through the child welfare, justice and education systems”.

5. June 4, 2015 - In recognition of its commitment to promote the duty to report and ensure that the legal obligations of teaching professionals are given adequate attention, the Ontario College of Teachers released a professional advisory. This advisory provides direction and guidance emphasizing the importance of knowing legal and ethical obligations to report abuse and neglect.
6. May 2016 – A recommendation that S. 17 Suspected Child Abuse Reporting, Regulation 2 be amended. from “All employees will be reminded annually of their legal obligations to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect” to “All employees are required to review the TCDSB media clip regarding Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect on an annual school year basis”.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. According to a Toronto Catholic Children’s Aid survey, 50% of persons indicate a reluctance to report suspected child abuse. Respondents suggested that they were more likely to report abuse if they were completely certain that abuse has occurred. Delivering in-services and reviewing a media clip will act as a reminder that the Child and Family Services Act requires school professionals to report suspicions of child abuse and not to attempt to verify or dismiss disclosures without the support of trained investigators.
2. It is the policy of the Toronto Catholic District School Board that employees shall comply fully with the Child and Family Services Act and report forthwith any suspicion of child abuse or neglect of pupils of the Board directly to a Children’s Aid Society. Regulations of the policy currently state that “the Board shall ensure that employees are aware of definitions of child abuse” and that “all employees will be reminded annually of their legal obligations to report suspected cases of child abuse”.
3. Most concerns from TCDSB employees regarding suspected child abuse will be placed to the Catholic Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. The

TCDSB has enjoyed a longstanding relationship with this Catholic agency including a long history of representation on their Board of Directors. The Catholic Children’s Aid Society of Toronto continues to partner with the TCDSB in providing workshops, training and policy development that is congruent with our Catholic faith and values.

4. To assist the TCDSB with its responsibility to communicate employees’ legal requirement and ethical obligation to report suspected child abuse, all employees will be asked annually to view a 17 minute media clip. All principals will be encouraged to facilitate the viewing of the media clip at staff meetings or PA days. It is also recommended that sufficient time be allotted to permit discussion of concerns and questions related to the reporting of suspected child abuse and that a School Social Worker be present at the staff meeting to answer questions and support staff with this difficult issue. For those who are unable to attend the designated staff meeting, the media clip can be viewed all at once or in each of its four segments on separate occasions. A system to track and remind staff of the requirement to view the media clip has been developed.
5. In addition, School Social Workers will schedule two additional specifically designated times in each school reserved to speak with staff about suspected child abuse reporting procedures. This will allow staff to ask questions in a more -private setting.
6. Also, a poster reminding staff of the duty to report suspected child abuse and the contact information for Catholic Children’s Aid Society will be developed and placed in staff offices.

E. VISION

VISION	PRINCIPLES	GOALS
All TCDSB Staff will be familiar with their ethical and legal obligation to report suspected child abuse in a timely manner.	With many waking hours spent in the Catholic School System, TCDSB staff members are in a position to be aware of indicators of possible physical, emotional and	All TCDSB employees will be reminded of their ethical and legal obligation to report suspect child abuse in a timely manner.

VISION	PRINCIPLES	GOALS
	<p>sexual abuse, and neglect.</p> <p>Early identification of child abuse and neglect can help to ensure that children remain safe. As Catholic Educators we have the added responsibility of nurturing the spirit within our students while in a safe and welcoming learning environment.</p> <p>Identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect requires every individual to take appropriate action within our Catholic community. In recognition that this may be difficult, support and assistance are available through the TCDSB Social Work Department.</p>	<p>A media clip has been developed and can be made available to all TCDSB employees.</p> <p>A system for monitoring the viewing of the media clip has been developed including an electronic sign off.</p> <p>TCDSB School Social Workers will be available to answer questions to parents and/or staff regarding the TCDSB Suspected Child Abuse Reporting policy on an ongoing basis. TCDSB School Social Workers will also schedule specific times in every school providing opportunities for school staff to ask questions related to the policy and/or procedures.</p>

F. ACTION PLAN
Resource & Compliance Requirements

Resources	#1
Curriculum/ Professional Learning	Professional learning will include the annual viewing of the TCDSB Suspected Child Abuse media clip. TCDSB School Social Workers will be available at staff meetings as well as subsequent opportunities for staff to review and ask questions

	related to the policy and procedures.
Human Resources	<p>Developing a monitoring and reminder system has required the support of the I.T. department and 21st Century Learning.</p> <p>Developing a media clip required support from the Social Work Department.</p> <p>Providing Social Work support to staff to understand and report suspected child abuse as appropriate and required.</p>
Costs/Funding Source	<p>In kind studio time and production support for the media clip has been provided by <i>Partners for Planning</i>.</p> <p>Cost of the development and printing of posters will be ascertained.</p>
Legal/Policy Compliance	The TCDSB Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Policy and Guidelines are in compliance with the Child and Family Services Act and privacy legislation.

G. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. All employees will be informed on an annual basis of the TCDSB Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Policy.
2. Employees will be asked to “sign off” that they have viewed the media clip on an annual basis.
3. TCDSB School Social Workers will be available to attend a scheduled staff meeting in each school on an annual basis to view the media clip and to answer questions related to reporting suspected child abuse. These scheduled availabilities will be tracked through the Social Work Department.
4. TCDSB School Social Workers will also schedule two additional time periods dedicated to meeting with any staff who has questions about reporting suspected child abuse. These scheduled availabilities will be tracked through the Social Work Department.

H. IMPLEMENTATION, STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

1. All TCDSB employees will be reminded on an annual basis of their ethical and legal obligation to report suspected child abuse in a timely manner. A media clip has been developed and can be made available to all TCDSB employees. A system for monitoring the viewing of the media clip has been developed including an electronic sign off. TCDSB School Social Workers are continually available to answer questions to parents and/or staff regarding the TCDSB Suspected Child Abuse Reporting policy. TCDSB School Social Workers will schedule specific times in every school providing opportunities for school staff to ask questions related to the policy and/or guidelines.
2. School principals will receive a brief in-service on the policy at principal meetings. The availability of the media clip will be communicated to all staff through e-mail and the TCDSB website.
3. A message regarding the reporting of suspected child abuse will be made available for insertion into school newsletters. TCDSB School Social Workers are available on an ongoing basis to answer parent or student questions regarding the TCDSB Suspected Child Abuse Policy and Guidelines. School Social Workers are also available to attend Catholic School Parent Council meetings.

I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the board approve a motion that Regulation 2 of the TCDSB Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Policy be amended to “*All employees are required to review the TCDSB media clip regarding Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect on an annual school year basis*”.