



Education (E-1)  
PO Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

August 27, 2024

Jason Pedlar, Ombudsman  
Yukon Ombudsman Office

Dear Jason Pedlar,

**Re: Update on Hidden Valley Investigation Report Recommendations OMB-INV-2021-10-077**

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As always, our top priority is to support healthy, safe, and caring learning environments in all Yukon schools, as such I am pleased to share an update on our work to protect students. The *Safer Schools Action Plan* was fully implemented on June 20, 2023. As with all action plans, this one was time limited, commencing February 18, 2022, with the expectation that all actions would be completed within 18 months. Moving forward, ongoing efforts will focus on the continued improvement, implementation, and operationalization of strategies to protect students. This letter serves as an update on the current work.

The *Safer Schools Action Plan* kickstarted significant systemic changes, making the protection of students a fundamental part of the everyday responsibilities of all adults working with students in Yukon schools. Building on the foundation established by the Action Plan, our ongoing work continues to be operationalizing these changes and continuously improving measures to ensure student safety.

We are grateful for your office's advice and other feedback we've received since the Action Plan commenced, including from the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate's Office, the First Nation Education Commission, the Advisory Committee for Yukon Education, the Yukon Association for Education Professionals, as well as the staff and partners who have been implementing the new policy, procedures and guidance.

While your recommendations primarily addressed actions after an incident or allegation of abuse or harm, the *Safer Schools Action Plan* adopted a broader focus. Protecting students can be categorized in four themes: **(1) Preventing; (2) Responding and reporting; (3) Supporting; and (4) Policies and procedures**, discussed in detail below. This comprehensive approach fosters a culture of safety with multiple layers of protection. While we hope that preventative measures will reduce instances of abuse or harm, we are now far better prepared to respond with effective communication and supports if an incident does occur. The Government of Yukon has made significant positive changes through the action plan. Our efforts to enhance safety and security in Yukon schools will be continuous.

## How Yukon protects students from harm by adults:

### 1. Preventing

- *Student health curriculum*  
Starting in Kindergarten, developmentally appropriate curriculum is delivered to address abuse and harm prevention. Students learn to identify safe touch, how to identify when they encounter inappropriate behaviour, and how to identify and reach out to safe adults. The Department of Education has worked with the Department of Health and Social Services to increase supports and resources for educators to deliver this curriculum.
- *Educator orientation/onboarding and training*  
Annual orientation and training provided to all new and existing school-based and school branch staff includes topics such as:
  - recognizing abuse (e.g., sexualized, physical, and emotional harm);
  - recognizing other forms of inappropriate behaviour (e.g., potential grooming behaviours and those that may require further assessment and follow-up); and
  - processes and protocols in the response to abuse and other inappropriate behaviours, protective intervention, and the mandatory duty to report (understanding the Student Protection Policy and related procedures).
- New staff are now required to read and acknowledge the Government of Yukon Values and Ethics code as part of their onboarding when they take their Oath of Office. When this was implemented, existing employees were required to read the code or complete an online course and verify on their HR file that they have read and agree.
- *Screening and hiring*  
A condition of employment includes security requirements that include vulnerable sector verification in the Student Protection Policy and Security Clearance Guidelines.

### 2. Responding and reporting

- All employees who interact with students through school activities must now complete annual training on the *Student Protection Policy* and related procedures, along with the *Commit to Kids* online training provided by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.
- Adults who interact with students through school activities, such as volunteers or contractors, now receive annual training aimed at preventing and responding to harm by adults.
- We have established comprehensive guidance for communicating critical incidents with the school community and the public. Additionally, we have implemented a system for internal communications guidance (what information to share with superiors and when) to support effective decision making in complex circumstances.

### 3. Supporting

- Educators can refer to guidance for how to receive a disclosure in a victim-centered way in the *School Procedures Handbook*.
- There are new web pages on Yukon.ca and handouts to refer victims to supports.
- Annual training includes promotion of supports available for staff who receive disclosures and reports of incidents and allegations.

- The Sexualized Assault Response Team, Victim Services Unit, Family and Children's Services and other government services collaborate with Education as appropriate in response to incidents or allegations.
- In May of 2022, school counsellors attended an information session on Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) services and how to respond, resulting in regular collaboration to support students.
- When the Department of Education school (school authority or a school board) school makes a request for support to a SART agency, the responding agency provides their service and offers to make referrals to other SART agencies.
- With the consent of a young person and/or family, a school may become involved in a collaborative planning process to support safety, health, and wellbeing within the school environment. With the victim or caregiver's consent. Victim Services provides support by working with the school and the Department of Education to create a safety plan for the child during school hours.
- As well, our work on Reimagining Inclusive and Special Education (RISE), and the implementation of Ready-to-Learn, works to support a holistic system with wrap around supports for students and families.
- The recent addition of Wellness Specialists across our schools will enhance the work and supports currently in our schools.
- The continued work on education's Mental Health and Wellness approach that aligns with the Yukon's Mental Health Strategy will include prevention, and promotion of positive mental health as well as provide supports and responses in our school system.

