



CANADIAN CENTRE *for* CHILD PROTECTION®
Helping families. Protecting children.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE and VICTIMIZATION

*by K-12 SCHOOL PERSONNEL
in CANADA*

SECOND EDITION (2017-2022)

ABOUT THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR CHILD PROTECTION

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection (C3P) Inc. is a national charity dedicated to the personal safety of all children. Our goal is to reduce the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, to assist in the location of missing children, to prevent child victimization, and educate the Canadian public about ways to keep children safe. As part of this work, C3P operates Cybertip.ca, Canada's tipline to report child sexual abuse and exploitation online, as well as Project Arachnid, a web platform that detects known images of child sexual abuse material and issue removal notices to electronic service providers where possible. C3P also supports individual survivors whose child sexual abuse was recorded and distributed online as well as survivor advocacy groups, including Stop Educator Child Exploitation.

ABOUT STOP EDUCATOR CHILD EXPLOITATION

Stop Educator Child Exploitation (SECE) is a grassroots organization composed of survivors of sexual abuse and violence at the hands of teachers in Canadian Schools. SECE, whose members come from across Canada, advocate for national leadership in combatting sexual abuse in schools. SECE advocates for the establishment of national, provincial and territorial independent bodies to investigate teacher-on-student sexual exploitation, restitution for the thousands of existing survivors and is calling for a national inquiry into the abuse of school children at the hands of teachers.

Data sources used to conduct the analysis are as outlined in the Study Methodology section, and all data analysis was conducted internally by staff at the Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc. prior to November 1, 2022. E. & O.E. Stock photos depict models and are intended as illustrative.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection (C3P) is issuing this study to provide vital information about the nature and context of sexual behaviours and abuses committed against children by K-12 school personnel across the country.

In doing so, we hope key decision makers in government and professional teacher associations will be better equipped to make effective, evidence-based changes that ensure Canadian schools foster safe, healthy and thriving learning environments. This report is also intended to provoke discussions about the need for greater public transparency regarding teacher discipline and to help expand the traditional lens through which school systems view what is and what is not appropriate behaviour and how to intervene.

In Canada, education falls under provincial and territorial jurisdiction. Currently, most professional bodies responsible for overseeing discipline of school personnel are not required to make the outcomes of investigations involving professional misconduct public. This heightens the potential for future risk for children, leaves gaps in knowledge about offending personnel behaviours, and creates barriers to research.

In 2018, we published a report titled *Child Sexual Abuse by K-12 School Personnel in Canada* in which researchers collected readily attainable public records – disciplinary records, court records, and media reports – related to teacher discipline. The current report is the continuation of this work. It provides the only known publicly available Canada-wide snapshot of the characteristics of sexual offending in schools, information about the student victims and offenders, granular details on offending patterns as well as important contextual information about the use of online platforms. The report also provides details about professional and criminal outcomes for the school personnel involved.

This study demonstrates how child sexual abuse and victimization can include a range of behaviours, from physical offences, such as sexual touching or assault, to non-physical offences such as exposing a child to sexually explicit material, sexual attention toward students, and using isolation tactics to gain further access to children. Ultimately, this report reinforces that children can be victimized through both physical and non-physical offending.

Collectively, a search of disciplinary records, media sources, and criminal case law yielded a total of 252 current or former school personnel working in Canadian K-12 schools that committed or were accused of committing offences of a sexual nature against a minimum of 548 children between 2017 and 2021 inclusively. In addition to this, over the same timeframe, we identified another 38 current or former school personnel who were criminally charged for stand-alone child pornography-related offences. **Therefore, in total, 290 school personnel were identified as part of this study.**

*“Child pornography” is used in this paper to reflect the legal term used in the *Criminal Code* of Canada. The term “child sexual abuse material” (CSAM) more accurately describes images and videos depicting assaults taking place against children and is the term preferred by most organizations that work in the area of child protection.*

ADDITIONAL KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- When the gender could be identified, 71 percent of victims were female and 29 percent male;
- Of all offending behaviours recorded, 37 percent involved physical contact offences;
- Of offending school personnel where a secondary role or profession was identified, 74 percent were coaches;
- 167 school personnel had criminal charges laid against them, with sexual assault (n=181), sexual interference (n= 137), and sexual exploitation (n=87) being the most frequently laid charges; and
- Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook were the platforms most commonly used to facilitate victimization.

OUR KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Stemming both from our extensive prior work in this area, including our 2018 study, and our close collaboration with Stop Educator Child Exploitation, a grassroots organization composed of survivors of sexual abuse and violence at the hands of school personnel in Canadian schools – are that all provinces and territories:

- Establish fully independent bodies in all provinces tasked with receiving complaints (from the public, parents, students, and school personnel), conducting investigations, the adjudication process, and determining appropriate sanctions;
- Ensure disciplinary records that pertain to professional misconduct or boundary transgressions involving a child are universally made public and available in a centralized location for the purpose of policy research and for supporting hiring activities;
- Mandate that all school personnel, including administrators, complete evidence-based child protection training programs; and
- Invest more in trauma-informed victim supports for students who are victimized within school environments.

2. INTRODUCTION

All children have the right to safety, dignity, security, and freedom from harm. Sexual abuse violates these rights, increasing risks for adverse physical, emotional, and psychological health and well-being throughout the lifespan.^{1,2,3,4,5} These harmful effects are often intensified when the abuse is committed by a trusted adult or authority figure, such as a teacher, educational assistant, coach, or other school personnel.^{6,7,8,9,10,11} To ensure children are safe, healthy, and thriving in Canadian schools it is important to understand the circumstances of sexual abuse and the continuum of problematic behaviours that lead up to it. Armed with this knowledge, we can best tailor prevention and intervention strategies.

Despite the obvious importance of understanding the issue, there exists relatively little information on a national scale about the nature and extent of sexual abuse and boundary transgressions by school personnel in Canada. This can be attributed in part to the lack of availability of teacher discipline records across many provinces and territories, inconsistent reporting standards, and agreed-upon definitions across jurisdictions, as well as the inexistence of a centralized registry of school personnel who commit or are accused of committing sexual abuse and boundary transgressions against children.¹²

In Canada, where the administration of education falls under the purview of provincial and territorial governments, the majority of entities responsible for overseeing professional discipline are not required by law or regulation to make decisions publicly available. As a result, past research has been almost entirely reliant on media reports or court decisions.

In this light, the purpose of this report is twofold: to address knowledge gaps and advance change. Toward this end, we compiled publicly available information on sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, and boundary transgressions known to be along the continuum of sexual-type violations committed by school personnel. Drawing on this data, our organization's decades of experience on the front lines of child protection, and through our work with survivors, we also identify issues of greatest concern in Canadian school systems and provide recommendations to address them.

