

# Memorandum of Understanding

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Between the  
**Vancouver School Board**  
and the  
**Vancouver Police Department**

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School Liaison Officer Program

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**VSB** Vancouver  
School Board



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# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

## BETWEEN

THE VANCOUVER SCHOOL BOARD

## AND

THE VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

## REGARDING

THE SCHOOL LIAISON OFFICER PROGRAM

### VISION

The Vancouver School Board (the "VSB") and Vancouver Police Department (the "VPD") share a strong commitment to ensuring that all Vancouver students are able to work and learn in safe and inclusive schools where they experience connectedness and belonging.

The VSB, as outlined in its 2026 Education Plan, has a strong commitment to creating *“equitable learning environments where every child can experience a deep sense of belonging and is free to pursue pathways that are authentic to themselves.”*

The VPD have outlined in the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan their commitment and belief that *“building positive relationships and mutual trust contributes to safer communities.”*

This partnership between the VPD and the VSB reflects the shared commitment of both organizations to work cooperatively and collaboratively to support school safety through an intentional focus on proactive and preventative strategies and approaches. This preventative approach, focused on building trusting relationships and implementing educational interventions, will enhance school safety and support positive decision making by students. Through proactive intervention it is our shared intent, where possible, to divert students from formal involvement with the criminal justice system.

In implementing this renewed program, both the VPD and the VSB acknowledge the concerns of some members of school communities, in that the presence of police makes them feel less safe and less comfortable at school. These concerns and perspectives have been carefully taken into consideration in planning for this renewed program. Both the VPD and VSB commit to centering the perspectives of Indigenous, racialized, and equity deserving students as the School Liaison Officer (SLO) program is implemented, as well as in making revisions and adjustments to the program moving forward. The renewed SLO program will embrace equity, diversity, and inclusion as key principles.

It is acknowledged that some members of the school community experience stressors such as poverty, childhood adversity, psychological and intergenerational trauma, racism, discrimination, and/or language barriers. SLOs will use a trauma-informed approach that considers the ethnic, cultural, and/or gender identity of students.

In response to concerns raised regarding the previous SLO program, significant changes have been made and are outlined in Appendix A of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Key areas where changes have been made to reflect feedback received include:

- Diversity
- Training
- Uniforms
- Weapons
- Vehicles
- Program Review and Assessment

To ensure the program can be adaptive and responsive, it is intended that this appendix be modified and updated, as required and as agreed to by the VSB-VPD Steering Committee, without requiring the MOU itself to be re-opened.

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

The purpose of this MOU is to outline the working relationship between the VPD and the VSB, and to define the goals, shared objectives, intentions, and protocols of the School Liaison Program (SLP). The intent of the MOU is to clarify the mandates, roles, policies, procedures, and other matters relevant to each party. This agreement is not intended to give effect to binding legal or financial obligations between the VSB and the VPD.

To support implementation of the MOU and to address in a timely manner any issues or concerns which may arise, the VPD and VSB commit to the establishment of a Steering Committee which will consist of a Deputy Superintendent, Associate Superintendent, and Director of Instruction from the VSB, as well as an Inspector and Superintendent from the VPD.

### **1.0 DEFINITIONS**

1.1 The definitions in this subsection apply in this MOU.

“adult” means any person 19 years of age or older that is working, volunteering or otherwise interacting with students on school grounds or at school activities.

"child" means a person who is or, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, appears to be 5 years old or older, but less than 12 years old.

"youth" means a person who is or, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, appears to be 12 years old or older, but less than 19 years old.

"student" means a child or a youth, and includes both, unless the term is limited by specific additional reference to a child or youth, to whom the VSB provides services in accordance with its mandate.

## **2.0 MISSION**

2.1 The VPD and the VSB will work collaboratively to:

- a. Improve school environments to ensure they are safe, caring, welcoming and inclusive places for all students, staff, and families.
- b. Center the perspectives of Indigenous, racialized and equity deserving students in implementing a program which is inclusive and accessible.
- c. Implement proactive educational and intervention strategies to support students in making positive decisions and to attempt to divert students from formal engagement with the criminal justice system, where and when possible. Restorative justice principles will be applied in accordance with the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.
- d. Establish and maintain effective and timely communication between the VSB and the VPD.

