



June 9, 2026

The Honourable Lisa Beare
Minister of Education and Child Care
Province of British Columbia
PO Box 9045 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

The Honourable Nina Krieger
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Province of British Columbia
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Re: Human Rights Groups Urge Moratorium on Police in Schools in BC

Dear Ministers,

BC Civil Liberties Association and Policing-Free Schools (Canada) write to urge the Province to end all police-in-school programs¹ in BC public schools and prevent their reintroduction, regardless of name, structure, or level of reform. Because of the extensive background information and evidence that supports the content of this letter, appendices are provided in a manner corresponding to the order of our arguments calling for your action.

This request is urgent. Two recent incidents in BC show that police presence in schools can create serious risks and significant harm to students and staff. Additional reasons to act include the chronic and acute accountability gaps inherent to these programs, your obligation to uphold the human rights of children and staff in BC's schools, and the longstanding evidence civilian professionals, not police officers, keep learning environments safe.

¹ "Police-in-school programs" means any program or arrangement involving police presence in school or school-adjacent activities, including school liaison officer, school police liaison officer, school resource officer, youth officer, curriculum-based, non-curricular, presentation, mentorship, or informal relationship-building programs delivered by or involving police.

Gun Pointed at School Worker

We are aware of a serious incident in which a worker, while arriving at work and using the school's bike cage for its intended purpose, was treated as a criminal suspect without any apparent objective basis. Rather than first taking less intrusive steps to verify the worker's identity or connection to the school, the School Liaison Officer (SLO) escalated the encounter by pointing a firearm, detaining and handcuffing the worker, and searching their belongings. On the facts as we understand them, these were highly invasive and harmful actions that an SLO used against a law-abiding person engaged in an ordinary workplace activity, and they raise significant concerns about whether the SLO's conduct was lawful, necessary, or proportionate. It also raises significant and unresolved questions about excessive use of force, accountability, and whether a school district can protect workers and students when it claims no practical authority over the officers they host under police-in-school programs.

Inappropriate Relationship Stemmed from Police Contact with Student

A second incident raises serious concerns arising from police authority, youth access, informal relationship-building, and unequal power dynamics. The Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner's (OPCC) most recent annual report describes misconduct over a 4-year period involving a Vancouver Police Department (VPD) officer whose abusive relationship with a former student originated through contact at a secondary school, where the officer had presented on policing and later exchanged career-related emails with the student while lying about their age.

The VSB and Independent School Association of BC were reportedly unaware of the incident, the investigation into the officer's conduct, and the substantiated findings. This raises serious accountability concerns. There appear to be no clear safeguards or oversight mechanisms requiring disclosure to school boards of risks associated with police-in-school programs, including information about officer misconduct investigations and related outcomes. This gap undermines school boards' ability to fulfill their duty to maintain safe environments for students and staff.

Governance, Disclosure and Accountability Failures

These incidents reveal a recurring structural problem in police-in-school programs: institutions promote them as carefully managed partnerships built on safety, mentorship, trust, and student well-being, yet when serious harms or accountability concerns arise, responsibility becomes fragmented or displaced. Police and school authorities appear unable or unwilling to provide clear answers about risk assessment, officer selection and placement, the content of any training required for police assigned to schools, disclosure to affected communities, student rights, complaint pathways, or misconduct outcomes.

Even elected parent representatives and journalists have faced barriers when seeking basic information about which officers are assigned to work with children and youth and whether those officers are subject to serious misconduct concerns.

Public education cannot depend on a partnership model in which responsibility and authority are split in ways that leave no institution fully accountable.² This lack of transparent governance and shared accountability undermines public confidence and raises serious concerns about whether schools can safely host relationship-based policing while police culture, oversight, and reporting systems remain subject to unresolved systemic scrutiny.

Provincial Responsibility to Prevent Discrimination and Harm

BC's Human Rights Commissioner has repeatedly called for police-in-school programs to end, warning that Indigenous, Black, and other racialized students may reasonably fear police because of their communities' disproportionate exposure to harmful police interactions.³

Those concerns have only been reinforced by BC,⁴ Canadian and International evidence on discriminatory policing, over-policing, use of force, and systemic anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism. United Nations experts in human rights, including the right to education, have addressed police-in-school programs directly, noting that they are not neutral tools. These experts recommend that police presence in schools be reduced to the maximum extent possible to protect learning environments.

² School Act, RSBC 1996, c 412, ss 8.4-8.5; Vancouver District Parent Advisory Council, "Email - DPAC-VSB-VPD Concerns re: SLO placement in schools" (September 2023), online(pdf): https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EwtgRYun_7ttu2NaGjMG2WjUJuo53Gpf/view [DPAC Email]; Vancouver School Board, Memorandum of Understanding Between the Vancouver School Board and the Vancouver Police Department - School Liaison Officer Program (31 August 2023), online(pdf): https://media.vsb.bc.ca/media/Default/medialib/mou_slo_and_appendix.0b7a5a66724.pdf s 5.1 [VSB-VPD MOU]; Katie Hyslop, "Officer Involved in Myles Gray's Violent Death Now Works in a High School", The Tyee (5 June 2024), online: <https://thetyee.ca/News/2024/06/05/Officer-Involved-Violent-Death-Works-High-School/> [Hyslop, "Officer Involved"]; Katie Hyslop, "Vancouver Police Finally Reveal Names of School Liaison Officers", The Tyee (17 November 2025), online: <https://thetyee.ca/News/2025/11/17/Vancouver-Police-Reveal-Names-School-Liaison-Officers/> [Hyslop, "Vancouver Police Finally Reveal Names"]; Vancouver Police Department, "Youth Outreach", online: <https://vpd.ca/community/youth-outreach/>.