- 1 Turner, S., Menzies, C., Fortier, J., Garces, I., Struck, S., Taillieu, T., Georgiades, K., & Afifi, T. O. (2020). Child maltreatment and sleep problems among adolescents in Ontario: A cross sectional study. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *99*, 104309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104309>
- 2 Afifi, T. O., MacMillan, H. L., Boyle, M., Taillieu, T., Cheung, K., & Sareen, J. (2014). Child abuse and mental disorders in Canada. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, *186*(9), 324–332. <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.131792>
- 3 Afifi, T. O., Sareen, J., Fortier, J., Taillieu, T., Turner, S., Cheung, K., & Henriksen, C. A. (2017). Child maltreatment and eating disorders among men and women in adulthood: Results from a nationally representative United States sample. *The International Journal of Eating Disorders*, *50*(11), 1281–1296. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eat.22783>
- 4 Afifi, T. O., Taillieu, T., Salmon, S., Davila, I. G., Stewart-Tufescu, A., Fortier, J., Struck, S., Asmundson, G. J., Sareen, J., & MacMillan, H. L. (2020). Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), peer victimization, and substance use among adolescents. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *106*, 104504–104512. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104504>
- 5 Cheung, K., Taillieu, T., Turner, S., Fortier, J., Sareen, J., MacMillan, H. L., Boyle, M. H., & Afifi, T. O. (2018). Individual-level factors related to better mental health outcomes following child maltreatment among adolescents. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *79*, 192–202. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.02.007>
- 6 Gómez, J. M. (2019). High betrayal adolescent sexual abuse and non-suicidal self-injury: The role of depersonalization in emerging adults. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *28*(3), 318–332. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2018.1539425>
- 7 Gómez, J. M. (2021). Gendered sexual violence: Betrayal trauma, dissociation, and PTSD in diverse college students. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, *30*(5), 625–640. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2020.1783737>
- 8 Goldsmith, R. E., Freyd, J. J., & DePrince, A. P. (2012). Betrayal trauma: Associations with psychological and physical symptoms in young adults. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *27*(3), 547–567. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260511421672>
- 9 Tang, S. S. S., & Freyd, J. J. (2012). Betrayal trauma and gender differences in posttraumatic stress. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, *4*(5), 469–478. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025765>
- 10 Freyd, J. J. (1996). *Betrayal trauma: The logic of forgetting childhood abuse*. Harvard University Press.
- 11 Clark, J. P. (2011). A legislative and judicial analysis of sexual relationships between American secondary students and their teachers [Doctoral dissertation]. Kent State University. https://etd.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_etd/send_file/send?accession=kent1300310479&disposition=inline
- 12 Jeglic, E. L., Calkins, C., Kaylor, L., Doychak, K., Blasko, B., Chesin, M., & Panza, N. (2022). The nature and scope of educator misconduct in K-12. *Sexual Abuse*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10790632221096421>

2.1 ADDITIONAL AREAS OF FOCUS

Building on our prior report from 2018 titled *Child Sexual Abuse by K-12 School Personnel in Canada*,¹³ we modified our process to capture information not previously examined. Primary differences from the last report include:

An Updated Records Timeframe

In this report we present a review of the most recent cases of child sexual abuse and misconduct by school personnel, using an examination period of 2017 to 2021.¹⁴

The Addition of Records from Québec

In our previous report, records from the province of Québec were excluded from our analysis due to resourcing and language constraints.¹⁵ This update to the last report now includes cases from Québec that could be identified through media and court records.

Identification of Online Platforms

Not all online platforms are the same, and nuances in their designs often cause them to be more or less favoured by offenders. Understanding the exact platforms used to victimize children is helpful from both research and public advocacy perspectives. It can also help influence policy regarding the use of electronic communication between teachers and students. This report provides details about the exact online platforms used by offenders when the information was available.

A Revised Framework for Categorizing Child Sexual Abuse and Victimization

This report presents a revised framework for categorizing child sexual abuse and victimization. This comprehensive framework categorizes and assigns sexually abusive and problematic behaviours to cases in a much more granular manner, described next.

13 Canadian Centre for Child Protection. (2019). The prevalence of sexual abuse by K-12 school personnel in Canada, 1997–2017. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 28(1), 46–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2018.1477218>

14 Any offence that occurred during the period of 2017 to 2021, whether it started or was a continuation from an earlier period or later were included within the dataset.

15 Canadian Centre for Child Protection. (2019). The prevalence of sexual abuse by K-12 school personnel in Canada, 1997–2017. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 28(1), 46–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2018.1477218>



2.2 OFFENCE TYPES AND CATEGORIZATION ISSUES

Neatly categorizing the wide range of offences poses a significant challenge for researchers. All classification systems come with strengths and weaknesses and shape our understanding of an issue in different ways.

There have been several proposed approaches by researchers to define, differentiate and categorize the various forms of child sexual abuse and victimization, with no agreed upon framework standard for conceptualization.^{16,17} In many cases, researchers use broad terms such as “grooming”, “sexual abuse”, “sexual assault”, and “sexual misconduct” to describe and categorize cases. However, there is no clear consensus or understanding of what behaviours are encompassed by these terms.

These categorization complexities are also evident in professional disciplinary processes and records. For example, a 2021 decision by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT)¹⁸ did not cite sexual abuse/misconduct in a decision where the statement of uncontested facts included the following behaviours:

- *Asking [the student] for her address and where she lived;*
- *Asking [the student] how old she was;*
- *Telling [the student] about problems with his girlfriend and that he wanted to be with someone else;*
- *Asking [the student] for her personal telephone number, including after she told him that she was [x] years old;*
- *Asking [the student] to go to the movies with him, including after she told him that she was [x] years old; and*
- *Providing his cellphone to [the student], which resulted in [the student] viewing images of sex dolls on his cellphone.*

In another OCT decision, a teacher was found guilty of professional misconduct for a series of violations, including referring to a student by an “inappropriate, sexualized name”.¹⁹ The College referred to this as emotional or psychological abuse, not sexual abuse nor sexual misconduct. While that observable action is consistent with the building blocks of sexual grooming, the case itself – under OCT’s framework – was not categorized as sexual in nature.

Thus, there is no accepted framework for categorizing offence types. Offence types are typically categorized by terms such as “child sexual abuse”, “sexual misconduct”, and “grooming” but there are inconsistencies in how these terms are defined and acknowledged. In this report, we opted to categorize offences as observable behaviours. This approach presents an opportunity to better understand sexual abuse perpetrated by school personnel and for interpreting and organizing information in a meaningful and consistent manner.

16 Clark, J. P. (2011). A legislative and judicial analysis of sexual relationships between American secondary students and their teachers [Doctoral dissertation]. Kent State University. https://etd.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_etd/send_file/send?accession=kent1300310479&disposition=inline

17 Winters, G. M., Jelglic, E. L., & Kaylor, L. E. (2020). Validation of the sexual grooming model of child sexual abusers. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 29*(7), 855-875. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2020.1801935>

18 Ontario College of Teachers v Cohen. (2021). ONOCT 96. <https://www.canlii.org/en/on/onocot/doc/2021/2021onocot96/2021onocot96.html>

19 Ontario College of Teachers v Béarez. (2022). ONOCT 14. <https://canlii.ca/t/jn3pw>

Revised Framework for Analysis

The previous iteration of this report published in 2018 broadly categorized tactics employed by offenders to gain sexual access to students as either grooming or opportunism, and classified cases on the basis of one of the following categories:

- Physical contact offences,
- Non-physical contact offences,
- Child sexual abuse material offences.

In this report, we have revised this initial categorization framework by creating theme-based sub-categories that reflect the broad spectrum of observable behaviours described in reports. In addition, each case was tagged with one or more offence themes in order to capture the full context of how the abuse unfolded. In total, this revised framework makes use of two main categories: physical contact offences, non-physical contact offences, and 14 subcategories. See Appendix for full details.