## **3.0 GOVERNING PRINCIPLES**

3.1 Nothing in this MOU will be interpreted or applied so as to contravene obligations and procedures required by provincial or federal legislation, as well as the policies, procedures, and regulations of the VPD and the VSB, including but not limited to the:

- a. *BC School Act*
- b. *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- c. *Youth Criminal Justice Act*
- d. *Criminal Code of Canada*
- e. *BC Police Act*
- f. *Child, Family and Community Service Act*
- g. VSB Policy Handbook
- h. VSB Administrative Procedures Manual
- i. Collective Agreements applicable to VSB or VPD employees

3.2 In order to ensure it is meeting the shared commitment to maintain safe and inclusive learning environments, the VPD and VSB will engage in supportive,

collaborative, and consultative processes to develop, refine, and adjust this partnership as the renewed SLO program is implemented.

- 3.3 The role of SLO officers assigned to schools shall focus primarily on proactive and preventative education and intervention. It is understood that all police officers have a statutory and common law duty to investigate crimes. Criminal investigations by SLOs will be conducted in accordance with applicable laws and VPD policy and procedures.
- 3.4 The VSB and the VPD will ensure that each other's relevant policies and procedures are understood and, where policies are in conflict, the matter will be referred to the Steering Committee.

#### 4.0 STRATEGIES

The following strategies will be applied to achieve the mission set out in section 2.0 of this MOU.

- 4.1 **Prevention and Education:** This strategy includes: education and awareness programs, role modeling, developing positive relationships, and supporting schools and communities to create safe and inclusive learning environments.
- 4.2 **Establishing Positive Connections:** SLOs will work to establish positive connections with the school communities to which they are assigned. This will include being available to support students and families who may be in contact with and/or experiencing challenges with the criminal justice system. With the support of the school administrator, SLOs will actively build trust with students and families who have had negative experiences with the police and/or have concerns about having SLOs in schools.
- 4.3 **Early Intervention:** The earliest possible identification of students at risk of harm, exploitation, victimization or criminal behaviour is a primary objective for the VPD and the VSB. Referrals to agency partners and remedial processes will be pursued at the earliest opportunity to mitigate risks and reduce the potential for harm to self or others.
- 4.4 **Supporting Victims of Crime:** SLOs will actively work to support members of the school community who have been the victim of a crime. The SLO will work collaboratively with school administrators and families to ensure victims of crime are heard and supported.
- 4.5 **Crime Prevention:** SLOs will engage in intervention and crime prevention activities within the school community. Where possible and appropriate, SLOs will refer students to programs/support in an effort to divert them from becoming engaged

with the criminal justice system.

- 4.6 **Justice System Processes:** When all other diversion options have failed or are not appropriate, students who have committed a criminal offence may be processed through criminal justice processes. The VPD will take the lead in criminal investigations in accordance with the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.
- 4.7 **Information Management:** The collection of information to identify students who are at risk of or engaged in criminal activities is a priority for ensuring safe and healthy schools. The collection and sharing of information will be done in compliance with and enabled by the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act* and the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.

## 5.0 ROLE OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

- 5.1 School principals and vice principals are responsible for the administration of the school and for ensuring staff and student safety as per the *BC School Act* and *VSB Board Policy*. This MOU does not in any manner alter or deter from the role and responsibility of the school principal/vice principal in this regard.
- 5.2 School principals and vice principals are responsible for student conduct and discipline, in alignment with the *District Code of Conduct* and the school *Code of Conduct*.
- 5.3 School principals and vice principals will work collaboratively with the SLO(s) assigned to their school community and ensure the officer has the information and support required to fulfill their role. The privacy rights of staff and students, as well as all applicable law, shall be adhered to in providing information to SLO officers.
- 5.4 School principals and vice principals will contact their Director of Instruction for advice and guidance, as required, in relation to the SLO program at their site.

## 6.0 ROLE OF THE VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

- 6.1 The VPD is a police department duly constituted in accordance with the provisions of the *BC Police Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996 c. 367, and is mandated to conduct law enforcement investigations, among other duties.
- 6.2 The VPD also has a role in assisting in the development and undertaking of crime prevention activities, community and student engagement, supporting victims of crime, as well as apprehensions and referrals for students at risk.