#### **4. Policy and procedures**

- New policies, procedures and guidance has been developed, including:
  - Student Protection Policy and related procedures.
  - Government of Yukon General Administration Manual Communications Guidance.
  - Interdepartmental Critical Incidents Group to advise Education staff when responding to criminal allegations and other critical incidents.
  - The Government of Yukon has instituted a Values and Ethics Code that all staff must acknowledge to assert expectations of appropriate behaviour.
  - The Department of Health and Social Services has an agreement with the RCMP for collaborating in child abuse investigations.
- The Student Protection Policy and related procedures set expectations for all staff regarding prevention, identification, and reporting incidents/allegations to authorities.
- Additionally, the related policy and related procedures include:
  - Expectations for when and how to communicate with families and the media.
  - Internal communications expectations are articulated to ensure that key decision makers including supervisors, senior leadership, and Human Resources staff have timely information to fulfill their respective roles.
  - Organizational components, roles and responsibilities have been described to ensure all elements of the policy are operationalized, continue to be top of mind, and are improved over time.

- The Department of Education conducts periodic reviews of policies and procedures with staff and advisory bodies.
- The Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services have an agreement regarding interdepartmental operations and communication when a child's safety is, or is likely to be, at risk.

Below is an update on how your recommendations are being addressed:

**OMB#1: Revise the 'Yukon School Post-Incident Communication Guidance and Procedures' (Post-Incident Comms Guide) to make clear its relationship to the 'Student Protection Policy: Preventing and Responding to Harm by Adults' (Student Protection Policy), the '9.11 Procedures for Preventing and Responding to Harm by Adults' (9.11 Procedures) and the 'Critical Incidents Response Guidelines' (CIR Guidelines), especially:**

- a) their respective authorities, applications, purposes, principles, roles and responsibilities, and accountabilities.**
- b) how they interact and what their precedence is in respect of the Post-Incident Comms Guide following the occurrence of an incident, and**
- c) what training regimen is attached to this.**

Draft revisions to address **(a)** and **(b)** are in internal reviews, with brief explanations. To clarify **(a)** and **(b)**, a one-page *Guide to Student Protection Policy and Procedures* has been developed to provide context for all the related documents and will address the Ombudsman's questions. This guide is also in internal reviews.

Recommendations **#1(c)** and **#3(d)** and **#8** all call for a training regimen on the Student Protection Policy and/or related procedures. All three recommendations are combined in the response to **#8**.

**OMB#2: Revise the Post-Incident Comms Guide by recasting part of it as a set of checklists outlining the steps that an individual in a school or within the Department must take to report an incident/allegation and communicate effectively with families after it occurs. These checklists should include:**

- a) a 'master' checklist for quickly determining the type of incident/allegation at hand;**
- b) a set of 'incident/allegation' checklists, each addressing a particular type of incident/allegation;**
- c) a list of 'what information to include' on the reverse of each checklist; and**
- d) concise information on where/how to hand-off to an interdepartmental responsibility (e.g., CIR Guidelines).**

A draft checklist tool as described has been developed and is in internal reviews. Depending on feedback, the updated documents may be taken to school administrators and Education leadership for a focus group/user testing to ensure the changes will strengthen usability.

Item **(a)**, a primary checklist for quickly determining the type of incident/allegation at hand will be included in the checklist tool. A primary checklist for quickly determining the incident/allegation at hand already appears on page 1 of the current Yukon School Post-Incident Communications Procedures. Administrators have an electronic version of this document, which contains clickable hyperlinks that will jump the reader directly to the type of incident they select. Internal hyperlinks are included in the new draft checklist tool as well. Note that our terminology here is different. The Government of Yukon is committed to inclusive language, so we are choosing to use “primary” instead of the gendered term “master” to describe the checklist.

Item **(b)**, in the draft checklist tool, the set of “incident/allegation checklists,” is divided into sections that address each type of incident/allegation, mirroring the procedures document for easy recognition and reference. The bulleted list that exists in the current Post-Incident Communications Guidance has been reformatted in the checklist tool to appear as open squares and circles so that a user can make tick marks.

Item **(c)**, a list of “What information to include” appears in the current Yukon School Post-Incident Communications Guidance for each type of incident in bulleted lists, with the bullets shaped like checkmarks. Those lists are included the draft checklist tool. In the checklist tool, with those checkmarks formatted to include open squares so that a user can make tick marks.

Regarding item **(d)**, under the policy and procedures, the Department of Education utilizes the Critical Incidents Group in its role as advisory body while maintaining, decision-making responsibility for aspects within its mandate.

The Critical Incidents Group supports the requirement in the current Yukon School Post-Incident Communications Guidance that the Assistant Deputy Minister, Schools and Student Services, will coordinate with the RCMP, Family and Children’s Services, the Public Service Commission, Justice and the Executive Council Office to consider the approach for communicating with students, families, school board/council and school staff based on:

- Any ongoing investigation
- An assessment of the rights, privacy legislation and dignity of staff and students

The draft update provides clarification about when to seek advice. Further, clarification about how to engage the Critical Incidents Group is expected when the Responding to Critical Incidents guidance is updated.

