



Safe Schools: Conducting Student Investigations

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INTRODUCTION

The following document provides Administrators with clear guidelines for investigating Safe Schools Incidents involving students. These guidelines must be followed to comply with Safe Schools Legislation, Bias Aware Progressive Discipline, Student Discipline Policy and Procedures, Police/School Board Protocol 2016, and Human Rights Legislation.

“Those seeking to understand student behaviour in the learning environment will find it helpful to keep the following in mind:

- *behaviour occurs in a context;*
- *behaviour is learned;*
- *behaviour serves a function for the individual; and*
- *behaviour can be changed over time.”*

Supporting Bias Free Progressive Discipline in Schools, 2013

CONDUCTING STUDENT INVESTIGATIONS

Key Considerations

In conducting any investigation involving students, Administrators must:

- ensure that the dignity of all involved (victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses) is a priority;
- maintain confidentiality with and between staff, students and parents;
- conduct full, fair and unbiased investigations;
- proceed in a timely manner, and provide a prompt response;
- interview only the appropriate persons;
- consider Mitigating, Other and Human Rights Factors;
- consider any other context that may be relevant;
- exercise discretion in how much information is shared with students, staff or other parents;
- maintain neutrality and procedural fairness;
- focus on corrective, not punitive questioning;
- recognize that although students and other witnesses may decline to comment or otherwise participate in an investigation, the obligation remains for Administrators to perform a “good-faith” attempt at gathering information before deciding whether any discipline is appropriate;
- implement Bias Aware Progressive Discipline if required;
- document only the facts, and not subjective interpretations; and
- be flexible, especially when your original assumptions or decisions need to be changed.

INVESTIGATIONS: SUPPORT FOR ADMINISTRATORS

I. Investigations: Support for Administrators

Policy and Legislation That Support the Right of Administrators to Investigate:

Authority to Investigate as Identified in the Education Act

Duties of Principals

- Education Act and Regulations (O. Reg. 265 and 298).
 - The Safe Schools Act – Bill 212.
 - Keeping Our Students Safe at Schools Act – Bill 157.
 - DDSB Code of Conduct, and Discipline for Students.
 - DDSB Security and Safety.
 - Positive School Climate.
 - Police/School Board Protocol.
 - Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
 - Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- O. Reg. 298: sections 11, 12, 20.*

Section 11 (1) - The principal of a school, subject to the authority of the appropriate supervisory officer, is in charge of,

- (a) The instruction and the discipline of pupils in the school; and
- (b) The organization and management of the school. *R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298, s. 11 (1).*

Duties of Vice-Principals

Section 12 (1) - A board may appoint one or more vice-principals for a school. *R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298, s. 12 (1).*

- (2) A vice-principal shall perform such duties as are assigned to the vice-principal by the principal. *R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298, s. 12 (2).*
- (3) In the absence of the principal of a school, a vice-principal, where a vice-principal has been appointed for the school, shall be in charge of the school and shall perform the duties of the principal. *R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 298, s. 12 (3).*

Duties of Teachers

Section 20 - In addition to the duties assigned to the teacher under the Act and by the board, a teacher shall,

- (a) be responsible for effective instruction, training and evaluation of the progress of pupils in the subjects assigned to the teacher and for the management of the class or classes, and report to the principal on the progress of pupils on request;

- (b) carry out the supervisory duties and instructional program assigned to the teacher by the principal and supply such information related thereto as the principal may require.

The Role of the Administrator as Identified in the Education Act

In order to maintain a safe environment:

- it is the duty of a principal of a school to maintain proper order and discipline in the school O. Reg. 265, s. 1(a); and
- when an incident has been reported to an administrator, the administrator will report promptly their findings to parent/guardian O. Reg. 298, s. 11(n).

The Role of all Staff as Identified in the Education Act

In order to maintain a safe environment:

- employees of a board who observe a pupil of a school of the board behaving in a way that is likely to have a negative impact on the school climate shall respond in accordance with any policies and guidelines Education Act, s. 300.4(1) and 301(5.6); and
- all employees should address and report inappropriate behaviour as outlined in the School Code of Conduct.

When Investigations are Required as Identified in the Education Act

Under The Safe Schools Act, an investigation is required where:

- a pupil is suspended for engaging in particular activities (Education Act, s. 310);
- there is a mandatory investigation requirement (Education Act, s. 311.1); and
- investigations are necessary when violations of the School Code of Conduct are reported to Administrators and/or staff.