³ British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, Equity is safer: Human rights considerations for policing reform in British Columbia (Vancouver: BCOHRC, November 2021), online(pdf): https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCOHRC_Nov2021_SCORPA_Equity-is-safer.pdf [Equity is Safer]; Letter from Human Rights Commissioner Kasari Govender to Ministers Beare and Begg, "Re: School Police Liaison Officers" (3 February 2025), online(pdf): https://bchumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCOHRC_Feb2025_Letter-to-Beare-Begg-re-SPLOs.pdf [Govender Letter]; International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in the Context of Law Enforcement, Visit to the United States of America, UN Doc A/HRC/54/CRP.7 (26 September 2023), online: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc54crp7-international-independent-expert-mechanism-advance-racial> at paras 52-54 [International Expert Mechanism]; Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Farida Shaheed, The right to be safe in education, UN Doc A/HRC/59/41 (16 June 2025), online(pdf): <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2025-06/a-hrc-59-41-aev.pdf> [Special Rapporteur].

⁴ Kiffer G Card et al, "Event-level outcomes of police interactions with young people in three non-metropolitan cities across British Columbia, Canada" (2021) 91 International Journal of Drug Policy 102824, doi: 10.1016/j.drugpo.2020.102824 [Card et al], online: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0955395920301651>.

Yet provincial and local authorities have continued to revisit, rebrand, or restore these programs without producing empirical evidence that they are effective or necessary. Program redesign does not cure these serious risks. Reduced visual markers of policing, additional training, and an emphasis on mentorship or relationship-building may make police presence feel less coercive to some people, but can also blur boundaries, obscure accountability, and deepen the very risks these programs claim to manage.

The Province cannot treat these decisions to expand police presence in schools as merely local matters: you have a responsibility to ensure that public education services uphold your human rights obligations.

Demonstrated Harms and Unproven Safety Benefits Require Action

After decades of police-in-school programs being operational in BC and elsewhere, there is no concrete evidence that the programs improve objective safety outcomes. Canadian reviews, human rights analyses, and empirical research instead identify recurring risks: criminalization, exclusion, discriminatory surveillance, unnecessary use of force, boundary violations, and abuse of power.

Invest in Evidence-Based Measures to Protect BC's Public Education Community

The evidence points away from policing and toward properly funded, healing-centred, and student-centred approaches to school safety. Schools need mental health supports, education assistants, youth counsellors, restorative practices, community-school models, culturally safe services, and equity-based safety planning—not the diversion of scarce education resources toward police liaison programs. Vancouver's own experience shows that non-policing safety infrastructure can be built and sustained, while teachers, parents, trustees, and oversight bodies have repeatedly identified chronic underfunding and inadequate supports as the real barriers to safe and inclusive schools.

As Human Rights Commissioner Govender has put it, equity is safer.

Our Calls to You

Considering the evidence and the Province's human rights obligations, we respectfully and urgently request that your Ministries:

1. End all police-in-school programs in BC public schools without delay.
2. Ensure that such programs cannot be re-established anywhere in BC, regardless of name, structure, or purported reform.
3. Publish reports from police bodies and school districts across BC that have participated in police-in-school programs since the 2020-2021 school year, including officer identities and school assignments, calls for service, searches, handcuffing and other use-of-force incidents, police collection and use of student and worker information, General Occurrence reports, charge recommendations, complaints, conduct investigations, substantiated

misconduct findings, and outcomes (disaggregated where legally and ethically appropriate).

5. Invest instead in properly funded schools and proven, human rights-based safety strategies that support well-being without the foreseeable harms of policing in schools.⁵

Please provide a substantive reply to this letter, including your availability to meet to discuss this pressing matter, by July 9, 2026.

We stand ready to support your Ministries in realizing an evidence-based, human rights-centred vision for real, lasting public school safety in BC.

Sincerely,

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BC Civil Liberties Association

Andrea Vásquez Jiménez
Director
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⁵ Jennifer DePaoli and Jennifer McCombs, Safe Schools, Thriving Students: What We Know About Creating Safe and Supportive Schools (Learning Policy Institute, 9 August 2023), online: <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/safe-schools-thriving-students-report> [Learning Policy Institute].

Appendices: Supporting Background and Authorities

These appendices correspond to the headings and content in the letter “Human Rights Groups Urge Moratorium on Police in Schools in BC” and provide supporting examples, evidence, and authorities.

Appendix A - Recent BC Harms and Governance Failures

A.1 Gun Pointed at School Worker

We are aware of a violent and unwarranted incident at a public secondary school in Vancouver last year. On the facts as we understand them, the worker was simply arriving at work and locking their own bicycle in the school’s bike cage. They were using the bike cage for exactly what it was there for.

What followed was a serious and escalating intrusion by an SLO on the worker’s rights. The SLO pointed a firearm at them, detained them, handcuffed them, and searched their personal belongings. These were not minor steps. They were highly invasive police actions used against a person who, on the known facts, was arriving at their workplace at the start of the day and securing their own bike.