**OMB#3: Revise the Post-Incident Comms Guide to include:**

- a) timelines of decisions and actions;**
- b) a communications message example to parents that responds to an incident/allegation of sexualized abuse or other violent incidents involving a student at a school;**
- c) continuous improvement mechanisms and timelines (e.g., review on a regular basis, debrief after situations that have used it, etc.); and**

**d) a training regimen to learn about and apply it in crisis situations, including ‘practice scenarios’ to test its application and effectiveness.**

Draft revisions of the Yukon Schools Post-Incident Communications Guidance are in internal reviews as noted in **OMB#1**.

For item **(a)**, timelines for decisions and actions are already included in the current Post-Incident Communications Procedures for minor, concerning, major and critical incidents. The new draft has added a heading for timelines so that they are more distinguishable. The new draft also includes language to address timelines for incidents or allegations of abuse/harm. These elements also appear on the checklist tool referred to in **OMB#2**.

For item **(b)**, the current Yukon Schools Post-Incident Communications guidance already includes a “What information to include” list for all incidents, including incidents or allegations of abuse/harm. The draft update retains the list of what to include, as well as converting the items in that list into an example communications message for incidents or allegations of abuse/harm.

Item **(c)**, continuous improvement mechanisms are included in the Student Protection Policy and are clarified in the draft update. Under the current Student Protection Policy the Deputy Minister is responsible to assess the department’s responses to incidents. Oversight responsibilities, including recommending amendments, are assigned to Assistant Deputy Ministers based on their respective roles. The draft update provides clarity by specifying expectations where language had been broad and adding timelines.

The current policy’s continuous improvement mechanism in the Monitoring and Accountability section articulates the Department of Education’s commitment to ongoing discussions with partners to further revise the policy and its related procedures. To that end, engagement with schools and education partners regarding the Student Protection Policy and related procedures and the implementation of the policy, procedures and training has occurred thus far with:

- First Nations Education Commission – February 9, 2023 – ½ day engagements on review of the policy and procedure and a request for feedback.
- School administrators – April 5 – April 28, 2023. The survey was advertised in administrator updates from April 5 - April 26, 2023.
- Advisory Committee for Yukon Education– June 8, 2023. Overview of the policy and procedure with a request for feedback.
- Family and Children’s Services – July 27, 2023. Meeting to discuss the policy. Clarity was provided that the reporting is only for adults who work in the school setting.
- Adding to this list is the recommendations from the Ombudsman’s office.

Feedback from these sessions has led to improvement in training and how the policy and procedures are put into practice, and it informs the draft updates. A key theme received in feedback was that stakeholders would like Education to turn its focus to addressing student-to-student harm.

Item **(d)**, Yukon's training regimen, is described in the update on **OMB#8**. The Student Protection Policy requires that annual training will be provided to all new and existing school-based and school branch staff. Training sessions typically include practice scenarios.

**OMB#4: Revise the Student Protection Policy, with appropriate revisions to the 9.11 Procedures and Post-Incident Comms Guide, to:**

- a) designate someone, such as the ADM of Schools & Student Services, to be accountable for keeping the communications purpose on track (in respect of informing/not informing parents of an affected school) and actively report to the Department DM on its status, whether the consultation is at the Department or 'Critical Incident Group' (CIG) level; and**
- b) require the Department DM to sign off on a final communications decision (to inform/not inform parents of an affected school) about an incident/allegation of abuse/harm to a student by an adult.**

Draft revisions as recommended are in internal reviews.

Item **(a)**, the current Student Protection Policy designates the ADM of Schools and Student Services as accountable for:

- Ensuring communication procedures are followed, (articulated in the Post-Incident Communications Guidance), including coordinating with the RCMP, Family and Children's Services, the Public Service Commission, Justice, and the Executive Council Office to consider the approach for communicating with students, families, school board/council and school staff based on
  - Any ongoing investigation
  - An assessment of the rights, privacy legislation and dignity of staff and students
- Ensuring a timely response to disclosures that is victim-centred (including developing a victim support plan, when appropriate)
- Confirming actions of collaborating departments or agencies after a report of suspected abuse has been reported by the Department of education.
- Developing a collaborative and multidisciplinary team to support the physical and emotional health of students and staff as warranted
- Reviewing and evaluating the branch's response
- Briefing the Deputy Minister

Item **(b)**, while the Deputy Minister is not currently required to "sign off" on a communications decision, under the Student Protection Policy, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Schools and Student Services must brief the Deputy Minister, and currently the Deputy Minister is the oversight for the department's coordination and communication response, and is responsible to communicate and coordinate the response with deputy ministers across government.