When Investigations are Discretionary

An investigation is discretionary where:

- the pupil has engaged in activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate.
(Education Act, s. 306)

II. The Definition of “School Climate” – As Defined by PPM 145

- “A sum total of all personal relationships within a school.”
- When these relationships are founded on mutual acceptance and inclusion, a culture of respect becomes the norm.
- A positive climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable and accepted.

III. Off-School Conduct and the Impact on School Climate

- **Nexus** is defined as “a connection or series of connections linking two or more things.”
- When there is an incident that occurs off school property, and the student(s) involved are not at a school sanctioned event, then the Administrator must determine nexus. The following questions help determine nexus:
 - Is there a direct and causal link between the students’ conduct and a definitive impact on the school climate?
 - Does the conduct create a material or substantial disruption in the school?
 - Does the conduct create a poisonous environment in the school?
- Nexus may be established when:
 - students are afraid to come to school;
 - students are worried about reprisal or retaliation;
 - parents are complaining about disruption to school environment; and
 - school staff are worried about their physical or emotional well-being, and safety.

IV. Key Considerations for Administrators Conducting Investigations at School

1. Follow Board and Ministry policies, regulations, procedures and protocols.
2. Consult and proceed slowly.
3. Conduct full, fair and unbiased investigations.
4. Don’t make assumptions.
5. Consider entire circumstances.
6. Document only facts.
7. Be flexible, especially if your original decision needs to be changed.

Key Considerations when Conducting Investigations

When conducting an investigation, you must be mindful of the following:

- investigations must have a timely/prompt response;
- investigations must be completed with a commitment to equitable outcomes;
- only appropriate persons should be interviewed;
- mitigating, Other and Human Rights Factors should be considered;
- investigation processes must be fair, thorough and complete;
- discretion must be exercised appropriately;
- neutrality and procedural fairness must be maintained at all times;
- the focus must be corrective and not punitive;
- if there are consequences for inappropriate behaviour then Bias Aware Progressive Discipline must be used; and
- AO/SO should be consulted whenever appropriate.

Initial Steps to Follow After an Incident

Following a Safe Schools Incident involving students, Administrators should:

- ensure the safety of all involved;
- follow relevant Policies, Regulations and Policies e.g., Police/School Board Protocol and 911 Emergency Guidelines;
- call 911 if necessary;
- separate alleged perpetrator(s), victim(s), witness(es) and provide supervision as needed;
- assign additional staff to provide support as needed;
- contact parent/guardian immediately if there is an injury requiring medical attention;
- complete searches if reasonable grounds exist;
- gather and preserve evidence, including:
 - objects from the scene (e.g., drawings, drugs, weapons)
 - electronic evidence (i.e., hard copies)
 - photographs;
- initiate a Violent Threat Risk Assessment if required;
- if necessary, wait for social work support before interviewing the victim or perpetrator;
- call Durham Regional Police Services depending on the nature of the incident (Refer to the Police/School Board Protocol). Follow the direction of the police; the school investigation may have to stop;
- call Durham Children’s Aid Society, if warranted. Follow the direction of the CAS; the school investigation may have to stop. Complete the student protection form within 24 hours;
- conduct initial interviews with victim(s), perpetrator(s) and witness(es);
- obtain written statements if student(s) is/are capable;
- ask the perpetrator for names of other possible witnesses – record names and interview as needed;
- consult with your AO and SO. As required; and
- sign and date any notes associated with the investigation.

Initial Steps to Follow After an Incident – Duties of an Administrator

Administrators have a duty to:

- follow due process, including procedural fairness;
- communicate with all parties as is necessary at the appropriate times; and
- conduct a proper investigation (refer to Section VI).

Procedural Fairness During an Investigation

- Be fair and ensure that there is an appearance of fairness throughout the investigation process. This includes:
 - remaining neutral;
 - acting fairly when investigating, providing recommendations, and preparing reports; and

- Procedural Fairness incorporates the Education Act, Board policies, regulations and procedures, the Statutory Powers Procedures Act, Common Law, etc.

V. Communication

Administrators must, at the appropriate times and where applicable, communicate with the following:

- Parent(s) / Guardian(s) of all concerned;
- Staff;
- Board Support Staff;
- Police and Outside Agencies (e.g., CAS, Frontenac Youth Services); and
- Others as deemed necessary.