In a free and democratic society, police action must be reasonably necessary. It is not enough that a more forceful approach might be convenient, faster, or effective. Unless the SLO had specific, objective reasons to believe the worker had committed, was committing, or was about to commit an offence, the officer could not lawfully treat the worker as a suspect just to “rule them out” as a possible bicycle thief.

That principle matters here. The SLO was dealing with a person at a school, at the start of the workday, using a bike cage for its obvious purpose. There were plainly less intrusive options available. The SLO could have spoken with them from a safe distance, asked whether they worked at the school, contacted school administration, checked staff information through school channels, or otherwise verified the worker’s identity.

On these facts, the SLO’s unjustified escalation transformed a basic identity-check or bike-theft inquiry into a frightening, coercive and violent police encounter for the worker at what should have been a safe and healthy workplace, involving a gun and associated prospect of death, detention, handcuffs, and a search of personal belonging.

The incident caused serious and lasting harm and demonstrates that even Vancouver’s “reimagined” SLO program can introduce, rather than reduce, risk. This incident reflects student concern about guns in schools recorded in the recently released Final Report of the

Evaluation of the School Liaison Officer (SLO) Program in Vancouver, including a student's fear that misinterpretation of circumstances by police could lead to someone being shot.⁶

Pointing a firearm at a member of the public is among the most serious forms of police use-of-force, short of discharging the weapon. Under BC's use-of-force framework, firearms are classified as a lethal-force option.⁷ Even where no physical injury occurs, the threat of potentially lethal force is a profound intrusion on personal security and dignity.

BC policing standards require police agencies to have procedures that require officers to report the display of a firearm as a use of force.⁸ Vancouver Police Department (VPD) procedures require members to report use of force, including an explanation, within 48 hours, triggering supervisory review.⁹ Yet the affected worker and the public do not know whether the officer reported the incident, whether supervisors reviewed it, or whether corrective, disciplinary, or training measures were considered and imposed.

We understand that the Vancouver School Board (VSB) took no concrete action to address the safety risk, even though it knew the worker experienced significant mental distress and could no longer work at the same location as the SLO. Treating reassignment of the harmed worker as the solution, rather than requiring their police partner (the VPD) to remove or reassign the officer, compounds the power imbalance inherent in police-in-school programs. The VSB's position that it has no role in protecting school staff and students from harm caused by an SLO beyond referring concerns to the VPD is inconsistent with its responsibility to ensure safe schools and with the SLO memorandum of understanding itself.¹⁰

A.2 Inappropriate Relationship Stemmed from Police Contact with Student

The risks of police-in-school programs are not limited to acute use-of-force incidents. The Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner's (OPCC) most recent annual report describes a VPD officer who attended a secondary school to present on policing, exchanged emails with a female student about a policing career, and later, after she graduated, entered an inappropriate relationship with her. The investigation found that the officer lied about his age and was verbally and emotionally abusive; the misconduct was classified as discreditable conduct, and

⁶ Vancouver School Board, Evaluation of the School Liaison Officer (SLO) Program, Final Report (April 2026), online(pdf): https://media.vsb.bc.ca/media/Default/medialib/evaluation-of-the-school-liaison-officer-program_april-2026.0f951388928.pdf [VSB Evaluation] at 7-8, 20.

⁷ BC Provincial Policing Standard 1.9.1, Use of Force Models.

⁸ BC Provincial Policing Standard, Reporting and Investigation Following the Use of Force, Subject 1.7.2 - Reporting and Investigation Following the Use of Force (1)(e), online: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/policing-in-bc/policing-standards/1-7/1-7-2-reporting-investigation-use-of-force>.

⁹ Vancouver Police Department Regulations and Procedures Manual, Use-of-Force 1.2.1, section 26, online(pdf): <https://vpd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/regulations-and-procedures-manual.pdf> at 31.

¹⁰ VSB-VPD MOU, supra note 2, s 5.1.

the disciplinary or corrective measure was dismissal, although the member resigned before dismissal.¹¹

The OPCC summary did not identify the officer, the student, or the school. Subsequent reporting noted that both the VSB and the Federation of Independent School Associations were unaware of the misconduct findings and related investigation, notwithstanding that the misconduct arose from a relationship that originated through police contact with a student in a school setting.¹²

The risk is not unprecedented. In a separate OPCC substantiated misconduct matter from 2021/22, a Vancouver police officer engaged in sexual activity with a high-school student; the disciplinary decision found discreditable conduct and imposed significant corrective measures.¹³ In an RCMP conduct appeal, a member acting as a volunteer youth sports coach had personal and suggestive text chats with a high-school student and co-coach; the Conduct Board ordered resignation or dismissal, and the Commissioner dismissed the appeal.¹⁴ A 1999 OPCC annual report also described a BC school liaison officer who committed numerous substantiated misconduct violations arising from school activities and was removed from liaison duties.¹⁵ These examples differ factually, but they reinforce the same safeguarding concern: police authority, youth access, mentorship, career guidance, and informal relationship-building roles create foreseeable risks that cannot be cured by program renaming or cosmetic reform.