**OMB#5: Work with the Executive Council Office Deputy Minister to revise the CIR Guidelines to provide for final approval by the 'lead' department deputy minister of the communications decision about a critical incident if the CIG is convened.**

The Executive Council Office is currently leading an inter-departmental review of the Critical Incident Guideline from a public communications perspective to ensure that it continues to evolve and strengthen in response to lessons learned in the response to incidents and to reflect recommendations by the Ombudsman.

**OMB#6: Revise any Action to include a list of relevant documents associated with that Action, and briefly explain how they tie together for purposes of operational priority and cross-referencing.**

As noted, the Action Plan has concluded and protecting student safety is part of the ongoing daily work of the Department of Education. For the benefit of the Ombudsman's office, descriptions of how the documents tie together are provided in this update.

### **Operational priority**

As in all policy instruments, the suite of policies, procedures and guidelines relating to protecting students all hold the same priority — there is not one policy instrument that must be dealt with before the others. Rather than by priority, how legislative/policy instruments relate to each other is by breadth of authority and specificity; e.g., all of Government of Yukon in the General Administration Manual in contrast with a Department of Education policy. The relationship of policy instruments among each other can also be understood in terms of paramountcy, the higher the authority, the higher the paramountcy, so the Government of Yukon General Administration Manual is paramount over the Department of Education Policy. If a Department of Education policy is found to not conform with a GAM policy, for example, Education would be responsible to bring it into compliance.

The broader instruments tend to provide less specific direction. The narrower instruments tend to provide more specific and detailed direction, maintaining the requirements set out in the broader instruments. In all cases, the more specific direction in a policy instrument must meet or exceed the direction contained in the broader, more paramount policy instrument.

### **Action Plan documents**

The suite of legislative and policy instruments related to the Safer Schools Action Plan is as follows:

**Acts and regulations ---> GAM and Interdepartmental instruments --->**

**Departmental (policies, procedures) --> School boards or councils, where applicable ---> Schools**

Departmental policies must meet or exceed GAM and Legislation. Departmental procedures must meet or exceed their associated policies, GAM and interdepartmental instruments, and acts and regulations. School board and council policies, procedures, and guidance, if any, must meet or exceed expectations in Department of Education policies and procedures.

School procedures, if any, must meet or exceed expectations in policies, procedures and guidance by school boards or councils, if any.

### Government of Yukon/interdepartmental

GAM 1.3, s.1.4.3 - The Right to Information: All staff preparing government communications are also responsible for internal communications using available committees and tools and multi-department collaboration as appropriate to best serve the public interest. A responsible public service ensures it is working together to take all reasonable steps to ensure cross-departmental coordination of communication activities, including during emergencies where no other guidance exists.

GAM 1.3, s.1.4.8 - Emergency communications and critical incidents: Refers to interdepartmental and external agency collaboration. Preparing communications to support an emergency response to critical incidents requires staff to balance the duty to inform with the need to respect constraints that may exist when matters are under investigation or before the courts. Decisions on how to manage critical incident communications should be made in accordance with department direction, available corporate guidance, legal advice, and advice from relevant government committees.

Government of Yukon Values and Ethics Code and HR verification tool (by Public Service Commission).

Responding to Critical Incidents – Describes how interdepartmental collaboration will take place for critical incidents and allegations of abuse. (Led by ECO).

### Department of Education

Student Protection Policy

Yukon School Post-Incident Communications Procedures

School Procedures 9.11

Cross-referencing proceeds from broad to specific. GAM 1.3, s. 1.4.3 says all staff preparing communications are responsible for consulting and using existing policies and guidance on communication activities and seeking advice to navigate complex and competing legal requirements.

Responding to Critical Incidents refers to GAM 1.3, s. 1.4.3 and 1.4.8, as well as noting that this document stands alongside other guidance within departments.

### **Student Protection Policy**

Student Protection Policy's Roles and Responsibilities section articulates that "the school community are responsible to follow the requirements set out in this policy and in the related procedures, listed as:

- School Procedures 9.11: Procedures for Preventing and Responding to Harm by Adults
- Yukon School Post-Incident Communication Procedures
- Security Clearance Guidelines

Each of those procedures provide procedural direction for how to implement different aspects of the Student Protection Policy – they are of equal operational priority.

The policy also cross-references other legislation and policies that must be followed:

- Child and Family Services Act, Education Act, Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act, Public Service Act, Criminal Code of Canada
- Safe and Caring Schools Policy
- Volunteers in Schools Policy
- Agencies in Schools Policy
- Off-Site Experiential Learning Policy
- Privacy management Policy
- United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Government of Yukon General Administration Manual