The result is a behaviour-based categorization framework that identifies a wide spectrum of offending behaviours while also capturing the nuanced, incremental, and multifaceted nature of child sexual abuse. Whether an offender communicated, isolated, coerced, or crossed the threshold into physically abusive behaviours are key details that contribute to understanding the circumstances of school personnel sexual abuse and misconduct. The behaviour-based framework presented in this report provides an evidentiary base for tailored prevention and intervention efforts. We used the framework to analyze instances of sexual abuse and misconduct perpetrated by school personnel that were reported in news media, court cases, and professional disciplinary records; however, few jurisdictions make professional disciplinary records public, and do so to varying degrees.

2.3 DEGREES OF TRANSPARENCY: DISCIPLINARY RECORDS ACCESS ACROSS JURISDICTIONS

The majority of provinces and territories in Canada do not make professional disciplinary records or information related to hearings available to the public. This includes the provinces of Manitoba, Québec, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, and all of the territories, Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. At the time of our 2018 report, only Ontario, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia made records on teacher discipline available to the public in some capacity. Since then, two additional provinces have joined them: Alberta and New Brunswick. The addition of these two jurisdictions suggests a trend toward increasing transparency as it relates to teacher discipline in Canada. Below we detail the varying transparency practices of these five jurisdictions.

Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA)

At the time of this report, the ATA's bylaws state they are to publish discipline decisions that resulted in a suspension or cancellation of a teacher's ATA membership as a result of unprofessional conduct. When a teacher had received a lesser penalty (i.e., a reprimand or fine) records were available only upon a request and only if the name of the teacher in question was known/provided. Given that the public is not formally made aware of teachers who have been investigated or penalized below the threshold of a membership suspension or cancellation, this can be characterized as a partial disclosure of discipline records. A total of 24 ATA discipline hearings were conducted in 2020, of which 83 counts of unprofessional conduct were substantiated across 24 members.²⁰ A large portion of these convictions (n=37) involved unprofessional conduct in relation to students. Eight hearings resulted in a suspension or cancellation of a teaching certificate.

In their Annual Report, the ATA notes 126 new requests for investigations were received, while 133 investigations were "completed" in 2020. It appears that of the 133 completed investigations, sufficient evidence to warrant hearings was found in 39 cases, 17 cases were cancelled when the complainant withdrew the request, and 32 cases were to proceed via an invitation process. An invitation process is described as a non-public and informal avenue for teachers facing misconduct allegations. There is no information about the remaining 45 completed investigations and why a hearing was not warranted in those cases.

With the passing of the *Education (Reforming Teacher Profession Discipline) Amendment Act* in May 2022, teacher discipline in Alberta is currently in a transitional phase in which disciplinary responsibility will be removed from the ATA and given to an arm's-length commissioner to oversee teacher conduct, teacher leader conduct, and competency complaints for the profession.²¹

Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board (SPTRB)

The SPTRB began operation in 2015. They publicly disclose the notice and schedule of disciplinary hearings.²² They publish the outcomes of Consensual Complaint Resolution Agreements, which are processes wherein a teacher has admitted to misconduct or incompetence, as well as Discipline Committee Decisions. The latter

²⁰ Alberta Teachers' Association. (2020). *Annual report*. <https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/About/What%20we%20do/COOR-28%2020%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

²¹ Government of Alberta. (2022). *Reforming teaching profession discipline*. <https://www.alberta.ca/improving-teacher-discipline.aspx>

²² Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board. (n.d.). *Hearing dates, agreements and decisions*. https://sptrb.ca/SPTRB/Professional_Standards/Hearing_Dates/SPTRB/Professional_Standards/Hearing_Dates__Agreements__and_Decisions.aspx?hkey=3c147b1e-c5f7-4a43-bc41-a23b2aa705af

are the SPTRB's most formal process for dealing with misconduct, structured in a similar way to a court proceeding. SPTRB sometimes publishes Cessation Agreements, which are described as an alternative process for temporary suspensions. The SPTRB also operates a public registry of names and certificate status of teachers registered for the current school year.

Ontario College of Teachers (OCT)

The OCT proactively discloses teacher misconduct in three main ways: a public registry, an archive of discipline records, and a hearing schedule. The OCT public registry returns results for individuals certified with the OCT. Information such as qualifications, status of certification, and discipline decisions when applicable is available for all certified teachers. Discipline committee decisions made by the OCT are published to an archive when a member is found guilty of professional misconduct or incompetent by a panel of the College's Discipline Committee.²³ OCT disciplinary decisions are also published on Canadian Legal Information Institute (CanLII). Additionally, hearing notices can be accessed on both a public hearing schedule and registry.²⁴

British Columbia Commissioner for Teacher Regulation (BCCTR)

The BCCTR manages two public databases in which summaries of disciplinary decisions are made known to the public: a discipline database as well as an online registry. The online registry provides information about current certificate holders and holders of a letter of permission, including the status of their teaching certificate or letter of permission, and records of disciplinary action. In general, the Discipline Database publishes two types of decisions (unless publicizing the case would cause hardship to the person who was harmed by the teacher): hearing decisions and consent resolution agreements (CRA). The CRA process is meant to avoid a citation and hearing, described as a voluntary process resulting in a published written agreement including information about what was decided and how it affects a teacher's certificate.²⁵ The CRA process is the more common approach to resolving disciplinary matters. In comparison, a hearing is described as a process similar to that of a court proceeding, where evidence and testimony are heard.²⁶

New Brunswick—Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

In July of 2021, the government of New Brunswick introduced the *Education Act* which included provisions for the creation of a Registry of Suspended and Revoked New Brunswick Teachers' Certificates. This registry includes the teacher's name, registration number assigned to the teacher's certificate, as well as the action taken against the teacher by the registrar with reasons. This registry is not retrospective; only suspensions and revocations related to misconduct occurring after July 1, 2021 are entered into the registry.²⁷

There were no professional discipline records published in New Brunswick's registry at the time of this report. As such, we only drew professional disciplinary records from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and British Columbia.

23 Ontario College of Teachers. (2022). *Discipline decisions*. <https://www.oct.ca/en/public/complaints-and-discipline/decisions>

24 Ontario College of Teachers. (2022). *Hearing schedule*. <https://www.oct.ca/members/complaints-and-discipline/hearing-schedule?View=Name>

25 Government of British Columbia. (2021). *Discipline process: Consent resolution agreement*. Government of British Columbia. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/boards-commissions-tribunals/commissioner-for-teacher-regulation/discipline-process/consent-resolution-agreement>

26 Government of British Columbia. (2021). *Discipline process: Hearing*. Government of British Columbia. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/boards-commissions-tribunals/commissioner-for-teacher-regulation/discipline-process/hearing>

27 Government of New Brunswick. (2021). *Education and early childhood development: Registry of suspended and revoked New Brunswick teachers' certificates*. <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education/k12/content/registry.html>

3. STUDY METHODOLOGY

3.1 RECORD INCLUSION CRITERIA

For records to be included in this study, they needed to meet the following three conditions:

- The offender or alleged offender worked in or provided services to a primary, middle, or secondary school in Canada. Consequently this criteria is not solely limited to teachers. Other school personnel that were defined within the inclusion criteria include educational assistants, custodians, school bus drivers, school bus monitors, student teachers, principals and vice-principals, guidance counselors, support staff, and school volunteers;
- The offender or alleged offender was charged with or found guilty of professional misconduct and that misconduct was or appeared to be of a sexual nature involving children, and/or was charged with a sexual criminal offence involving children (which includes child pornography-related offences); and
- The timeframe of the overall offending period intersects with the study's timeframe of 2017 to 2021 inclusively.

For simplicity and readability, the term "offence" is used throughout this report to refer to any incident in a record that met the inclusion criteria. Likewise, the term "offender" is used in this report to broadly refer to school personnel implicated in a record meeting the inclusion criteria whether a decision has been rendered or not.

3.2 DATA SOURCES AND COLLECTION

All records in this study were collected from three publicly available sources:

- Disciplinary records published by professional bodies that certify or are involved in the regulation of teachers (i.e., proactive disclosure);
- Reports by media (i.e., media cases);
- Written decisions of reported Canadian case law (i.e., legal cases).

Table 1 illustrates which data sources provided us with information for each jurisdiction. There were two jurisdictions (Northwest Territories and Nunavut) in which no records relevant to the study period could be found.

Table 1. Data sources used in this study, by jurisdiction

	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PE	NL	YT	NT	NU
Disciplinary records	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓						
Media Cases	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Legal Cases	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓					

Every disciplinary decision regarding school personnel professional misconduct was reviewed to determine if it met the criteria for inclusion in the study. An internet search was performed to see if details had been reported in the media and if so, any relevant supplementary information was added to the dataset. Internet searches were also used to collect additional cases that were not reported across disciplinary records. Canadian case law provided further information and cases.

3.3 ANALYTIC APPROACH

C3P research analysts read through each case to assess whether it met inclusion criteria. They created a relational database of all cases that met the criteria. Following a codebook, researchers coded information about the offenders, victims, professional body, offence type (as per our framework), and criminal details. We used Pandas (Python), an open-source data-science software, to calculate frequencies and percentages for these case characteristics. Due to rounding, percentages will not all total 100 percent.

3.4 LIMITATIONS

Lack of Publicly Available Records

As noted, many provinces and territories do not publicly report on school personnel discipline. As such, our report is limited to the available records and therefore underestimates the prevalence of school personnel that committed or were accused of committing offences against children.

Minimum Number of Victims

In several cases, the exact number of victims was not available, however it was known that a group of students of an unknown size had been victimized. In these cases, it could be logically inferred that at least one victim was victimized. These minimum numbers form part of the report's total reported number of victims. This means the true number of victims is greater than what is reported in this study.

Bias Toward Most Serious Behaviours

Public reports of child sexual abuse often fail to capture the totality of offending behaviour. Reports frequently lack details regarding grooming patterns and other relevant details, and solely focus on what are perceived as the most serious outcomes. In addition, the threshold for disciplinary bodies to release information publicly in the first place generally requires that incidents or allegations involve more severe levels of abuse. This means cases not meeting the publication threshold are more likely to remain unreported.

Caution with Attempts to Establish Trends

It must be emphasized that this report does not represent the totality of cases across Canada over the timeframe of the study. Due to the unavailability of records and different reporting standards in many jurisdictions, this study is an under-representation of the true volume of school personnel who have offended or allegedly offended against children. For this reason, comparing the volume of cases across regions and over time is not recommended.

In addition, the findings of this report and the 2018 report *Child Sexual Abuse by K-12 School Personnel in Canada* are not directly comparable. Some of the data collection procedures and categorization decisions have changed, as have the provinces that disclose and publish professional discipline records. In addition, the 2018 report spanned the timeframe from 1997 to 2017, which overlaps with a period in time where many public records had yet to be published on the internet or available in digital formats, and were therefore more difficult or labour-intensive to access. The current report covers cases from a narrower window of time.

3.5 DATA STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION

Data throughout this report may be presented as a whole (i.e., inclusive of all instances), according to victim, offender, or as a subset of data as indicated by the context. Not all data points could be reliably ascertained for all instances studied.



4. ANALYSIS

4.1 VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

Minimum Number of Victims

A total of 493 known victims were identified in this study. The term “known victims” means victims for whom a victim entry was entered in the database when sufficient information was available to know the precise number of victims in a case. In some cases, reports described cases of abuse or victimization but did not quantify the number of victims. In these cases, we assigned a minimum value of one (n=1) to each case, for a total of at least 55 additional victims. This means a total of **at least** 548 children were sexually abused or victimized by a person who worked at or provided direct services at a Canadian school between 2017 and 2021 inclusively.

Table 2. Minimum number of victims (n=548)

	N	%
Known victims	493	89.9%
Cases of unknown number of victims	55	10.1%



Gender

In cases where the gender could be confirmed, 71.1 percent of victims were female (n=283), while 28.9 percent of victims were male (n=115). In 95 cases the gender could not be determined.

Table 3. Gender of victims (n=398)
When gender could be determined.

	N	%
Female	283	71.1%
Male	115	28.9%

School Grade Level

When the school grade level was known or could be inferred²⁸ for known victims, the vast majority of cases involved high school students. For males (n=41) 83 percent of victims were in high school, and for females (n=122) 62 percent were in high school. In 74 cases for males and 161 cases for female victims, there was insufficient information to determine the grade level.

Of note is the fact that the case volumes for female victims is more evenly distributed across the grade levels compared to males. Previous studies have found that older children are more likely to report their abuse^{29,30,31} and that boys generally take more time to report in comparison to females.^{32,33} These findings offer a potential, but simplified, explanation for the greater representation of high school students and females within the collected records.

Table 4. Grade level of all victims, by gender (n=41)
When grade level and gender could be determined.

	FEMALE		MALE	
	N	%	N	%
Elementary school	21	17.2%	4	9.8%
Middle school	25	20.5%	3	7.3%
High school	76	56.9%	34	82.9%

28 Although approximations, the following age divisions by school are employed in this study: students are 5 to 10 years old in elementary school, 11 to 13 years old in middle school, and 14 to 19 years old in high school. This rule was used to make a grade level determination when only age or date of birth was available.

29 Lippert, T., Cross, T. P., Jones, L., & Walsh, W. (2009). Telling interviewers about sexual abuse: Predictors of child disclosure at forensic interviews. *Child Maltreatment, 14*(1), 100-113. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559508318398>

30 Goodman-Brown T.B., Edelstein, R.S., Goodman G. S., Jones, D. P. H., & Gordon, D. S. (2003). Why children tell: A model of children's disclosure of sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 27*(5), 525-40. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(03\)00037-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(03)00037-1)

31 Hershkowitz, I., Lanes, O., & Lamb, M. E. (2007). Exploring the disclosure of child sexual abuse with alleged victims and their parents. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 31*, 111-123. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2006.09.004>

32 Lippert, T., Cross, T. P., Jones, L., & Walsh, W. (2009). Telling interviewers about sexual abuse: Predictors of child disclosure at forensic interviews. *Child Maltreatment, 14*(1), 100-113. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077559508318398>

33 Easton, S.D. (2013). Disclosure of Child Sexual Abuse Among Adult Male Survivors. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 41*, 344-355. <https://doi-org.uwinnipeg.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s10615-012-0420-3>

Vulnerability

In total, 31 victims who had vulnerabilities, aside from the inherent vulnerability of their age, were identified. The most commonly described type of vulnerability was personal difficulties.³⁴

Table 5. Vulnerabilities among victims (n=31)
When vulnerabilities could be determined.

	N	%
Personal difficulties	16	51.6%
Family difficulties	8	25.8%
Disability/special needs	7	22.6%

Disclosure and Discovery of Abuse

Records for 82 of the known victims included sufficient information to determine whether the abuse was either disclosed or discovered. In 63.4 percent of these cases (n=52), the victim had disclosed the abuse, whereas someone else discovered the abuse in the remaining cases.

Table 6. Disclosure and discovery (n=82)
When disclosure or discovery could be determined.