A.3 Governance, Disclosure, and Accountability Failures

Police services and school authorities routinely describe these programs as carefully planned partnerships intended to advance student safety, well-being, mentorship, trust, transparency, and positive community relationships.¹⁶ Yet when serious harms occur, the institutions

¹¹ Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner, Appendix 2024/2025 Annual Report: Substantiated Allegation Summaries (Victoria: OPCC, 2025), online(pdf): <https://opcc.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/OPCC-2024-2025-Substantiated-Allegation-Summaries.pdf> at 34-35 [OPCC 2024/25 Annual Report]; at 34-35.

¹² Katie Hyslop, "VPD Officer Was Quietly Investigated over an Abusive Relationship with Teen", The Tyee (12 December 2025), online: <https://thetyee.ca/News/2025/12/12/VPD-Officer-Investigated-Abusive-Relationship-Teen/> [Hyslop, "VPD Officer"].

¹³ Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner, Appendix 2021/2022 Annual Report: Substantiated Allegation Summaries (Victoria: OPCC, 2022), online(pdf): https://opcc.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2022-11-10-2021-2022-Substantiated-Allegation-Summaries_FINAL.pdf at 26.

¹⁴ Royal Canadian Mounted Police External Review Committee, "Conduct (Discipline) Appeals - C-078" (21 November 2023), online: <https://www.canada.ca/en/rcmp-external-review-committee/services/case-summaries/conduct-discipline-appeals/c-078.html>.

¹⁵ Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner, 1999 Annual Report (Victoria: OPCC, 1999), online(pdf): https://opcc.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/1999_Annual_Report.pdf at 33-34.

¹⁶ See, e.g., Vancouver School Board, "News Release: VSB schools ready to welcome school liaison officers" (31 August 2023), online: <https://www.vsb.bc.ca/news-release-vsbs-schools-ready-to-welcome-school-liaison-officers.66726>; New Westminster Schools, "Message about the Board of Education's motion to create a MOU with the NWPD" (28 May 2025), online: <https://newwestschools.ca/blog/2025/05/28/message-about-the-board-of->

involved cannot show who is responsible for identifying risks, preventing harm, informing affected communities, or ensuring accountability.

The misconduct matter reported by the OPCC in its last annual report is illustrative. The school community was apparently not informed that a former student had been subjected to years of abusive conduct flowing from a relationship that began through school-based police programming. The public response deepens the concern: media reporting indicates that the Chief Constable was not made available to answer questions about the officer's conduct, while a VPD spokesperson stated that the officer had been dismissed despite the OPCC summary recording that the officer resigned before a dismissal order was issued.¹⁷ Because the officer's identity has been withheld throughout, the public has no way of knowing if he went on to work with another police department or to work with young adults.

The same accountability gap appears in the Vancouver school-worker incident involving the pointed gun, handcuffing and search. We understand that the VSB's position is that it has no authority over the school liaison officer involved or their specific school placement and cannot know about any related VPD investigation into the incident or its outcome. The VSB claims to have no meaningful role beyond notifying the VPD of the matter, even while continuing to host police in the school environment under its purview.¹⁸

Reform and training commitments do not resolve this structural problem. The VSB evaluation says the renewed program reduced visible markers of policing and provided additional training, while increasing relationship-building and broader involvement in school communities.¹⁹ When an officer is simultaneously a law-enforcement actor, intelligence gatherer, mentor, presenter, club sponsor, and informal support person, the boundary between care and coercion becomes unclear.

Accountability concerns are sharpened by the VPD's continued placement of Constable Hardeep Sahota as a school liaison officer.²⁰ Constable Sahota is also one of several VPD officers whose conduct in connection with the 2015 death of Myles Gray is the subject of a current OPCC public hearing. The Notice of Public Hearing states that the hearing will consider allegations that the respondent members intentionally or recklessly used unnecessary force against Mr. Gray, and that Const. Sahota neglected duty by failing to make and preserve

[educations-motion-to-create-a-mou-with-the-nwpcd/](#) ; New Westminster Police Department, "Chief Constable Responds to School Board's School Safety Partnership Decision" (28 May 2025), online: <https://www.nwpolice.org/news-media/media-releases/message-from-the-chief-constable-on-school-board-decision/> .

¹⁷ Hyslop, "VPD Officer", supra note 12; OPCC 2024/25 Annual Report, supra note 11 at 34-35.

¹⁸ VSB-VPD MOU, supra note 2, s 5.1.

¹⁹ VSB Evaluation, supra note 6 at i, 31.

²⁰ Vancouver Police Department, "Youth Outreach", supra note 2; Hyslop, "Vancouver Police Finally Reveal Names", supra note 2.

contemporaneous notes and/or furnish required reports or statements in a timely way.²¹ Those allegations have not been finally determined. However, assigning an officer subject to unresolved serious public accountability proceedings to a school role premised on trust, mentorship, discretion, and safeguarding reasonably undermines public confidence. Reporting on the IIO investigation into the death of Mr. Gray also raises concerns about the constable's cooperation with civilian oversight.²²

Transparency problems have also affected journalists and parent representatives seeking basic information about police officers assigned to work with children in public schools, including how police are chosen for the role, who is assigned to which school, and what students' rights are understood to be when interacting with the police at school. Reporting indicates that when Vancouver's District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) relayed parent concerns to the school board and police department about the risk to children in assigning an SLO known to have been involved in a violent death and asked that students and parents be informed of students' rights when interacting with police in schools, the institutions provided superficial responses.²³ They also failed to disclose to the DPAC whether the SLO in question would face disciplinary proceedings. A media outlet seeking the names of SLOs assigned to Vancouver schools faced FOI refusals based on claims from the VPD that the public disclosure of SLO identities could endanger officers' life or physical safety.²⁴ That position is difficult to reconcile with VPD's subsequent public posting of youth outreach/SLO identities.²⁵

Basic information about who is assigned to schools, what training they have, what student contacts they initiate, whether they are under investigation, and how complaints are handled should not require years of access-to-information disputes.²⁶ Where schools may not know whether assigned officers are subject to serious misconduct concerns, and where responsibility can be displaced between police and school authorities, neither institution appears fully accountable for safeguarding school communities.

