

October 1, 2021

Memorandum to: Chairs of District School Boards
Directors of Education
School Authorities

From: Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education

Subject: Safety Protocols and COVID-19 Related Protests and Incidents

Thank you for your continued focus on ensuring schools are safe places for learning for Ontario students.

In recent weeks, incidents of COVID-19 related protests and harassment targeting students and staff have increased. Events that intimidate, harass, and/or threaten the safety of students, staff and our school communities are completely unacceptable. As a result of these troubling incidents we have sought updated advice from the Ministry of the Solicitor General and law enforcement. Principals and school staff must ensure the safety of school spaces and property, including the conduct of all persons on school property, is a priority.

Ontario students and staff should never be made to feel unsafe. As a result of updated advice from law enforcement and the Ministry of the Solicitor General, please find below safety protocols and steps that school staff can take to handle this type of inappropriate activity on or near school property.

The [Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol \(“Protocol”\)](#) serves as a template for school boards to respond to incidents related to school safety. It outlines the common principles upon which all local police/school board protocols should be based, and the 22 key elements they must include. At the root of effective school-police partnerships is a common understanding of each partner’s role and responsibilities as well as agreed upon procedures and decision-making authority. The Protocol outlines the types of incidents, such as bomb threats, that require mandatory reporting to police and those for which reporting is discretionary, such as trespassing.

The Protocol mandates the development of an Emergency and Crisis Response Plan that must include a lockdown plan and procedures to be followed after an emergency. Teachers, staff, parents, and students should be involved in the development and

monitoring of the Emergency and Crisis Response Plan, and the plan should be fully communicated to members of the school community, police services, and the fire department.

These measures are critical to the safety and protection of the school community. The Police Protocol can be found on the Ministry of Education's website at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/brochure/protocol/locprote.pdf>.

Additionally, school boards are required to report the total number of violent incidents (as per [*Policy and Program Memorandum 120: Reporting Violent Incidents \(PPM 120\)*](#)) on an annual basis to the Ministry of Education through the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS).

All violent incidents that occur on school premises during school-run programs must be reported to the Ministry of Education, whether the violent incident was committed by a student of the school or whether it was committed by any other person, including those involved in COVID-19 related protests and demonstrations.

If there is any concern related to the safety of students, please engage with local law enforcement immediately. We ask that you please remain vigilant and proactive to ensure the safety and security of all students and staff.

Ontario's [provincial code of conduct](#) sets clear standards of behaviour for individual school boards to follow, so that they can develop their own codes of conduct.

The code of conduct applies not only to students, but to everyone involved in the publicly funded school system, including parents, volunteers, teachers, early childhood educators and other staff members. The code applies whether on school property, on school buses, at school-related events or activities, before and/or after school programs or in other circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate.

Should you have any questions about these policies and procedures, please contact Dianne Persaud, Manager, Safe Schools Unit at Dianne.Persaud@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Stephen Lecce
Minister

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