The outcome of the investigation will determine the sequence of informing parents.

Communication - Informing Parents

When determining the appropriate time to inform parents, Administrators must consider:

- whether a student has suffered an injury that requires immediate parental contact;
- whether there is immediate danger to staff/students in school;
- the existence of mitigating or other factors; and
- the type of allegation.

Key consideration:

If a student is 18 years old, or if a student is 16 years or older and has withdrawn from parental control, the school does not contact the parent unless it is requested by the student to do so.

VI. Gathering Evidence and Conducting Searches

To conduct a search, Administrators must:

- have reasonable grounds to believe that there has been a breach of school regulations;
- conduct a search of a student if the administrator believes that the search would reveal evidence of that breach;
- ensure that only principals or their designates should conduct a search or seizure of prohibited objects or substances, unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of a person or persons on the school premises;
- exercise reason and judgment when determining the scope of a search; and
- comply with the Charter regarding random and arbitrary searches.

Conducting Searches – Reasonable Grounds

The following may constitute reasonable grounds to conduct a search:

- information received from one student considered to be credible;
- information received from more than one student;
- a teacher's or principal's own observations; and
- any combination of these pieces of information which the school authority considers to be credible.

Conducting Searches – Agents of the Police

- A student search shall not be conducted by a teacher or Administrator at the direction of the police.
- If the police require that a search be conducted, the police must conduct the search.
- The grounds required for a police search are higher than those required for a school search.
- Administrators should be mindful not to act as "agents" for the police (Refer to the Police School Board Protocol).

Conducting Personal Searches – Best Practices

When conducting a personal search, Administrators should:

- have a witness present;
- conduct the search in a private setting;
- conduct non-invasive searches, that involves:
 - refraining from touching the student; and
 - conducting a search that is minimally intrusive and completed in a sensitive manner.
- give due consideration to the age and gender of the student and the gravity of the infraction;
- have students empty their own pockets, and volunteer evidence;
- have students empty their own coat, wallet and knapsack contents prior to an adult searching their belongings;
- if illegal evidence is found, keep the evidence secure and accounted for at all times until police arrive (e.g., keep in a sealed envelope in the possession of the administrator); and
- if the student refuses to allow you to conduct a search, then contact the police.

Conducting Locker Searches – Best Practices

When conducting a locker search, Administrators should:

- inform students and parents annually that the locker and other storage spaces in the school are the property of the school and can be searched;
- have the student present if possible;
- have a witness; and
- If illegal evidence (weapons, drugs, etc.) Is found, secure the locker until police arrive.

Health and Safety Regarding Searches

When conducting the search of a student, a students' belongings or locker, Administrators should consider the following:

- if in the process of conducting a search it becomes necessary for the administrator or designate to search the students' belongings, then it is important to exercise "Universal Precautions"; meaning that these precautions should be enacted no matter who the student is who is being searched;
- if you have reason to believe that there may be a weapon on the student or in his or her belongings then wait for a police officer to arrive and conduct the search;
- if available, ask the student, if there anything in your coat, wallet, backpack, locker, etc. that could harm the searcher?
- the search should not be intrusive e.g. asking the student to remove their trousers, socks etc.;
- proceed with caution (don't rush the search);
- visually scan the area, utilize a light to look into small spaces. (Looking for sharp objects, and or objects that may be contaminated or dangerous to the searcher. Do not remove these items unless you can do so safely) ;
- wear protective gloves (rubber, latex, etc.); and
- after securing items found during search, remove and dispose of protective gear. (Avoid coming in contact with the parts of the protective gear that have been in contact with the items).

VII. [The Interview Process](#)

Preparing to Interview a Student

Administrators should formulate a school investigation plan prior to interviewing student(s) that:

- identifies witnesses suggested by the alleged victim, perpetrator, staff, etc.;
- includes prepared introductory and closing comments to be used during the interview;
- includes a draft of open-ended questions to be used in the interview;
- informs parents when the investigation is complete, unless special circumstances exist;
- specifies the order of the interviews:
 - Victim;
 - Witnesses;
 - Alleged perpetrator; and
 - Additional witnesses identified from the perpetrator interview.
- designates a private interview space, to be as discreet as possible.