²¹ Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner, Notice of Public Hearing, PH 2024-02, OPCC File 2015-11014 (11 December 2024), online(pdf): <https://opcc.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/11014-2024-12-11-Notice-of-Public-Hearing.pdf> at paras 1, 44.

²² Hyslop, "Officer Involved", supra note 4; Independent Investigations Office of BC, "IIO Files Petition in the Myles Gray Investigation (2015-116)" (11 October 2017), online: <https://iio.bc.ca/media/iio-files-petition-in-the-myles-gray-investigation-iio-2015-116/>; Jessica Kerr, "Vancouver police officers could face charges in death of Myles Gray", Vancouver Is Awesome (16 January 2019), online: <https://www.vancouverisawesome.com/courier-archive/news/vancouver-police-officers-could-face-charges-in-death-of-myles-gray-3091744>.

²³ DPAC Email, supra note 2; Hyslop, "Officer Involved", supra note 2.

²⁴ Hyslop, "Vancouver Police Finally Reveal Names", supra note 2.

²⁵ Vancouver Police Department, "Youth Outreach", supra note 2.

²⁶ Katie Hyslop, "We Finally Have Some Info on School Liaison Officer Training", The Tyee (25 November 2025), online: <https://thetyee.ca/News/2025/11/25/Finally-Info-School-Liaison-Officer-Training/>; Katie Hyslop, "Despite Claims, School Liaison Officers Received No Special Training", The Tyee (13 January 2023), online: <https://thetyee.ca/News/2023/01/13/School-Liaison-Officers-No-Special-Training/>; Hyslop, "Vancouver Police Finally Reveal Names", supra note 4.

The broader police oversight record reinforces our core concerns. The OPCC has launched a systemic investigation into workplace-related sexualized conduct in BC municipal police departments and designated units, noting recurring conduct, power imbalances, barriers to reporting, and organizational-culture issues.²⁷ Comparable concerns arise beyond municipal policing: systemic cultural issues within the RCMP, BC's provincial police service involved in police-in-school programs, are well documented and include harassment and violence, and racism and misogyny.²⁸ These materials matter because police-in-school programs rely on trust, mentorship, informal relationships, and school-based authority. Schools should not be asked to treat relationship-based policing as a safeguarding measure while police culture, reporting pathways, and accountability systems remain under systemic review.

Appendix B – Provincial Responsibility to Prevent Discrimination and Harm

BC's Human Rights Commissioner Kasari Govender recommended in 2021 that police-in-school programs in BC should end. She reiterated that recommendation to your Ministries in 2025, emphasizing that Indigenous, Black, and other racialized children may have well-founded fears of police because they see their communities disproportionately affected by negative police interactions.²⁹ Victoria Police Department's 2018-2023 use-of-force data underscores the same concern.³⁰

Despite these warnings, school boards and provincial decision-makers have continued to revisit, rebrand, or expand police-in-school programming. The Province's intervention in

²⁷ Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner, Terms of Reference: Systemic Investigation Regarding Sexualized Conduct in Police Workplaces (25 March 2026), online(pdf): https://opcc.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/OPCC_Systemic-Investigation_-_Terms-of-Reference_25March26_final.pdf at 1-2.

²⁸ Royal Canadian Mounted Police, "RCMP response to the report of the Independent Assessors regarding the claims made under the Merlo/Davidson settlement agreement" (17 November 2025), online: <https://rcmp.ca/en/bastarache-report/rcmp-response-report-independent-assessors-regarding-claims-made-under-merlodavidson-settlement> ; Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2024 Annual Report: Independent Centre for Harassment Resolution (Ottawa: RCMP, 2025), online: <https://rcmp.ca/en/corporate-information/publications-and-manuals/2024-annual-report-independent-centre-harassment-resolution> ; Shivangi Misra, Ashley Major, Pamela Palmater & Shelagh Day, *The Toxic Culture of the RCMP: Misogyny, Racism, and Violence against Women in Canada's National Police Force* (Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action, May 2022), online: Mass Casualty Commission <https://commissiondespertemassives.ca/files/documents/roundtables/COMM0059795.pdf?t=1763043703>; The Joint Federal/Provincial Commission into the April 2020 Nova Scotia Mass Casualty, *Turning the Tide Together: Final Report of the Mass Casualty Commission, Volume 5: Policing* (March 2023), online(pdf): <https://masscasualtycommission.ca/files/documents/Turning-the-Tide-Together-Volume-5-Policing.pdf> at 427, 517, 627-628.

²⁹ Equity is Safer, *supra* note 3 at 9; Govender Letter, *supra* note 3 at 1-2.