<b>OMB#6 – Actions and associated documents</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Documents</b>
<p><b>SSAP#1: Finalize and implement the Yukon School Post-Incident Communication Guidance and Procedures, including timelines for reporting, information to provide to parents and supports available for students and families.</b></p> <p><b>R1</b></p>	<p>Student Protection Policy and its cross-referenced legislation, regulations, and policies.</p> <p>Yukon School Post-Incident Communications Procedures supports the Student Protection policies.</p> <p>Resources for families (handouts and web pages) as called for in the “Resources to support families” section of the Post-Incident Communications Procedures.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#2: Develop corporate guidance for inter-departmental communication and coordination in response to serious incidents in schools that expands on existing protocols and includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Involvement of senior interdepartmental committees when serious incidents occur</b></li> <li>• <b>Clarifying role of the Communications Management Committee and departmental Communications teams</b></li> <li>• <b>Clarifying Ministerial briefing protocols</b></li> <li>• <b>Timelines for action</b></li> </ul> <p><b>R1</b></p>	<p>ECO lead</p> <p>Corporate guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Administration Manual Volume I: Corporate Policies – General (clarifies communications roles) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1.3, Communications Policy (Updated Aug 30, 2022) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ s. 1.4.3 A responsible public service</li> <li>▪ s. 1.4.8 Emergency communications and critical incidents</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Responding to Critical Incidents (Lead ECO) guides involvement of senior interdepartmental officials in the Critical Incidents Group and briefing protocols.</li> </ul>

<b>OMB#6 – Actions and associated documents</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Documents</b>
	<p>Departmental policies, procedures and guidelines fall under this corporate and interdepartmental guidance.</p> <p>GAM, CIR, and Department of Education documents all speak to ensuring timely communication.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#3: Develop corporate guidance for communicating publicly or with stakeholders about serious incidents when a criminal matter is under investigation or before the courts.</b></p> <p><b>R1</b></p>	<p>JUS, PSC lead</p> <p>Corporate guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Administration Manual Volume I: Corporate Policies – General (clarifies communications roles and responsibilities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1.3, Communications Policy (Updated Aug 30, 2022) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ s. 1.4.3 A responsible public service</li> <li>▪ s. 1.4.8 Emergency communications and critical incidents</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Responding to Critical Incidents (Lead ECO) guides involvement of senior interdepartmental officials in the Critical Incidents Group, briefing protocols, and external communications.</li> </ul> <p>GAM, CIR, and Department of Education documents all speak to ensuring timely communication.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#4: Develop victim support plan and identify materials, which could include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify victim support team and their roles and responsibilities at various levels</li> <li>• Incorporate into teacher/school personnel training or develop specific training on victim support on (a) how to respond to victims/families when an allegation is made; (b) working and providing supports to support student victims and families post-incident (e.g., in the classroom).</li> </ul>	<p>JUS lead</p> <p>Student Protection Policy directs ADM Schools and student services to ensure a timely response to disclosures that is victim-centered (including developing a victim support plan, when appropriate).</p> <p>School Procedures Handbook 9.11 Procedures for Preventing and Responding to Harm by Adults, especially Section B: Responding, reporting, and documenting.</p> <p>Handouts and web pages</p>

OMB#6 – Actions and associated documents	
Action	Documents
R1 R5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Supporting students at school   Government of Yukon</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Supports for students (contact list)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Support for a child or youth victim of harm or crime</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>SSAP #5: Establish a Hidden Valley School Parent Advisory following input received from families on the function/purpose of the committee and its involvement in next steps and the actions that will be undertaken.</b></p> <p>R2</p>	N/A. This committee's mandate has concluded.
<p><b>SSAP#6: Update and consolidate policies and procedures under a stand-alone Policy on Prevention and Reporting of Serious School Incidents, which would include:</b></p> <p><b>Prevention / protection of students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Onboarding and annual training requirements for school staff and administrators on prevention and reporting of abuse, including sexualized abuse</li> <li>• Enhanced criminal record checks</li> <li>• Safe schools procedures</li> <li>• Protocols for appropriate and inappropriate physical contact with students</li> <li>• Specialized requirements for special education settings, including training requirements for EAs</li> </ul> <p><b>Responding/reporting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination with RCMP when there is an allegation of criminal conduct</li> <li>• Incident record-keeping for school administrators</li> <li>• Responses to other serious incidents such as peer-to-peer or teacher/student violence</li> <li>• Internal and external communications</li> <li>• Coordination with other departments and agencies</li> </ul>	<p>Student Protection Policy: Preventing and Responding to Harm by Adults.</p> <p>Associated procedures listed in the policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Procedures 9.11 addresses prevention, protocols for appropriate and inappropriate physical contact, coordination with RCMP, incident record-keeping.</li> <li>• Yukon School Post-Incident Communication Procedures addresses internal and external communications and coordination with other departments and agencies.</li> <li>• Responding to Critical Incidents addresses coordination with RCMP, record-keeping, internal and external communications and coordination with other departments and agencies.</li> <li>• Security Clearance Guidelines</li> </ul> <p>Student Protection Policy references:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child and Family Services Act</li> <li>• Education Act</li> <li>• Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act</li> <li>• Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act</li> <li>• Public Service Act</li> <li>• Criminal Code of Canada</li> </ul>