Introductory Remarks When Interviewing

Prior to beginning the interview, the Administrators should clearly state:

- the purpose of interview;
- the role of interviewer;

- the reasons for taking notes;
- any confidentiality limitations; and
- assurance/warnings against reprisals.

Conducting the Interview

Administrators should:

- interview one person at a time;
- ask open-ended questions that are simple and straightforward:
 - Let interviewee tell their story.
 - Avoid asking leading questions.
 - Ask questions like: “What happened?”
- obtain details with specific facts (who, what, where, when, how)
 - Tell me what happened.
 - What did you see or hear?
 - Who else was there?
 - What did you think of at the time?
 - Determine the history or background of events.
 - Is there anything else you want to add?
 - Is this accurate? (at conclusion of questioning)
- confirm firsthand knowledge;
- review notes with the student where possible (this is Best Practice);
- consider Mitigating, Other and Human Rights Factors;
- understand the capacity of the student to understand and respond. You may need to modify your approach for students with special needs or for ESL/ELL students;
- review any pertinent IEP documents;
- maintain fairness and openness to new information while interviewing student(s);
- let the student know the nature of allegations;
- review the evidence gathered;
- provide an opportunity for the student to fully respond; and
- if the student refuses to cooperate, inform them of possible next steps.

Gathering Evidence - *Documentation of the evidence is critical.*

Administrators should:

- collect
 - electronic evidence (unless there are sexual images)
 - e-mail addresses
 - information indicating date and time received
 - copies of relevant e-mails, with full headers
 - the nickname of offending person(s)
 - name and url of chat room;
- gather only facts, not opinions;
- photographs of injury, weapons, any other physical evidence;

- use an object, like a ruler, to compare the size when taking pictures;
- gather drawings in notebooks, agendas and binders;
- take notes of direct observations;
- take notes of conversations; and
- take notes of any additional information that may come out during the interview

Gathering Evidence - Sexual Images

- If there are sexual images refer to the Police/School Board Protocol and consult with your AO/SO.
- The laptop/personal electronic device should be secured until the police arrive.
- The School Liaison Officer should be contacted however, if they are not available, immediately have a Road Officer attend.
- Administrators should provide any evidence directly to police and ensure that they do not have any copies, in any format, in their possession.
- If images have been forwarded to an Administrator electronically or in print, be sure they are removed in police presence.
- Do not copy, transmit, disclose, share, forward, print, back up or electronically store any images.
- When the police leave, it should be as if the image was never in the Administrator's possession.

Record Keeping During the Interview

Best practices include the following:

- administrators should take notes of direct observation;
- administrators should take notes of conversation;
- everyone should date and sign own notes and reports;
- parents are free to write own notes, Administrators do not provide them a copy of their notes; and
- more than one administrator should be present if possible.

Concluding Remarks

Administrators should clearly state that:

- student is expected not to speak to others;
- the confidentiality of the investigation will be enforced;
- the limits of confidentiality for any information provided;
- the school will take any reprisals seriously;
- additional information may be required; and
- the possibility of a re-interview may be necessary.

VIII. The Decision-Making Process

Review the Evidence Gathered

Administrators should consider and evaluate:

- whether reasonable grounds and evidence exist to suggest that there has been a breach of the School Code of Conduct;
- the credibility of interviewees;
- if there is reason to suspect bias;
- the student's/witness's demeanor; and
- whether statements made were believable and consistent.

Wrapping Up the Investigation

Determine the appropriate course of action:

- assess the evidence and make judgement;
- if necessary implement Bias Aware Progressive Discipline;
- before you inform the student that they are suspended, the parent must be informed;
- if calling police and/or CAS, follow their direction. The school investigation may have to stop; and
- inform the AO/SO immediately.

Determine the appropriate course of action, based on:

- apply school based consequences based on Bias Aware Progressive Discipline;
- consider Mitigating, Other and Human Rights Factors;
- equitable outcomes for all participants in the incident;
- opportunity for students to learn why their behaviour was inappropriate and to understand what they may do differently in the future;
- consultation with AO/SO, if considering 5 day suspension or longer;
- communication with the police regarding possible criminal activity; and
- communication with the CAS regarding possible circumstances that deal with child protection.

Factors to Consider When Considering Consequences

Mitigating Factors:

- ability to control behaviour;
- ability to understand foreseeable consequences of behaviour; and
- whether student's continuing presence does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety of any person.

Other Factors:

- student's history;
- whether Bias Aware Progressive Discipline approach has been used;
- whether the activity at issue relates to harassment due to race;

- religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation or any other harassment;
- effect of discipline on student's ongoing education;
- age of the student;
- whether an IEP is in place; and
- any other relevant factors.

Human Rights Factors:

Need to consider the rights of the student based on the Human Rights Code, including:

- Race
- Ancestry
- Place of origin
- Colour
- Ethnic origin
- Citizenship
- Creed
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Gender expression
- Age
- Marital status
- Family status
- Disability

Involving the Police in an Investigation

- The school conducts its own investigation.
- If the investigation reveals a possible criminal activity, the police may need to be called (see mandatory and discretionary notifications in Police/School Board Protocol);
 - the school investigation stops until a conversation has taken place with police and AO/SO.
- The police investigation is parallel to the school investigation;
 - police and school are two public bodies each charged with carrying out their own role.
- Cooperate and share information with police;
 - the school may have to ask the police officer for updates on findings and charges or in some cases, have a conversation with the police officer in order not to act as agents of the police.
- If the police are involved and the student is under 18, or if the student is over 18 and has provided permission, parents must be contacted prior to police interview unless directed otherwise by police.
- Prior to calling parents, be sure to have a conversation with the investigating officer and follow their direction.

Communicating the Outcomes

Education Act, s. 300.3

- (4) When notifying a parent or guardian of a pupil under this section, the principal shall disclose,
- (a) the nature of the activity that resulted in harm to the pupil;
 - (b) the nature of the harm to the pupil; and
 - (c) the steps taken to protect the pupil's safety, including the nature of any disciplinary measures taken in response to the activity.

Education Act, s. 300.3

- (5) When notifying a parent or guardian under this section, the principal shall not disclose the name of or any other identifying or personal information about a pupil who engaged in the activity that resulted in the harm, except in so far as is necessary to comply with subsection (4).

Communication

Administrators should:

- complete appropriate forms;
- report to parent/guardian and pupil;
- report to the victim;
- report to the perpetrator;
- report to witnesses, if needed;
- if extenuating circumstances exist, that preclude communicating the outcome to the parent/guardian, review this decision with AO/SO as soon as possible;
- support victim safety, as outlined in Keeping Our Students Safe at School Act;
- contact Police or CAS if required; and
- consider other factors as applicable.

Supporting the Victim

Administrators should:

- provide professional supports to the victim such as:
 - public health units;
 - outside agencies; and
 - board support staff.
- offer alternative placements/arrangements;
- provide academic supports;
- prevent "double victimization"; and
- conduct regular monitoring and follow up.

Completing Necessary Documentation

Administrator should complete:

- any school specific forms;
- Student Accident Form;
- Online Safe Schools Incident Reporting Form (from Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act (Bill 157));
- Online Employee Violent Incident Form;
- Appendix J: Violent Incident Form – OSR Guideline; and
- Online Park Lane if warranted.

IX. Final Thoughts – Key Points

- Consult with AO/SO.
- Procedural fairness and communication.
- The investigation may lead to a suspension pending the decision to expel, so act accordingly (refer to Safe Schools Portal for Expulsion Checklist).
- Do not provide copies of notes without consulting with AO/SO.
- Keep to the facts: be prepared that notes may be subpoenaed.
- To ensure the safety of the student and others, walk students out of the building when being sent home.
- All decisions have legal ramifications.
- Be thorough, don't take short cuts.
- Be reasonable with students.
- Policies, regulations and procedures need to be followed.
- Confidentiality is critical.

Guide to Gathering Evidence and Conducting Searches

To conduct a search, Administrators must:

- have reasonable grounds to believe that there has been a breach of school regulations;
- believe that the search would reveal evidence of that breach;
- ensure that only principals or their designates conduct a search or seizure of prohibited objects or substances, unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of a person or persons on the school premises;
- exercise reason and judgment when determining the scope of a search; and
- comply with the Charter of Rights regarding random and arbitrary searches.

Conducting Searches – Reasonable Grounds

The following may constitute reasonable grounds to conduct a search:

- information received from one student considered to be credible;
- information received from more than one student;
- a teacher's or principal's own observations; and
- any combination of these pieces of information which the school authority considers to be credible.