³⁰ Victoria Police Department, "VicPD Use of Force Data 2018-2023" (15 January 2025), online: <https://vicpd.ca/2025/01/15/vicpd-use-of-force-data-2018-2023/>.

School District 61 was particularly troubling because it appeared to pressure a local board to restore school police programming despite evidentiary and human rights concerns.³¹

The reinstated SD61 Board recently stated that it had repeatedly asked police and government for empirical evidence that the police-in-school program was effective or necessary, but that evidence was not produced.³² Local disagreements cannot relieve the Province of its obligation to ensure that public education services do not perpetuate systemic discrimination or expose students and workers to avoidable harm.

Recent BC and Canadian materials reinforce that police-in-school programs cannot be assessed as neutral relationship-building initiatives divorced from broader issues about policing systems and inequality. In February 2026, BC's Human Rights Commissioner released a final review concerning the Vancouver Police Board settlement with Maxwell Johnson Sr. and A.B.; the Board had admitted discriminatory conduct based on Indigenous identity, race, and ancestry, and the Commissioner concluded that key collaborative measures to address systemic anti-Indigenous racism had not been fully satisfied.³³ The Commissioner's police use-of-force inquiry and Justice Canada materials specific to Black communities in BC further underscore concerns about over-policing, presumptions of guilt, and overrepresentation in arrest and correctional data.³⁴

Appendix C - International Human Rights Obligations

These are not only policy concerns. Canada is party to core international human rights instruments that protect children's dignity, non-discrimination, privacy, liberty, education, disability rights, and protection from degrading treatment.³⁵ Routine police involvement in school discipline, surveillance, informal questioning, record generation, and relationship-

³¹ Katie Hyslop, "What a School Board Sacking Reveals about Police in BC Schools", The Tyee (2 April 2025), online: <https://thetyee.ca/News/2025/04/02/School-Board-Sacking-Police-BC-Schools/>.

³² School District No 61 (Greater Victoria), "Statement from the Board of Education Regarding the Board's Reinstatement" (25 May 2026), online: <https://www.sd61.bc.ca/news-events/news/title/may25-statement/>.

³³ British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, Final review: Settlement Agreement between Maxwell Johnson Sr. and A.B. and the Vancouver Police Board (Vancouver: BCOHRC, 24 February 2026), online: <https://bchumanrights.ca/resources/publications/publication/vpb-johnson-final/>.

³⁴ British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, "Inquiry into police use of force", online: <https://bchumanrights.ca/inquiries-and-cases/inquiries/inquiry/use-of-force/>; Justice Canada, "Executive summary", Canada's Black Justice Strategy: African Art and Culture Community Contributor Society Report (8 April 2025), online: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/cbjs-scjn/aaccs/p1.html>; Justice Canada, "Findings", Canada's Black Justice Strategy: African Art and Culture Community Contributor Society Report (8 April 2025), online: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/cbjs-scjn/aaccs/p3.html>.

³⁵ Government of Canada, "Reports on United Nations human rights treaties", online: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/canada-United-nations-system/reports-united-nations-treaties.html>; Government of Canada, "International Human Rights Treaties to which Canada is a Party", online: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/abt-apd/icg-gci/ihr-didp/tcp.html>; United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, Convention on the Rights of the Child, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

based programming must be assessed against those obligations that extend to BC, particularly where the burdens fall most heavily on Indigenous, Black, racialized, disabled, and other marginalized students.

UN human rights mechanisms have addressed police in schools directly. The International Independent Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in the Context of Law Enforcement concluded that school police presence contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline and recommended reducing police presence in schools to the maximum extent possible, eliminating use of force and arrests, avoiding criminalization of disciplinary infractions, and implementing alternatives. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education echoed that recommendation.³⁶

The Special Rapporteur also frames safety in education as a rights-based obligation to protect learners, educators, and non-teaching staff from violations of physical, sexual, and psychoemotional integrity without discrimination, fear, or reprisal. She warns that reliance on police in schools is not neutral because it shifts education from empowerment toward control.³⁷

UN treaty bodies have similarly called for measures to address racial discrimination in school discipline, including school-based arrests and referrals to juvenile and criminal systems for minor non-violent offences, and have raised concerns about police officers deployed to patrol school hallways.³⁸

Appendix D - Demonstrated Harms and Unproven Safety Benefits Require Action

Across Canada, and in BC specifically, there is no conclusive empirical evidence that police presence in schools improves objective safety outcomes. There is, however, substantial evidence of harm, particularly for Indigenous, Black, racialized, disabled, 2SLGBTQIA+, and otherwise marginalized students and staff.

- Recent BC youth-police research strengthens this concern. Card et al examined 675 police encounters reported by 360 young people aged 16-30 in Victoria, Chilliwack, and Prince George. Encounters resulted in questioning or ID requests (33.6%), warnings (19.6%), searches or frisks (15.4%), tickets (15.0%), and handcuffing or arrest (16.4%). In adjusted models, young Indigenous people were significantly more likely than white youth to be

³⁶ International Expert Mechanism, *supra* note 3 at paras 52-54; United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to education, End of Mission Statement: Visit to the United States of America (10 May 2024), online(pdf): <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/education/statements/20240510-stm-eom-sr-education-usa.pdf> at 5-6.