## **7.0 ROLE OF SCHOOL LIAISON OFFICERS**

- 7.1 SLOs serve to build relationships between school communities and the VPD, fulfilling a unique role in that they retain all the duties of a peace officer, while also undertaking responsibilities relative to working in an educational setting with students and other adults, including parents, teachers, staff, and administrators.
- 7.2 It is not the role of SLOs to enforce school discipline, rules, or *Codes of Conduct*. This is the responsibility of the school administrator.
- 7.3 The specific duties of the SLO include:
  - a. Delivering safety and crime prevention programs.
  - b. Providing advice and guidance to students, staff, and parents who seek support.
  - c. Acting as a resource to students, administrators, and staff.
  - d. Working to enhance the safety and security of the school.
  - e. Supporting and engaging with various school teams and clubs, and accompanying classes on field trips when requested.
  - f. Investigating criminal offences related to schools when required.
  - g. Serving as a liaison between the school and the criminal justice system.

## **8.0 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE VSB**

- 8.1 The VSB will provide each SLO with an office space that is private and in close proximity to the office or counseling department, where feasible. The school principal will collaborate with the assigned SLO to determine a suitable space. The VSB will provide materials required for the SLO office including:
  - a. telephone,
  - b. computer and printer with internet access,
  - c. locking filing cabinet,
  - d. school interior master key,
  - e. clothing wardrobe, and
  - f. office furniture and supplies.

## **9.0 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE VPD**

- 9.1 The responsibilities of the VPD in relation to the SLO program include the following:
  - a. Providing police constables to work as SLOs within VSB schools, both elementary and secondary, during the regular school calendar year and summer school.



- b. Providing SLOs with all requisite duty equipment, including cellular phones, laptops with wireless access to police databases (including "PRIME", "CAD" and "CPIC"), and vehicles, as well as a locking (key lock) gun locker at each school, in order to effectively perform their duties.
- c. Outlining operational deployment of SLOs as stated in a standalone document managed by the VPD, with VSB to be consulted on any operational changes and/or amendments to the document.

## **10.0 COLLABORATIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE VSB AND THE VPD**

10.1 The collaborative responsibilities of the VSB and the VPD include the following:

- a. Conduct an annual review of SLO program to determine areas of improvement.
- b. Conduct joint training between SLOs and VSB staff on topics of shared interest and need.
- c. SLO officers will complete the VSB anti-racism and non-discrimination training module.

## **11.0 ORIENTATION PROTOCOLS**

11.1 The VSB assigns a staff member as an SLO program liaison, and the VPD SLO supervisor(s) will inform the VSB liaison of the SLO assignments prior to commencement of each school year.

11.2 The VSB will inform school administrators of their assigned SLO prior to school start.

11.3 Each school administrator and the assigned SLO will meet prior to school start-up for the purpose of an orientation to the school, and the orientation should include:

- a. a school administrator-led tour of the school,
- b. a meeting between the SLO and school staff,
- c. providing the SLO with a school timetable,
- d. an introduction to the Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Model, Tool Kit, Protocol, and Site-Specific VTRA Team,
- e. an overview of school policies, bell schedules, school goals, school code of conduct, and other school specific information, and
- f. the establishment of a regular meeting schedule between the SLO and the school administrator.

## **12.0 COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS**

- 12.1 VSB school administrators or staff will call 9-1-1 in the first instance when they learn of a critical incident unfolding at the school. Part of the SLO role is to intervene in critical police-related incidents within the school, and in the event of their absence, the SLO will provide an alternative SLO contact person to the school administrator.
- 12.2 When staff changes in the SLP or in SLOs occur during the year, the VPD SLO supervisor(s) and the VSB Liaison will notify each other of these changes and will update contact information as appropriate.
- 12.3 The VSB and VPD will ensure they notify the other partner as soon as possible of any procedural, policy, or program changes and/or modifications to the SLP.
- 12.4 Complaints and concerns by either a SLO or school staff shall be brought to the attention of the VPD SLO supervisor(s) and/or the school administrator.

## **13.0 STUDENT INFORMATION DISCLOSURE PROTOCOL**

- 13.1 The VSB and the VPD will manage student information in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and where applicable, *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.
- 13.2 VSB school administration shall only disclose to SLOs the personal information of employees, parents and students, in accordance with section 33(3) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- 13.3 Personal information disclosed to and collected by SLOs from the VSB may only be used or further disclosed by SLOs for an investigative purpose, if the personal information was specifically obtained for such a purpose, or for any resultant court process or as otherwise required by law.
- 13.4 The VPD and VSB acknowledge that in order to fully pursue the goals and spirit of this MOU, it may also be desirable to pursue a formal information sharing agreement in accordance with section 33.2(k) of FIPPA. This section authorizes the sharing of personal information between VPD and VSB if the information is necessary for the delivery of a common or integrated program or activity. The VPD and VSB agree to discuss the merits of section 33.2(k) as part of an enhanced information sharing protocol, within six (6) months of signing this MOU.