**OMB#6 – Actions and associated documents**

Action	Documents
<p>R1-R6</p>	<p>Policy references:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe and Caring Schools Policy</li> <li>• Volunteers in the Schools Policy</li> <li>• Agencies in Schools Policy</li> <li>• Off-Site Experiential Learning Policy</li> <li>• Privacy Management Policy</li> <li>• United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</li> <li>• Government of Yukon General Administration Manual</li> </ul> <p>The agreements listed in SSAP#7 and #8 address coordination with other departments and agencies.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#7: Create a new Inter-Agency Agreement for the Investigation of Child Abuse between the RCMP, HSS and Education.</b></p> <p><b>Provide training on roles and responsibilities under the agreement to those responsible within each department.</b></p> <p>R6</p>	<p>April 12, 2023, agreement between Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services regarding interdepartmental operations and communication when a child’s safety is, or likely to be, at risk.</p> <p>June 13, 2023, Protocol on the Concurrent Investigation of Child Abuse between the RCMP and Health and Social Services.</p> <p>April 10, 2024, Health and Social Services and the RCMP MOU update, now titled the Memorandum of Understanding on the Concurrent Investigations of Child Abuse and Other Related Matters.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#8: Develop corporate policies and procedures for information sharing with the RCMP on matters involving the investigation of alleged criminal conduct by an employee that include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considerations around informed consent</li> <li>• Collaborative case management</li> </ul> <p>R6</p>	<p>Lead: JUS, PSC, EDU</p> <p>April 12, 2023, agreement between Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services regarding interdepartmental operations and communication when a child’s safety is, or likely to be, at risk.</p> <p>June 13, 2023, Protocol on the Concurrent Investigation of Child Abuse between the RCMP and Health and Social Services.</p>

**OMB#6 – Actions and associated documents**

Action	Documents
	<p>April 10, 2024, Health and Social Services and the RCMP MOU update, now titled the Memorandum of Understanding on the Concurrent Investigations of Child Abuse and Other Related Matters.</p> <p>Responding to Critical Incidents.</p> <p>The Public Service Commission issued guidance to assist departments in steps to be taken when an employee is suspected of engaging in criminal conduct, is under police investigation for alleged criminal conduct, has been criminally charged or has been criminally convicted.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#9: Review and update policies internal to the Department of Education to ensure they are aligned with corporate policies and processes.</b></p> <p>R1</p>	<p>No documents were created in addressing this action. Related legislation, policy, and procedures are reviewed when new policies are developed and when existing policies are updated.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#10: Enhance and require training for all school-based staff in the prevention, detection, and obligation to support child abuse/suspicious behaviour, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional conduct/protective environments</li> <li>• Grooming behaviours/suspicious behaviours</li> <li>• Reporting “grey area” behaviours</li> <li>• Assessing risk (e.g., boundary violations and environments that present risk)</li> <li>• Responding to children’s families when abuse is disclosed or witnessed</li> <li>• Providing ongoing support to victims of abuse in the classroom</li> </ul> <p>R3 R5</p>	<p>Student Protection Policy requires annual training for all school-based and school branch staff as listed in SSAP#10:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes 9.11 Procedures for Preventing and Responding to Harm by Adults</li> <li>• Includes Yukon School Post-Incident Communications Guidance</li> </ul> <p>Handouts and web pages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Supporting students at school   Government of Yukon</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Supports for students (contact list)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Support for a child or youth victim of harm or crime</a></li> </ul>

OMB#6 – Actions and associated documents	
Action	Documents
<p><b>SSAP#11: Incorporate training on how government works into required leadership training for school administrators, managers and senior leaders within the Department of education, with tailoring to include understanding of the roles of school boards and school councils and what services are provided by the broader public service (JUS, HSS, PSC).</b></p> <p>R3</p>	<p>Lead: ECO, EDU</p> <p>Public school staff now access YGLearn, the Yukon government's learning management system, to access self-paced and in-person courses that relate to leadership, public service values and responsibilities and other work-related topics.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#12: Update onboarding practices for all school-based and central administration staff with a program that fits Education's unique operational requirements.</b></p> <p>R3</p>	<p>The Department of Education has implemented an electronic onboarding process.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#13: Implement summer training for principals, vice-principals and new staff on reporting serious incidents, prevention, supporting victims and related subject matter. Develop a plan to train all staff over time.</b></p> <p>R3 R5</p>	<p>Annual training for all school-based and school branch staff is set out in Student Protection Policy.</p> <p>The plan to train staff over time has been completed as described in the update to OMB#8.</p>
<p><b>SSAP #14: Explore ways to incorporate training requirements on prevention, detection and reporting of child abuse and on supporting victims and families into certification of teachers.</b></p> <p>R3 R5</p>	<p>No associated policy documents. It was determined that mandatory in-house training was a better approach, and in-house training for all school-based and school branch staff has been implemented. Details of training is described in response to OMB#8.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#15: Explore ways to make best use of school, student and human resource databases to collect, archive and maintain up-to-date information on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Past and current students and families</b></li> </ul>	<p>Educator assignments are tracked on the current student information system.</p> <p>Up-to-date information on current students and families, classroom teacher and specialty teacher</p>

<b>OMB#6 – Actions and associated documents</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Documents</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Teacher, EA and TOC assignments</b></li> <li>• <b>Attendance of students in a classroom or setting, presence of a teacher, EA or TOC</b></li> <li>• <b>Family/guardian information for each student</b></li> </ul> <p>R4</p>	<p>assignments and family information for each student is kept on the information system.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#16: Review existing incident reporting and tracking systems across YG and determine if one common system or similar systems could be implemented for all departments, beginning with Education.</b></p> <p>R4</p>	<p>No associated document. The Department of Education determined it would be most efficient to develop a tool to meet the department's specific reporting requirements for incidents in schools. The current process created for incident reporting in schools is manual.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#17: Develop a process for ongoing review and monitoring of policies and procedures and best practices for higher risk settings, such as individual learning, field trips, etc.</b></p> <p>R2 R3 R5</p>	<p>Student Protection Policy Monitoring and Accountability section and Department of Education policy review schedules.</p> <p>Checklist for reviewing school safety for high-risk educational settings and situations.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#18: Enhance and formalize interdepartmental committees for serious incidents.</b></p> <p>R1</p>	<p>ECO lead</p> <p>Applicable committee guided by GAM 1.3 Communications Policy Responding to Critical Incidents guidance.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#19: Expand foundational on-boarding for all YG senior leadership regarding government operations and accountabilities to promote consistency across departments.</b></p> <p>R3</p>	<p>ECO, PSC lead</p> <p>Series of quarterly onboarding events for new and existing Assistant Deputy Ministers.</p>
<p><b>SSAP#20: Implement the corporate leadership development framework to support employees in all departments in developing leadership skills and competencies.</b></p>	<p>PSC lead</p> <p>The Leadership Development Framework was launched in February 2022 and describes the foundations for meaningful and effective leadership</p>

OMB#6 – Actions and associated documents	
Action	Documents
R3	development. It sets out expectations for people leaders and establishes principles and approaches to guide departments as they invest in leadership development of their employees. These courses are free to all departments through the Organizational Development Branch's YGLearn. Educators were given access to YGLearn in May of 2024.
<b>SSAP#21: Develop Values and Ethics code to ensure a clear understanding of public service ethics, responsibilities and culture and weave it into onboarding process.</b>  R3	PSC lead  Values and Ethics Code: Education participated in government-wide implementation, including requiring all current staff to confirm acknowledgement of the Values and Ethics Code, reflected in HR files.
<b>SSAP#22: Update the GAM to reflect the most up to date practices regarding interdepartmental coordination for communicating publicly and establish a schedule for future update/reviews.</b>  R1-R3	ECO lead  GAM 1.3, Communications Policy, was updated on August 30, 2022.
<b>SSAP#23: Enhance opportunities for public servants to take positions in different departments to promote employee development and reduce silos, including promoting temporary assignments.</b>  R3	PSC lead  The Temporary Assignment Interest List was implemented in November 2023 and provides an alternative method for identifying internal candidates for opportunities in different areas of government that support their professional development and improves their networks and organizational awareness.

**OMB#7: Identify a senior Department official whose authority is to ensure that the Action Plan is implemented, followed, and periodically reviewed for effectiveness.**

As noted, the Action Plan is fully implemented, and the actions have been operationalized as appropriate. The Student Protection Policy sets out specific roles and responsibilities, including who is responsible for reviews. The Deputy Minister is responsible for oversight of the Department of Education, which will include operationalization of items developed as part of the Action Plan.

The Student Protection Policy notes that the Department of Education commits to ongoing discussions with partners to further revise the Student Protection Policy and related procedures, including describing these responsibilities for the Deputy Minister:

- Assessing the department's response to allegations of abuse.
- Communicating and coordinating responses with deputy ministers across government.

The Student Protection Policy describes Assistant Deputy Minister responsibilities as follows:

- The Assistant Deputy Minister of Corporate Services and Programs is responsible for oversight of the Student Protection Policy, including recommended amendments.
- The Assistant Deputy minister of Schools and Student Services is responsible for the oversight of school procedures, including recommended amendments.

**Omb#8: Develop and implement a comprehensive training regimen for purposes of addressing serious incidents and communicating with families that includes:**

- a) the Post-Incident Comms Guide (including its partial recasting as a set of checklists);**
- b) associated legislation, policies, procedures, and guidance documents; and**
- c) 'table-top' exercises (e.g., practice scenarios, case studies) to test and validate policies, procedures, and capabilities by identifying resource requirements, capability gaps, strengths, areas for improvement and potential best practices.**

The Department of Education has implemented the comprehensive training regimen in all Yukon schools. The training regimen addresses **(a)**, **(b)**, and **(c)** as well as elements aimed at preventing abuse and inappropriate behaviours, described below. Implementation of the regimen to date:

- By the end of September 2022, all staff working with students at the time - school administration, teachers and educational assistants - were trained on the Student Protection Policy as well as Post-Incident Communications Guidance and the 9.11 Procedures for Preventing and Responding to Harm by Adults during a scheduled Professional Development Day to ensure that this new policy and related procedures were communicated to all Yukon Association for Education Professionals members.
- During the first week of October 2023, Superintendents and Executive Directors shared with their school administrators an orientation package to support school administrators to communicate the Student Protection Policy and related procedures/Duty to Report training to their school community. School administrators were asked to deliver the orientation package by November 15, 2023, to their staff. Staff also had to complete either the annual refresher Commit to Kids training (if they had completed the 9-module training in 2022) or the full 9 module Commit to Kids training if they were new staff or returning from leave.
- Teachers on Call were provided their student protection training in the spring of 2024.
- School-based training is provided to school administration, teachers, staff including office staff and janitors, and members of the school community. The training focuses on the conduct of adults who care for students while engaged in school activities.

## Elements of annual training

Understanding the Student Protection Policy, Yukon Schools Post-Incident Communications Guidance, School Procedures Handbook 9.11: Procedures for preventing and Responding to Harm by Adults, and the Mandatory Duty to Report as legislated in the Child and Family Services Act -

Training typically includes practice scenarios. Elements:

- **Prevention**
  - Maintaining professional boundaries
  - Orientation and training on child protection
- **Responding, reporting, and documenting**
  - Responding
  - Ranges of inappropriate behaviour
  - Responding to disclosures
  - Reporting
  - Documenting
- **Confidentiality and communication**
  - Information regarding the ATIPP act and who should be provided information regarding a disclosure
  - Guidance for communicating incidents
- **Best practices on professional boundaries and professional behaviour**
  - Understanding one's behaviour and the impact it may have on others
- **Recognizing signs of abuse or harm in students**
  - Possible indicators of physical abuse
    - Physical
    - Behavioural
  - Possible indicators of emotional abuse
    - Physical
    - Behavioural
  - Possible indicators of sexualized abuse
    - Physical
    - Behavioural
- **Examples of inappropriate behaviour**
  - Examples of inappropriate behaviour that may require further follow up (not an exhaustive list)
- **Concerning instances of inappropriate behaviour**
  - Examples of concerning behaviours that are considered serious that would require reporting to Family and Children's Services or the RCMP

**Commit to Kids training** - Developed by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection

This annual training is required for all staff. It consists of eight modules of online training plus a Yukon-specific introductory module that was made in collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. After this is completed, annual refresher training is required.

- Module One – Introduction
  - includes information regarding child sexual abuse and the scope of the problem in Canada
- Module Two – Child Sexual Abuse
- Module Three – Grooming
  - Offenders and the grooming process
- Module Four – Disclosure
  - Disclosure of sexual abuse
  - How to support a child during a disclosure
- Module Five – Impact of child sexual abuse
  - Symptoms and coping behaviour
- Module Six – Child protection code of conduct and reporting
  - Reporting child sexual abuse and misconduct
- Module Seven – Policies and procedures
  - How to create policies and procedures within your organization (recommended only for those that are developing policies and procedures)
- Module Eight – Closing
- Knowledge quiz based on scenarios, requires 80% passing grade in order to achieve a certificate of completion.

The Department of Education continues to support Executive Directors, Superintendents and school Administrators in their role and responsibility to communicate the Student Protection Policy and Procedures to the school community.

Newly hired staff have and will continue to participate in updated onboarding completed online before their first day. The onboarding process includes an overview of the policies and procedures that outline school-based staff roles and responsibilities to protect students from potential and actual harm by adults. A new Government of Yukon Code of Values and Ethics is now part of mandatory onboarding processes, requiring all new staff to review and acknowledge it.

The 2024-25 school year launched on the week of August 20, 2024, with its annual Welcome Week for educators working for schools in the Department of Education authority. Welcome Week includes the annual Student Protection Policy/Duty to Report training. The school boards are responsible for providing the same training, on their own timelines.

In closing, I would like to commend our staff for their commitment to student protection. Their participation in training sessions has contributed to an active culture of safety by increasing their awareness and understanding of what child abuse, harm or unlawful behaviour is, and the legal duty of all Yukoners to report suspected incidents.

Thank you again for your recommendations for keeping students safe in Yukon schools. While the updates to the recommendations are in reviews, we are working to ensure that the training we deliver provides clarification for the people using the policy and procedures. In that sense, your work has already contributed to safer schools.

Sincerely,



Mary Cameron  
Deputy Minister, Education

c.c.

- Justin Ferbey, Deputy Minister, Executive Council Office
- Lyle Dinn, a/Public Service Commissioner
- Jennifer Gehmair, Deputy Minister, Social Services
- Mark Radke, Deputy Minister, Justice
- Hon. Jeanie McLean, Deputy Premier, Minister of Education, Minister responsible for Women and Gender Equity
- Hon. Ranj Pillai, Premier, Minister of Executive Council Office, Minister of Economic Development, Minister responsible for the Yukon Housing Corporation