³⁷ Special Rapporteur, *supra* note 3 at paras 40-43, 73-74, 95-97.

³⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding observations on the combined tenth to twelfth reports of the United States of America, UN Doc CERD/C/USA/CO/10-12 (21 September 2022), online(pdf): <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g22/495/96/pdf/g2249596.pdf> at paras 31-32; Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: United States of America, UN Doc CERD/C/USA/CO/6 (8 May 2008), online(pdf): <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g08/419/82/pdf/g0841982.pdf> at para 34.

handcuffed or arrested, and the authors found that Indigenous and non-binary participants were more likely to experience punitive outcomes even after adjusting for histories of drug dealing, past police encounters, and contextual factors. Younger participants were more likely to be searched or frisked regardless of illegal activity or being suspected of a crime at the time of the encounter.³⁹

- The Campbell systematic review found no detectable improvements in school crime or violence from school-based law enforcement and found higher rates of exclusionary discipline.⁴⁰
- Canadian research supports caution: a 2021 BC review found very few systematic evaluations of Canadian school-policing programs and limited empirical outcome research; the authors of one frequently cited pro-SRO Peel study later acknowledged that, without comparison schools, they could not attribute observed improvements to police presence.⁴¹
- The April 2026 VSB evaluation reports positive perceptions among many respondents, including that 72% of staff and 57% of students who answered agreed that SLOs contribute to a sense of safety. But it is not a causal safety-outcomes study. It does not establish that police reduce harm, are necessary, or are less harmful than non-policing alternatives, and it identifies significant limits in design, participation, demographics, and comparability with prior reviews.⁴²
- The same evaluation confirms that the renewed program generates police files and criminal-legal pathways. From September 2023 to June 2025, participating secondary schools produced 1,117 unique calls and online reports to police; 52% resulted in General Occurrence reports; and 68 people were recommended for charges, although charges were not pursued in 74% of those cases.⁴³
- Vancouver's 2021 SLO engagement review remains central. Only 15% of Black student respondents agreed that the SLO program contributed to a sense of safety in schools, while 60% disagreed. Among Indigenous student respondents, 33% disagreed. Those findings

³⁹ Card et al, *supra* note 4.

⁴⁰ Benjamin W Fisher et al, "School-based law enforcement strategies to reduce crime, increase perceptions of safety, and improve learning outcomes in primary and secondary schools: A systematic review" (2023) 19:4 *Campbell Systematic Reviews* e1360, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1360>.

⁴¹ Dr Kanika Samuels-Wortley, "The State of School Liaison Programs in Canada" (May 2021), online(pdf): https://bhumanrights.ca/wp-content/uploads/Samuels-Wortley_May2021_School-liaison-programs.pdf [Samuels-Wortley];; Linda Duxbury and Craig Bennell, "Statement Regarding Concerns Raised About Police in Schools: An Evidence-Based Look at the Use of School Resource Officers", online(pdf): <https://carleton.ca/policeresearchlab/wp-content/uploads/sites/207/Peel-Report-Statement.pdf> at 2.

⁴² VSB Evaluation, *supra* note 6 at iii, 2, 6-7, 21, 31.

⁴³ *Ibid* at iv, 26-28, 31-32.

cannot be treated as resolved by a later perception survey with limited Indigenous participation.⁴⁴

- The Human Rights Commissioner's analysis of School District 61 police callout data found no correlation between school liaison officer presence and gang activity, and no reduction in school callouts before or after the programs were ended.⁴⁵
- The BC Teachers' Federation reported that police violence experienced in BIPOC communities enters the daily lives of teachers and students, affecting teaching, learning, and well-being, with Indigenous participants expressing the strongest fears of police presence in schools.⁴⁶
- Ontario Human Rights Commission materials and Canadian school-district reviews describe students feeling watched, targeted, intimidated, over-scrutinized, and at risk of discipline or criminalization when police are present in schools.⁴⁷ Official reviews in Toronto and Ottawa-Carleton report similar concerns, including intimidation and lack of formal evidence of program effectiveness.⁴⁸
- Research also raises disability-related concerns, including evidence that many school resource officers hold problematic attitudes toward students with disabilities.⁴⁹
- Other jurisdictions have acted on these concerns. Peel Regional Police dissolved its SRO program after acknowledging negative impacts on segments of the student population, and Louis Riel School Division discontinued its program after an independent equity-based review.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Vancouver School Board, Vancouver School Board/VPD School Liaison Program Review: Engagement Summary (March 2021), online(pdf): https://sbvsbstorage.blob.core.windows.net/docs/18f0df3f-ed51-4836-b6e5-ac2e252654db_VSB-SLO-EngagementReport-Mar2021.pdf at 29; VSB Evaluation, supra note 6 at 5-7, 22-23.

⁴⁵ Govender Letter, supra note 3 at 2.

⁴⁶ BC Teachers' Federation, Policing in Schools Project: Report to the Executive Committee (Vancouver: BCTF, December 2022), online(pdf): <https://www.bctf.ca/docs/default-source/for-news-and-stories/policing-in-schools-final-report.pdf> at 6 [BCTF].

⁴⁷ Ontario Human Rights Commission, "OHRC Submission Regarding School Resource Officer Programs" (30 June 2025), online: <https://www3.ohrc.on.ca/en/ohrc-submission-regarding-school-resource-officer-programs> .