Conducting Searches – Agents of the Police

Administrators should not act as agents for the police. Although the grounds required for a police search are higher than those required for a school search, an administrator (or teacher) should never search a student or a student's belongings at the direction of the police. If the police require that a search be conducted, the police must conduct the search.

Conducting Personal Searches – Best Practices

When conducting a personal search, Administrators should:

- have a witness present;
- conduct the search in a private setting;
- conduct non-invasive searches
 - refrain from touching the student
 - minimally intrusive and conducted in a sensitive manner;
- give due consideration to the age and gender of the student;
- wherever possible, have students empty their own pockets and volunteer evidence;
- wherever possible, have students empty their own coat, wallet and knapsack contents prior to an adult searching their belongings;

- keep any illegal evidence found secured and accounted for at all times until police arrive (e.g., in a sealed envelope locked in an Administrator’s drawer); and
- contact the police if a student refuses to allow a search to be conducted.

Conducting Electronic Device Searches – Best Practices

A search of a student’s electronic device, e.g. cellphone, Administrators should follow the same expectations as a search of a student, a student’s locker or backpack. A search of an electronic device may be considered when:

- there is a credible witness(es) that there may be information on the electronic device that will impact on the safety and security of the school;
- there are immediate concerns about a health and/or safety issue. Administrators have a responsibility to prevent serious harm to students, by acting as a “reasonably prudent parent”; and
- the Administrators must take measures to guard against or react to ongoing threats of violence and bullying.

When searching a student device, Administrators should keep a record of what was searched, the reason for the search, and the extent to which the device was searched. All searches of student devices should be tailored to only address the original reason(s) for the search. The degree of search must be proportionate to the severity of the threat. That being said, if there is a serious threat or possible criminal offense, then Administrations should involve the police and follow the Police School Board Protocol. In addition, the Administrator should contact their AO/SO.

Conducting Locker Searches – Best Practices

When conducting a locker search, Administrators should:

- inform students and parent/guardians at the beginning of the school year in the student agenda and in Code of Conduct assemblies that the locker and other storage spaces in the school are the property of the school and can be searched;
- search a locker when the halls are not filled with students;
- have the student present if possible;
- have a witness; and
- secure the locker until police arrive if illegal evidence (weapons, drugs, etc.) is found.

Health and Safety Regarding Searches

When conducting the search of a student, a student’s belongings or locker, Administrators should consider the following:

- if an administrator or designate must search the student’s belongings, then precautions should be enacted no matter who the student is who is being searched;
- if there is reason to believe that there may be a weapon on the student or in their belongings then wait for a police officer to arrive and conduct the search;

- if available, ask the student, 'is there anything in your coat, wallet, backpack, locker, etc. that could harm the searcher';
- proceed with caution (i.e., do not rush the search);
- visually scan the area, utilize a light to look into small spaces and do not remove these items unless you can do so safely);
- wear protective gloves (e.g., rubber, latex, etc.);
- after securing items found during search, remove and dispose of protective gear, and
- avoid coming in contact with the parts of the protective gear that have been in contact with the items.

Conducting School Investigations Checklist

First steps when beginning an investigation

- Follow Board and Ministry policies, regulations, procedures and protocols.
- Consult and proceed slowly.
- Investigations must have a timely/prompt response.
- Investigations must be completed with a commitment to equitable outcomes.
- Mitigating and other factors should be considered.
- The focus must be corrective and not punitive.
- AO/SO should be consulted whenever appropriate.

Key Steps When Conducting an Investigation

- Conduct full, fair and unbiased investigations.
- Interview all participants involved individually and keep them separated throughout the investigation.
- Consider entire circumstances.
- Document only facts.
- Ensure the safety of all involved.
- Call 911 if necessary.
- Review who needs to be contacted, parents, guardians, AO/SO, Police, Children's Aid.
- Review appropriate methods for storing evidence (ex. Sexual evidence via cell phones.)
- Review the evidence that must not be retained.
- If images have been forwarded to an Administrator electronically or in print, be sure they are removed in police presence.
- Do not copy, transmit, disclose, share, forward, print, back up or electronically store any images.
- During the interview attempt to have more than one administrator present.

Key Steps for Closing an Investigation

- Assess the evidence and make a judgement.
- If suspending the student, inform parents first.
- If calling the police and or/CAS halt the school investigation immediately.
- Inform SO/AO immediately.
- Commit to supporting equitable outcomes for all participants in the incident.