	N	%
Disclosed	52	63.4%
Discovered	30	36.5%

³⁴ Information regarding vulnerabilities were generally subject to redactions within documentation.



Disclosure

Of the 52 victims where disclosure details were known, the gender could be identified in all but three cases. Based on these observations, the rate of disclosure for females was 13.4 percent while males disclosed in 9.6 percent of cases. Details surrounding victim disclosure were often limited or non-existent and so these figures represent an incomplete picture of the true extent of disclosures among students.

Another important factor to note is that often children who have been sexually abused do not disclose or, especially in the case of younger victims, may not even recognize they are being abused or victimized.³⁵

Table 7. Disclosure, by gender (n=49)

When disclosure and gender could be determined.

	N (KNOWN VICTIMS WITH CONFIRMED DISCLOSURES)	N (TOTAL KNOWN VICTIMS)	DISCLOSURE RATE
Female	38	283	13.4%
Male	11	115	9.6%

Focusing on the various groups of individuals to whom victims have disclosed their abuse, female victims reported their abuse most frequently to school personnel (n=20) in 52.6 percent of cases. For males, disclosure was most common with family members (n=7) in 63.6 percent of cases.

Table 8. To whom did victims disclose their abuse? (n=49)

When disclosure and gender could be determined.

	FEMALE		MALE	
	N	%	N	%
Family	6	15.8%	7	63.6%
Friend	5	13.2%	3	27.3%
School personnel	21	55.2%	0	-
Police	5	13.2%	0	-
Therapist	0	-	1	9.1%
Unspecified	1	2.6%	0	-

35 Goodman-Brown T.B., Edelstein, R. S., Goodman G. S., Jones, D. P. H., & Gordon, D. S. (2003). Why children tell: A model of children's disclosure of sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 27(5), 525-40. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(03\)00037-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(03)00037-1)

Discovery

When looking across cases where the abuse was discovered, it was most often by a family member of the victim (n=10) in 33.3 percent of cases. In 13.3 percent of cases, the abuse was discovered by the offender's partner, police, or school personnel (for each group, n=4).

Table 9. Who discovered the abuse? (n=30)

When the person who discovered the abuse could be determined.

	N	%
Family of victim	10	33.3%
Partner of offender	4	13.3%
School personnel	4	13.3%
Police	4	13.3%
Anonymous tip	3	10.0%
Other	2	6.7%
Friend of victim	2	6.7%
Student	1	3.3%

4.2 OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS

Demographics

When the gender could be confirmed, 84.5 percent of offenders (n=245) were male and 14.5 percent of offenders were female (n=42). For one percent of offenders (n=3), the gender was unknown.

Table 10. Gender of offenders (n=290)

	N	%
Male	245	84.5%
Female	42	14.5%
Unknown	3	0.1%

When known, the ages of offenders ranged from 21 to 77 years. The mean age of male offenders was 44.3 years, while the mean age of female offenders was 35.4 years.

Number of Victims per Offender

The number of victims per offender ranged from one to 29 victims.³⁶ The average number of victims per offender was 2.2. In the majority of cases, offenders either victimized males only or females only; seven offenders victimized male and female children.

Table 11. Number of victims per offender (n=220)

	N	%
One victim	130	59.0%
Two victims	42	19.0%
Three victims	20	9.0%
Four victims	8	4.0%
Five or more victims	20	9.0%

Roles and School Type

Teachers represent the largest group of offenders (n=250), which is to be expected given that they represent the largest group of personnel within schools and are subject to professional oversight. Support staff (n=11) represent 3.8 percent while both administrative staff (n=8) and custodians (n=8) each represent 2.8 percent of offenders.

Table 12. Offender's primary role (n=290)

	N	%
Teacher	250	86.2%
Support staff	11	3.8%
Administration	8	2.8%
Custodian	8	2.8%
Bus driver	5	1.7%
Other educator	2	0.7%
Coach	1	0.3%
Other	5	1.7%

³⁶ These figures exclude cases with only child pornography offences.

Along with their primary role inside of schools, 42 offenders were known to have secondary roles that provided them with further access to children. At 73.8 percent, coaching positions were the most commonly reported secondary role for offenders (n=31).

Table 13. Offender's secondary role (n=42)

When a secondary role could be determined.

	N	%
Coach	31	73.8%
Other	7	16.7%
Tutor	1	2.4%
Counsellor	1	2.4%
Volunteer	1	2.4%
Daycare provider	1	2.4%

When sufficient details were available to assess the broad category type of the schools where offenders were employed or provided services, 62 percent of schools were secular public schools (n=102), 24 percent were public or private Catholic/Christian schools (n=39), and 14% were private secular schools or non-Catholic/Christian faith-based schools.

Note that the figures presented in Table 14 are not adjusted to reflect the total number of schools within each group in Canada. For example, while there are more than double the number of public secular schools compared to Catholic/Christian ones in the table, public secular schools outnumber Catholic/Christian schools across the country. In Ontario, for example, there are more than 3,100 public secular schools, while there are just over 1,600 public Catholic schools.³⁷

Table 14. Type of school at which the offender worked (n=163)

	N	%
Public secular	102	62.2%
Catholic/Christian	39	23.9%
Other/private	22	13.5%

37 King's Printer for Ontario. (2022). 2020-2021 Academic Year [Data set]. Government of Ontario. https://data.ontario.ca/dataset/81c48bca-938c-413c-8c35-a33f96ed8660/resource/11f6940b-7485-43a0-a9c6-90866156dc69/download/number_of_schools_en_2020-2021.txt

4.3 OFFENCE DETAILS

Offending Behaviours

The following tables describe the broad spectrum and frequency of offending behaviours noted throughout the various public documents used as part of this study. Since sexual abuse often involves a series of incremental events (i.e., grooming), any given victim may have been subjected to one or more of the offending behaviour categories shown in Tables 15 and 16.

Of the main offending behaviour categories, non-physical contact offences (n=470) were the most frequently observed, representing more than half (54.7 percent) of recorded offences. Just over a third (36.8 percent) of recorded offences involved physical contact (n=316).

Table 15. Observed offending behaviours by main offence categories (n=859)

MAIN OFFENCE CATEGORIES	N	%
Non-physical contact	470	54.7%
Physical contact	316	36.8%

Table 16 further subdivides the main offending behaviour categories from Table 15 into sub-categories (see Appendix for a description of each sub-category).

For example, if a teacher was found to have kissed a student and engaged in texting inappropriate messages late at night, this singular case would be tagged with the following offending behaviour subcategories:

- Physical contact: Kissing
- Non-physical contact: Inappropriate communication

For non-physical contact offending behaviours, inappropriate communication was the most commonly observed across all victim genders. Inappropriate communication includes not only communication that is inappropriate based on the nature of the conversation, but also communication that occurs at inappropriate times (e.g., middle of the night), takes place on a non-school sanctioned communication service or happens at a frequency beyond what would be considered appropriate by a reasonable observer. Table 16 also shows that strategies designed to create opportunities to gain access or to isolate victims, both physically or socially, are also common.

For physical contact offending, inappropriate touching (that is not overtly sexual) was the most commonly cited behaviour across males and females. Several records did not provide sufficient information to determine the nature of the physical contact offending, as a result many cases with unspecified physical offending were categorized as "other/unknown".

Table 16. Observed offending behaviours, by subcategories and gender of victim (n=859)

		FEMALE		MALE		UNKNOWN	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Non-physical contact	Inappropriate communication	170	62.5%	60	44.8%	32	50%
	Gaining access/isolation	34	12.5%	19	14.2%	6	9.4%
	Solicitation/coercion	24	8.8%	12	9.0%	5	7.8%
	Invasion of physical privacy/space	17	6.3%	22	16.4%	12	18.8%
	Favouritism	13	4.8%	6	4.5%	2	3.1%
	Inappropriate content/substances	12	4.4%	10	7.5%	7	10.9%
	In-person exposure	1	0.4%	5	3.7%	-	-
	Other/unknown	1	0.4%	-	-	-	-
	Total	272	100%	134	100%	64	100%
Physical contact	Touching	76	40.2%	21	31.8%	18	29.5%
	Other/unknown	44	23.3%	21	31.8%	40	65.6%
	Fondling	43	22.8%	7	10.6%	3	4.9%
	Kissing	15	7.9%	7	10.6%	-	-
	Penetration	9	4.8%	6	9.1%	-	-
	Oral	2	1.1%	4	6.1%	-	-
	Total	189	100%	66	100%	61	100%

Physical Contact Offences

For offenders who engaged in at least one physical contact offence, males offenders (n=126) were responsible for 81.8 percent of all recorded contact offences.

Table 17. Gender of physical contact offenders (n=152)

	N	%
Male	126	82.9%
Female	26	17.1%

In total, 84.5 percent of recorded contact offences by male offenders (n=136) were committed against female victims, whereas 15.5 percent of these offences (n=25) were against male victims.

Table 18. Victim gender of male physical contact offenders (n=161)

	N	%
Female	136	84.5%
Male	25	15.5%

In total, 76.7 percent of recorded contact offences by female offenders (n=23) were committed against male victims, whereas 23.3 percent of these offences (n=7) were against female victims.

Table 19. Victim gender of female physical contact offenders (n=161)

	N	%
Male	23	76.7%
Female	7	23.3%

Non-Physical Offences

For offenders who engaged in at least one non-physical contact offence, male offenders (n=150) were responsible for 82.9 percent of all observed non-physical contact offences.

Table 20. Gender of non-physical contact offenders (n=181)

	N	%
Male	150	82.9%
Female	31	17.1%

In total, 77 percent of recorded contact offences by male offenders (n=191) were committed against female victims, whereas 23 percent of these offences (n=57) were against male victims.

Table 21. Victim gender of male non-physical contact offenders (n=248)

	N	%
Female	191	77.0%
Male	57	23.0%

In total, 77.3 percent of recorded contact offences by female offenders (n=34) were committed against male victims, whereas 22.7 percent of these offences (n=10) were against female victims.

Table 22. Victim gender of female non-physical contact offenders (n=44)

	N	%
Male	34	77.3%
Female	10	22.7%

Locations of Offences

The findings below represent the collection of locations where offenders abused victims. When the location of the abuse was known, some or all of the offending occurred on school property 58.8 percent of the time (n=100). Twenty-two offenders were known to have abused victims in two or more locations.

Table 23. Locations where abuse took place (n=170)³⁸
When location could be determined.

	N	%
School property	100	58.8%
Offender property (e.g., home, car)	31	18.2%
Public area	17	10.0%
Other	15	8.8%
Victim property (e.g., home, car)	7	4.1%

Online Platforms and Technology Use

Sufficient information was available to confirm the use of some form of technology to facilitate the abuse of victims for 40 percent of offenders (n=116). Snapchat (n=21), Instagram (n=20), and Facebook (n=16) were the most noted platforms.

The previous iteration of this report found upwards of 80 percent of offenders used technology in cases after 2016, which is higher than what was observed throughout the cases studied in this report. Readers are cautioned not to infer from this that the use of technology as part of student victimization in schools is declining. The data collected to produce each report varied greatly with each report having its own limitations. Moreover, the general ubiquity of technology as a means of communication, and trends in national crime statistics³⁹ demonstrating dramatic increases in online child sexual exploitation and abuse, suggests the use of technology to victimize children is in fact rising across all areas of society, including school environments.

³⁸ Certain offenders abused children over one or more locations.

³⁹ Ibrahim, D. (2022, May 12). *Online child sexual exploitation and abuse in Canada: A statistical profile of police-reported incidents and court charges, 2014 to 2020*. Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00008-eng.htm>

Table 24. Online platforms used to facilitate abuse (n=67), top 7 only

	N
Snapchat	21
Instagram	20
Facebook	16
Google Chat	3
Skype	3
Grindr	2
Tumblr	2

4.4 CRIMINAL AND DISCIPLINARY OUTCOMES

Criminal Charges

This study found a total of 176 teachers that have been criminally accused of one or more charges while 115 had no known related criminal charges. The greatest number of charges laid against a single offender was 50. It involved an Ontario teacher who was arrested and charged with several child pornography and child luring offences.⁴⁰

Table 25. Number of charges (n=291)

	N	%
No charges	115	39.5%
1 to 5 charges	141	48.5%
6 to 10 charges	21	7.2%
11 to 15 charges	6	2.1%
More than 15 charges	8	2.7%

40 Ontario College of Teachers v. Ly. (2021). ONOCT 141. <https://www.canlii.org/en/on/onocot/doc/2020/2020onocot141/2020onocot141.html>

The criminal charges identified as part of this study cover a wide spectrum of offences. When considering all charge counts laid against school personnel, sexual assault (n=181), sexual interference (n=137), and sexual exploitation (n=87) were the most frequent. Note that Table 26 does not represent the number of offenders being charged with various offences, but rather the total number of charges laid for all offenders.

Combined, child pornography-related offences – possessing, making, distributing, accessing – also accounted for a large portion (n=194) of charges laid against school personnel. The number of charges for making child pornography is skewed upwards due to a single outlier case where a teacher in Nova Scotia was charged with 25 counts for this criminal code offence.⁴¹

Table 26. Most common criminal charges laid (all charge counts included), top 15 only

	N	% OF ALL CRIMINAL CHARGES
Sexual assault	181	23.1%
Sexual interference	137	17.5%
Sexual exploitation	87	11.1%
Possession of child pornography	76	9.7%
Luring a child	76	9.7%
Making child pornography	54	6.9%
Distribution of child pornography	39	5.0%
Invitation to sexual touching	32	4.1%
Accessing child pornography	25	3.2%
Making sexually explicit material available to child	23	2.9%
Assault	13	1.7%
Voyeurism	6	0.8%
Exposure	4	0.5%
Abduction of person under age of 16	4	0.5%
Extortion	3	0.4%

⁴¹ Kaiser, L. (2021, April 9). Former Riverview, N.B., basketball coach sentenced to 9 years for making child pornography. *CTV News*. <https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/former-riverview-n-b-basketball-coach-sentenced-to-9-years-for-making-child-pornography-1.5381574>

When a legal decision was known, most school personnel who were charged with a criminal offence within this dataset plead guilty (n=67) in 65 percent of cases. In 18.4 percent of cases (n=19), the offender was found guilty at trial.

Table 27. Criminal decisions (n=103)
When criminal decisions could be determined.

	N	%
Guilty plea	67	65.0%
Finding of guilt	19	18.4%
Stay/withdrawn	12	11.7%
Acquittal	5	4.9%

When sentencing outcomes were known, 77.2 percent of offenders (n=61) received a sentence that included time in prison or jail. Within this group, 31 percent were sentenced to two or more years in prison, whereas 69 percent received less than two years jail time.

The longest prison sentence imposed was 18 years. The case involved an offender from Québec who was charged with, among other things, human trafficking, sexual assault, and a series of charges related to child pornography.⁴²

Table 28. Sentencing outcomes (n=97)
When sentencing outcomes could be determined

	N	%
Prison/jail term	61	77.2%
Community-based sanctions	18	22.8%

⁴² Cherry, P. (2021, August 18). Montrealer sentenced to 18 years after buying, sexually assaulting African child. *Montreal Gazette*. <https://montrealgazette.com/news/montreal-man-who-used-girl-from-africa-as-sex-slave-gets-18-year-term>



Exclusively Child Pornography Cases

School personnel suspected or found exclusively guilty of child pornography offences were overwhelmingly male (n=37), representing 97.4 percent of these types of cases. There was only one female (n=1) in this category, representing 2.6 percent of cases. The mean age of male offenders in this group was 47.5 years.

Table 29. Primary occupation for child pornography only cases (n=38)

	N	%
Teacher	26	68.4%
Support staff	3	7.9%
Administrator	3	7.9%
Custodian	3	7.9%
Other	2	5.3%
Bus driver	1	2.6%

Professional Discipline

As discussed throughout this report, the unavailability of disciplinary records across several Canadian jurisdictions explains the stark underrepresentation of records from many provinces and territories, as illustrated in Table 30. For this reason, readers should avoid comparing trends or case volumes across provinces and territories.

Table 30. Professional misconduct investigation underway or completed (n=165)⁴³

When professional misconduct investigations could be determined.

	N	%
Ontario	106	64.2%
British Columbia	41	24.8%
Alberta	13	7.9%
Saskatchewan	3	1.8%
Québec	2	1.2%

⁴³ As of July 1, 2021, New Brunswick makes public a registry of suspended and revoked teachers' certificates. However, since this change in reporting occurred, no records have been added to the registry, which can be accessed here: <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education/k12/content/registry.html>

When the details of professional sanctions imposed on a teacher were known, 51 percent of offenders saw their teaching certificate revoked, cancelled, or never to be renewed (n=70). Nearly nine percent of offenders agreed to resign during the disciplinary hearing process (n=12). Other sanctions such as reprimands, suspensions, fines, counselling, and boundary trainings were imposed for 40 percent of teachers (n=55).

Table 31. Professional sanction outcomes (n=137)

When professional sanctions could be determined.

	N	%
Certificate nullified (Teaching certificate revoked, cancelled, or never to be renewed)	70	51.1%
Other (Combination of reprimand, suspension, fine, counselling, psychiatric assessment, and/or courses on professional boundaries)	55	40.1%
Resigned (Agreed to resign during the disciplinary hearing after which teaching certificate was cancelled)	12	8.8%



5. DISCUSSION

Through the analysis of public media articles, court decisions, and available professional disciplinary records, this study identified a minimum of 548 students who were sexually abused or victimized by personnel working in Canadian schools between 2017 and 2021 inclusively. Although not directly comparable in all cases, the findings closely mirrored the results of the first iteration of this report in 2018. While some positive structural changes have happened since that time, our findings, experience, and work alongside survivors suggest that many of the fundamental gaps that put children at risk in schools persist and must be addressed.

5.1 EXAMPLES OF ENCOURAGING CHANGES

As noted throughout this document, a contributing factor to the lack of a system-wide framework designed to prevent harm and to intervene appropriately is exacerbated by the lack of transparency in regards to teacher discipline records and outcomes in the majority of provinces and territories. Access to the information contained in these records is crucial for helping identify problematic behaviours and learn from them before they cause life-altering harm. However, some recent improvements on this front have been made.

For example, both New Brunswick and Alberta now make at least some teacher disciplinary records available to the public. In Alberta, recent reforms lead to the creation of a new body called the Alberta Teaching Profession Commission and the appointment of an arm's-length commissioner to oversee teacher and teacher leader conduct and competency complaints. The reform also called for the establishment of an online registry of teachers and school administrators,⁴⁴ which includes information about professional standing for teachers, all legal names known to the registrar, certificate status/details and disciplinary decisions. This has been in effect since September 1, 2022.⁴⁵

Other changes include new mandatory online training on professional boundaries and identifying problematic behaviours for all teachers certified by the Ontario College of Teachers' as of January 1, 2022.⁴⁶ In partnership with C3P, existing and new teachers are now required to complete the Commit to Kids⁴⁷ training program while new and returning applicants must successfully complete it to be eligible for certification. To date, more than 232,000 Ontario teachers have completed the training program. Conversations are ongoing with other education stakeholders across the country to determine if similar requirements can be established province- or territory-wide in other jurisdictions.

⁴⁴ Province of Alberta. (2022). *Teacher and teacher leader registry*. <https://www.alberta.ca/teacher-and-teacher-leader-registry.aspx>

⁴⁵ Province of Alberta. (2022). *Reforming teaching profession discipline*. <https://www.alberta.ca/improving-teacher-discipline.aspx>

⁴⁶ Ontario College of Teachers. (2021, September 1). *Development of mandatory sexual abuse prevention program for Ontario Certified Teachers*. <https://www.oct.ca/public/media/press-releases/2021/20210824>

⁴⁷ Canadian Centre for Child Protection. (2022). *Commit to Kids*. <https://protectchildren.ca/en/programs-and-initiatives/commit-to-kids/>

5.2 ISSUES OF GREATEST CONCERN

Despite these encouraging shifts, several systemic changes are needed to prevent and respond to sexual abuse and misconduct in Canadian schools. While schools have policies regarding the reporting of child sexual abuse, major gaps persist.

Based on the findings of this and our 2018 report, as well as our work in child protection and alongside survivors, the following key points have been identified as being among the most problematic issues in Canadian school systems as it relates to the safety of children:

1. **Most systems involved in the intake, investigation, and discipline of school personnel lack independent oversight and are not publicly transparent in either their processes or their decision making. In addition, there are often multiple disjointed entities involved in the process with no one body being ultimately accountable.**
2. **In certain provinces and territories, unions representing the interest of its members are involved in the discipline process, creating a serious conflict of interest.**
3. **Reporting protocols for sexual misconduct in school environments are not fit for the purpose. While such protocols may address instances that involve acts that reach a criminal threshold, early indicators of problematic sexual behaviour are not being addressed appropriately, if at all.**
4. **Reports or concerns of sexual misconduct or boundary violation behaviours that are not formally investigated by police or child welfare do not appear to be consistently recorded. It is unclear what monitoring may be occurring with these lower level concerns, meaning that valuable indicators of problematic behaviours are often lost or insufficiently documented to allow for the long-term monitoring of personnel.**
5. **In many jurisdictions, findings of misconduct do not meet a public disclosure threshold and are therefore never made public.**
6. **Most provinces and territories have inconsistent child sexual abuse awareness training for staff, students, and parents. In addition, many jurisdictions lack trauma informed responses to victims.**

To illustrate how several of these issues of concern can manifest in practice, we use Manitoba as an example. There, the Manitoba Teachers' Society acts as the union representing the interest of its members, the professional advocacy body for the profession in the province, and is also directly involved under some circumstances in the investigation and discipline of teachers – a fact that has drawn criticism from some observers.^{48,49,50} Manitoba also does not proactively disclose professional disciplinary records.

