

HWDSB

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Reporting Bill 123 (Erin’s Law) Protocol

What is Bill 123 (Erin’s Law)?

Erin’s Law (Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Reporting), 2024, also known as Bill 123, is a legislative requirement within the Education Act that mandates all publicly funded schools to provide annual, age-appropriate instruction to students on child sexual abuse prevention and reporting. The goal is to equip students with knowledge to recognize unsafe situations, understand bodily autonomy, and seek help from trusted adults. This protocol ensures consistent implementation across HWDSB schools and aligns with the Board's commitment to safe, equitable, and inclusive learning environments.

1. HWDSB Implementation

HWDSB’s implementation of [Bill 123 \(Erin’s Law\)](#) is grounded in a commitment to uphold the rights, dignity, and safety of all students. This work is informed by the [2017 Child, Youth and Family Services Act \(CYFSA\)](#), which emphasizes the paramount importance of child safety and well-being, and mandates clear responsibilities for reporting and responding to suspected neglect and abuse.

In alignment with the [HWDSB Human Rights Policy](#), this protocol affirms every student’s right to learn in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, and violence. It also reflects the principles of the [HWDSB Indigenous Education Policy](#), recognizing the unique histories, rights, and perspectives of Indigenous students and communities, and the need for culturally responsive and trauma-informed approaches.

Engaging in child sexual abuse prevention and education requires not only acknowledging the lived experiences and systemic barriers faced by many communities, including those impacted by intergenerational trauma, racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, oppression, ableism, poverty, and gender-based violence. HWDSB is committed to actively working to dismantle these barriers through identifying and addressing structural inequities through targeted interventions, inclusive curriculum design, culturally responsive pedagogy, and ongoing collaboration with affected communities. This equity-driven approach centers student voice, affirms diverse identities, and fosters trust through transparent, accountable, and restorative practices.

2. Responsibilities

Executive Council:

- Ensure system-wide implementation of Bill 123-related programming and protocols.
- Approve and allocate appropriate resources and partnerships for prevention education and support services.
- Monitor compliance through school improvement planning and annual reporting.

Principals and Vice Principals:

- Ensure all staff are aware of and adhere to this protocol.
- Coordinate annual delivery of age-appropriate child sexual abuse prevention education to all students.
- Provide staff with access to training and current information on prevention, intervention, and reporting protocols.
- Ensure families are informed about available school and community-based counselling and prevention resources.

Educators and School Staff:

- Deliver child sexual abuse prevention education using Board-approved resources and age-appropriate strategies. [Erins Law Resources 1-12](#), integrated into Personal Safety and Injury Prevention health curriculum or other appropriate curriculum platforms through a Human Rights approach.
- Follow all mandatory reporting requirements under the [Child, Youth and Family Services Act \(CYFSA\)](#).
- Participate in ongoing training related to abuse prevention, trauma-informed care, and duty to report.
- Foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive classroom environment.

3. Student Engagement

- On an annual basis, all students will receive age-appropriate instruction on child sexual abuse prevention and how to seek help, integrated into Grade 1-8 Personal Safety and Injury Prevention health curriculum or other appropriate platforms.
- Programming will include developmentally appropriate lessons on personal safety and injury prevention, aligned with Bill 123. Topics will focus on safe and unsafe

boundaries, consent, healthy and safe relationships, online and digital safety, understanding personal boundaries, the difference between secrets and surprises, identifying a trusted adult, and strategies for reporting unsafe situations.

- Lessons will follow the Conditions for Learning/Identity Affirming Practices/Responding to Student Need (CIR) framework through creating conditions for learning, while affirming student identity through dignity and promoting safety without fear-based messaging. This approach is grounded in the principles of the HWDSB [Human Rights and Equity Action Plan](#), including culturally responsive pedagogy, anti-oppressive learning environments, and accountability to dismantle systemic barriers. It also reflects the [Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan](#) pillars of Revitalize, Reclaim, Renew, Restore, and Celebrate, honouring Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, and fostering intergenerational healing and educational wellness.

4. Staff Professional Development

- HWDSB will provide ongoing professional learning for staff on child sexual abuse prevention, identifying signs of abuse, and reporting obligations, through an equity and Human Rights perspective that recognizes the diverse lived experiences of students and communities, and promotes culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and inclusive practices.
- Resources and training materials will be made accessible through the Board's intranet and professional development channels.

5. Parent, Guardian and Caregiver Information and Resources

- HWDSB will ensure all parents, guardians and caregivers have access to information on child sexual abuse prevention, reporting processes, and available supports.
- Resources, including culturally relevant counselling services, will be shared on the board and school websites.
- Additional information for parents, guardians and caregivers can be found through the following links:
 - [Bill 123, Erin's Law \(Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Reporting\), 2024](#)
 - [Erin's Law](#)
 - [Canadian Centre for Child Protection Erin's Law](#) website for additional information and resources regarding prevention and reporting.

6. Monitoring and Review

- This procedure will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with legislative requirements and community needs.
- Feedback from students, families, and staff will be considered to improve educational practices and resource accessibility.