## **14.0 CRITICAL INCIDENT PROTOCOLS**

- 14.1 The VPD hereby advises the VSB that the SLO should not be deemed to be the

immediate point of contact in emergencies, regardless of the presence of a SLO in a school. In emergency situations, school staff are advised to call 9-1-1 for assistance.

- 14.2 To ensure the VSB is made aware of police situations that may arise in or around schools, the SLO supervisor(s) or SLO will notify the VSB and the schools affected.
- 14.3 The SLO will not make the arrest of a student or school employee while on school premises except in the event that a criminal act is in progress or when it is required to ensure staff, student, and public safety.
- 14.4 Police and school officials should work together to devise a communication plan in the event of a critical incident, with VPD and VSB public affairs liaising accordingly. Police are responsible for addressing the media with respect to any criminal incident, including public safety concerns and police response to the incident. School and district personnel are responsible for dealing with media on issues pertaining to staff and student safety.

## **15.0 COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS PROTOCOLS**

- 15.1 Complaints and concerns regarding an SLO or school staff shall be brought to the attention of the VPD SLO supervisor(s) and the school administrator, and will be investigated accordingly.
- 15.2 Depending on the nature of the complaint, it may involve *BC Police Act* or *BC School Act* investigations.
- 15.3 Concerns regarding the program will be directed to the Steering Committee.

## **16.0 TERMINATION**

- 16.1 This MOU may be terminated by either the VSB or the VPD at any time and for any reason on the provision of thirty (30) calendar days written notice of termination. Each Party will be responsible for its own cost, expenses, and liabilities arising from such termination.

**We, the signatories, agree to the commitment described herein.**



**August 31, 2023**

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Helen McGregor Superintendent of Schools, Vancouver School Board



August 31, 2023

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Adam Palmer Chief Constable, Vancouver Police Department

# Appendix A

## SCHOOL LIAISON OFFICER PROGRAM

### OPERATIONAL COMPONENTS

This appendix is intended to outline operational aspects of the School Liaison Officer (SLO) program. As a working document it will be updated from time to time to reflect changes made to the program to either improve and enhance service and/or address areas of concern. It is understood that amendments to operational components of the SLO program will be made in a collaborative and transparent manner between the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) and the Vancouver School Board (VSB). This appendix will be kept up to date and will reflect operational changes made in the interest of public transparency.

### STAFFING

The VPD is the sole funder of the support provided as part of the SLO program. As such, levels of staffing will be determined, on an annual basis, by the VPD. Information on changes to staffing will be shared with the VSB through the Steering Committee.

For the 2023-24 school year the staffing provided by the VPD will include:

- 15 Constables organized into 2 teams
- 2 Sergeants
- 1 Youth Justice Programs Coordinator

### UNIFORMS

The SLO attire outlined below is intended to be worn by SLOs upon their return to school communities, and will readily identify SLOs as police officers. The SLO attire will provide an alternative to the standard VPD operational uniform, which will still be worn when deemed operationally necessary.

The daily SLO attire will consist of the following items:

- Blue golf shirt branded with the VPD crest on the chest
- Black or blue hiking style pants
- VPD identification jacket
- Winter jacket with crest
- Black shoes

In order to engage in recreational/athletic outreach events, standardized physical training gear will be issued to all SLOs, to be used at their discretion, and will include:

- T-shirts, branded with VPD crest
- Athletic shorts

## **FIREARMS**

In direct response to concerns raised about SLOs carrying firearms, SLOs will be equipped with a smaller firearm that will not be visible and will be concealed.

## **VEHICLES**

The VPD have commissioned 15 unmarked electric vehicles (Hyundai Kona) which will be used by SLOs.