⁴⁸ Policing-Free Schools Canada, "Resources", online: <https://www.policingfreeschools.ca/resources>; Toronto District School Board, School Resource Officer Program Review (15 November 2017), online(pdf): https://briarpatchmagazine.com/pdf/TDSB_School_Resource_Officer_Program_Review.pdf at 1-3; Carolyn Tanner, Policy and Practice Review of Police Involvement in Schools (Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, June 2021), online(pdf): <https://www.ocdsb.ca/download/481531> at 75.

⁴⁹ David C May, Corrie Rice and Kevin I Minor, "An examination of School Resource officers' attitudes Regarding Behavioral Issues among Students Receiving Special Education services" (2012) 15:3 Current Issues in Education, cited in Samuels-Wortley, supra note 41 at 13.

⁵⁰ Peel Regional Police, "Dissolution of the School Resource Officer (SRO) Program" (18 November 2020), online: <https://www.peelpolice.ca/news-feed/posts/update-dissolution-of-the-school-resource-officer-sro-program/> ; Louis Riel School Division, "An Equity-Based Review of Police Involvement in Schools" (17 March 2023), online: https://www.lrsd.net/_ci/p/20504 .

- Vancouver call-data reporting similarly undermines simplified safety narratives. Some categories of calls rose after SLO cancellation, but total secondary-school calls in 2022 were lower than in several years when SLOs were stationed in secondary schools, and the data did not show whether calls led to deployment, investigation, or charges.⁵¹
- Official misconduct and legal findings show that concerns about school-police contact are not merely subjective. OPCC findings include unnecessary force against young people, and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario found that race was a factor when Peel police handcuffed and shackled a six-year-old Black girl at her public school.⁵²⁵³

Appendix E - Invest in Evidence-Based Measures to Protect BC's Public Education Community

The available evidence points toward non-policing, healing-centred, and student-centred approaches: properly funded schools, mental health supports, education assistants, youth counsellors, restorative practices, community schools, culturally safe supports, and equity-based safety planning. Vancouver's own experience shows that non-policing school safety infrastructure can be developed; VSB's Safe and Caring Schools department was created after police were removed from schools and remained operational after SLOs returned.⁵⁴

Those investments are urgently needed. The Canadian Teachers' Federation has identified chronic underfunding and lack of adequate support as systemic problems requiring properly funded, supported, and resourced public education. BC parents, teachers, and trustees have described persistent funding gaps, and the BC Ombudsperson is investigating reports of disabled students being asked to stay home, often because schools lack the resources to meet their needs.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Katie Hyslop, "Are Schools More Dangerous Without Embedded Police?", *The Tyee* (7 November 2023), online: <https://thetyee.ca/News/2023/11/07/Are-Schools-More-Dangerous-Without-Embedded-Police/> [Hyslop, "Are Schools More Dangerous"].

⁵² OPCC 2024/25 Annual Report, supra note 11 at 14.

⁵³ *JKB v Peel (Police Services Board)*, 2020 HRTO 172; *JKB v Regional Municipality of Peel Police Services Board*, 2020 HRTO 1040; Human Rights Legal Support Centre, "HRTO rules that race was a factor in restraining and handcuffing of 6-year-old Black girl at her public school", online: <https://hrlsc.on.ca/hrto-rules-that-race-was-a-factor-in-restraining-and-handcuffing-of-6-year-old-black-girl-at-her-public-school/> ; Human Rights Legal Support Centre, "UPDATE: HRTO orders Peel Police Services Board to pay \$35,000 to 6-year-old Black girl restrained and handcuffed at her public school", online: <https://hrlsc.on.ca/update-hrto-orders-peel-police-services-board-to-pay-35000-to-6-year-old-black-girl-restrained-and-handcuffed-at-her-public-school/> .

⁵⁴ Hyslop, "Are Schools More Dangerous", supra note 51.

⁵⁵ Canadian Teachers' Federation, "Canadian educators Outline 4 key reforms in new Parachute survey series" (13 January 2025), online: <https://www.ctf-fce.ca/news-parachute-survey-finds-canadian-education> ; Katie Hyslop, "Is BC's Education Underfunded and at a 'Tipping Point'?", *The Tyee* (29 May 2025), online: <https://thetyee.ca/News/2025/05/29/BC-Education-Underfunded-Tipping-Point/> ; Ombudsperson BC, "Are BC schools fair when asking students to stay home? We're investigating" (December 2024), online: <https://bcombudsperson.ca/fairness-public-schools/> .

The BC Teachers' Federation concluded that student needs in a chronically underfunded public education system cannot be met by funding school liaison officers. Participants instead described safe, healthy, and equitable schools as fully funded schools grounded in community and holistic support for students' academic, emotional, social, and physical well-being.⁵⁶

Research-backed non-policing measures include increasing student access to mental health and counselling resources; investing in integrated student supports and community schools; fostering secure school relationships; adopting restorative practices and social-emotional learning; preparing staff to support student well-being; and conducting equity reviews of school safety measures and discipline outcomes.⁵⁷ As Commissioner Govender has framed it, equity is safer.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ BCTF, *supra* note 46 at 8, 12.

⁵⁷ Learning Policy Institute, *supra* note 5.

⁵⁸ Equity is Safer, *supra* note 3.