Recently, a long-time high school gym teacher and football coach in Manitoba was charged with 30 sexual assault and exploitation-related charges. Media reports^{51,52} suggest several individuals, including parents, teachers and students had identified problematic behaviours and went as far as to formally report them. Although complaints eventually led to a formal intervention with the accused teacher, the number of allegations that have surfaced suggests there were multiple failures in the systems meant to keep kids safe. During the time period of the charges, Manitoba did not require that all school personnel receive training to identify and prevent the risk of child sexual abuse.

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49 Grabish, A. (2019, December 19). Records reveal 20 Manitoba teachers suspended for misconduct, including 14 convicted of sexual offences. *CBC News*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/teachers-suspended-discipline-records-1.5396165>

50 Clarke, K. (2022, October 4). Lack of transparency in Manitoba teacher discipline 'disturbing'. *Winnipeg Free Press*. <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/2022/10/04/lack-of-transparency-in-manitoba-teacher-discipline-disturbing>

51 Hamilton, J. (2022, September 16). The Kelsey McKay playbook. *Winnipeg Free Press*. <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/featured/2022/09/16/intimidating-untouchable-no-longer>

52 CBC News. (2022, October 14). Winnipeg high school football coach accused of sexual abuse charged with 6 new offences. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/kelsey-mckay-coach-teacher-sexual-abuse-new-charges-1.6616535>

5.3 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the course of this study, C3P collaborated closely with Stop Educator Child Exploitation (SECE), a grassroots organization composed of survivors of sexual abuse and violence at the hands of school personnel in Canadian schools. Their lived experience and special victim-centric insights into the safety deficiencies within schools were invaluable to this process and to the development of the recommendations below.

The following recommendations are designed to address the issues of concern identified in the previous section.

1. Independent Oversight and Adjudication of Complaints

All provinces and territories must establish a framework, supported by legislation, that ensures all complaints and concerns of a sexual nature related to any person working in school environment (e.g., teachers, administrators, bus drivers, therapists, educational assistants, custodial staff) are reported to a singular specialized and child-centre public body that is fully independent and free from the conflicts of interest present in many existing systems.

Establishing an independent regulatory body that is empowered to receive and respond to all such complaints and concerns is particularly important when the complaint relates to sexualized misconduct involving a child who is a student in that educational environment.

Those tasked with the investigation, adjudication, and sanction determination within this body must be trained on issues particular to child sexual abuse, such as grooming. Such training will help ensure there is a common understanding of the situations that present risk to children, which will in turn ensure a consistent approach to all matters. The processes followed by the body throughout the investigative process must be trauma-informed, with the safety and well-being of children as a core objective.

Finally, there must be clear processes in place to ensure matters assessed as potentially criminal in nature are reported for investigation by police or child protection authorities. An independent body would increase public confidence in the school system and the safety of children by:

- Ensuring there is consistency in the approach to, and management of, complaints and concerns, thus taking this responsibility out of the hands of individual schools and school divisions;
- Reducing the appearance of any perceived conflicts of interest (from teacher unions, political parties, etc.); and
- Sending a strong message about the seriousness of sexual misconduct in educational environments.

2. Public Accountability and Access to the Disciplinary Process and Outcomes

To ensure there is public accountability for decisions being made in this context, disciplinary records that pertain to professional misconduct or boundary transgressions involving a child should be made publicly available and centralized nationally. With a singular location to house these records, a more holistic approach to designing prevention and intervention strategies can take place. It also serves as a transparent and accessible screening tool for school divisions who may be considering a candidate as part of a hiring process who has worked in another province or territory.

3. Mandatory Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Awareness Training at the School Level

To reduce the prevalence of sexual misconduct in school environments, all individuals within these systems must be equipped with the tools needed to recognize, prevent, and report sexual abuse, misconduct, and boundary violations. For school personnel, this should consist of structured and mandatory annual training. For students, it should consist of education curricula designed to equip them with the tools needed to recognize and report boundary transgressions, as well as sexual abuse or misconduct, within the school system or elsewhere.

4. Trauma-Informed Victim Support

Within the current systems the needs of victims are often not considered in a formalized and structured way. More supports need to be in place for child-victims, including access to counselling and psychological support throughout the complaints process and beyond.



6. CONCLUSION

This report provides the most comprehensive public snapshot of child sexual abuse and misconduct committed by school personnel in Canadian K-12 schools between 2017 and 2021. It must be noted, however, that the information reported throughout this study represents only a subsection of the true extent of the problem as many more cases – those that were not disclosed, discovered, brought to justice, or reported publicly – are not captured. The key recommendations are intended to reduce this lack of transparency, increase accountability of school personnel, and ultimately, prevent child sexual abuse and misconduct.

Implementing the recommendations contained in this report will require system-wide policy changes. Changes such as these are challenging and require concerted efforts, but they are not impossible. Other institutions in Canadian society, such as the military^{53,54} and universities^{55,56,57} have recently made important strides in response to public pressure and the advocacy of survivors.^{58,59,60}

C3P will continue to advocate for these changes by working closely with governments, professional associations and teacher certification bodies, as well as school districts to foster safe, healthy and thriving learning environments for school aged children across Canada.

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APPENDIX: OFFENCE TYPE CATEGORIES AND DESCRIPTIONS

MAIN CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES	DESCRIPTION
Physical contact	Penetration	When a person penetrates another person's vagina or anus with any part of the body, or by using an object.
Physical contact	Oral	Contact between the mouth and the genitals or anus; fellatio, cunnilingus, or anilingus.
Physical contact	Fondling	The touching of genitals, anus, pubic region, buttocks, or female breasts.
Physical contact	Kissing	Involves the contact between lips/mouth and other body parts, but excludes oral sex.
Physical contact	Touching	Involves the touching of all other body parts not included in "fondling", but excludes kissing.
Physical contact	Other/unknown	All other physical contact incidents not captured in the above categories.
Non-physical contact	Inappropriate communication	Any communication, using any medium (verbal, video, text, etc.) that is inappropriate unto itself, on the basis of subject matter (offensiveness, sexual nature, overly private, beyond scope of academic requirements, etc.). Inappropriate communication also includes characteristics beyond subject matter such as frequency, timing or communication channel. This category excludes offences that fall under "Solicitation/coercion".
Non-physical contact	Solicitation/coercion	Any communication that contains an explicit or implicit request for something from a student that is not related to normal school activities. The requests may be for physical items, physical contact, emotional commitments, or anything that imposes an inappropriate expectation of the student. These communications may also contain threats, warnings, requests to not disclose information or to keep secrets.
Non-physical contact	Favouritism	Actions that demonstrate favouritism or preferentialism toward a student. This includes personal favours, non-conventional gift giving, lenient school work marking and more.
Non-physical contact	Gaining access/isolation	Behaviours or actions designed to create opportunities to gain access or to isolate, both physically or socially, the student. The isolation may lead to private interactions inside and/or outside of school environments.
Non-physical contact	Inappropriate content/substances	Engaging with a student in any context, while making use of inappropriate content, material or substances (violent, sexual, mature topics, drugs, alcohol, etc).

Non-physical contact	Invasion of physical privacy/space	Includes the non-respect of physical boundaries (but without physical contact) or the general invasion of private physical spaces. Refers to in-person only (not digital). Invasion of privacy also includes looking at someone in a sexually interested way (leering) overtly or surreptitiously as well as voyeuristic-type behaviours which may include the recording of students.
Non-physical contact	In-person exposure	When a person exposes themselves to a student in person.
Non-physical contact	Other/unknown	All other non-physical contact behaviours that do not fit in a specific non-physical contact category.






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