## **TRAINING**

The renewed SLO program consists of a revised, mandatory training portfolio for all SLOs. The additional training requirements for SLOs is intended to be robust and well-rounded, with particular emphasis on:

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)
- Specialized Investigation and Youth
- Leadership and Effective Communication
- Supporting students with diverse learning profiles

EDI has been identified as the area of focus most pertinent to student perceptions of safety. In recognizing that Black and Indigenous students are less likely to associate police with feelings of care, support, and security, the SLO program acknowledges that more can be done by way of training to help address concerns. The SLO program recognizes the importance of cultural humility, knowledge, and awareness, and in ensuring a comprehensive curriculum for training, the revised SLO program encompasses mandatory EDI courses. Additionally, a trauma-informed approach to policing has been identified as a central tenet to the function and operation of the reimagined SLO program, with numerous courses designed to educate SLOs on ways to work with trauma.

In accordance with the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* and the guiding principles of restorative justice approaches, SLOs are trained to ensure that diversion from the criminal justice system takes place wherever possible. Through alternative measures and decriminalization, SLOs are conversant in ways to manage and minimize the residual impacts of crime, both for youth victims and perpetrators.

Leadership and effective communication courses will help to support SLOs in performing the daily functions of their role. Given the emphasis on informal relationship building and connection in this role, it is of the utmost importance that SLOs are effective communicators who can readily de-escalate challenging situations.

The VSB will engage members of the Education Services team to provide training and information to SLOs regarding working with students who have complex learning needs and profiles. This training will support SLOs in effectively interacting with these learners.

As a key component of the program, the VPD and the VSB also commit to working with one another to determine and co-facilitate opportunities for school staff and SLOs to engage in shared learning opportunities on an ongoing basis.

## **DIVERSITY OF OFFICERS**

The VPD will seek to recruit qualified officers from various demographic and cultural backgrounds, while adhering to the requirements of VPD processes, rules, and collective agreements. SLOs will be carefully selected based on their qualifications, experience, character, and fit for this community-oriented role.

## **SLO DEPLOYMENT**

The SLO program will consist of five-day coverage to ensure that there is support for the VSB school district throughout the school week. It is likely that SLOs will split their time between their assigned schools and the Youth Services office depending on need. Regular shifting patterns for the SLOs will consist of the following options:

- Monday to Thursday – half the SLOs, first assigned Sergeant
- Tuesday to Friday – half the SLOs, second assigned Sergeant

It is necessary that dedicated office space at each VSB secondary school be close to school administration, including the principal, vice-principal, and school counsellors. This enables students and staff to speak with SLOs in an accessible, safe, and secure location, thereby increasing privacy, confidentiality, and trust. It is of the utmost importance that SLOs are readily accessible, as they will be actively involved with school communities through informal conversations and relationship building, wherever possible.

## **PROGRAM REVIEW**

### **ANNUAL SURVEY**

On an annual basis, a survey will be distributed to gather input and feedback on the effectiveness and impact of the SLO program. The survey will be anonymous.

### **FACILITATED DISCUSSIONS**

In addition to the general survey, small groups will be asked to participate in facilitated conversations about the impact of the SLO program. Participants in these discussions will have had direct involvement with the SLO program. Like the surveys, the intent will be to gather input and feedback to inform changes and enable adjustments, thereby ensuring that the SLO program continues to meet the needs of school communities on an ongoing basis.

### **INDEPENDENT, THIRD PARTY REVIEW**

As the SLO program moves into year two, the VPD and the VSB share the commitment to engaging an independent third party to conduct a review of the program, in order to provide

objective information on program strength and efficacy, as well as areas for revision and improvement.

## **COMMUNICATION**

At the start of the school year, the VSB will send information to school communities informing them of the plans for the SLO program in their school community. This includes information on the SLO assigned to support the school community, ways students and/or families can contact the SLO, and an overview of key supports and activities the SLO will be involved in within the school community.

## **INDIGENOUS RIGHTSHOLDERS**

As the renewed SLO program is launched, the VPD and the VSB commit to continuing to share information with, and seek input from, Indigenous Rightsholders through the Indigenous Education Council (VSB) and the Indigenous Advisory Committee (VPD) structures. As part of our shared commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, both the VPD and VSB commit to continuing to engage with, and learn from, Indigenous Rightsholders and Nations.

## **SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS TEAM**

The VPD will work with the VSB to determine how the Safe Schools team and the SLOs will work together to support students and families in the District. As processes are established, further updates will be made to this appendix as appropriate.

Adoption Date: August 31, 2023

Revised: