



# **NORTH BAY POLICE SERVICE**

## **2009 Annual Report School Liaison**

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## **A. Mandate of the Unit**

Act as liaison between the North Bay Police Service and 6 local High Schools and 28 Elementary and Senior Elementary schools;

Establish, develop and maintain partnerships with area school stakeholders;

Provide information on community safety issues;

Promote and foster a reduction of crime and victimization in relation to young persons;

Assist in the development of students understanding of good citizenship;

Divert young persons away from crime and anti-social behaviour; and

Work in partnership with other government and community-based organizations to support positive youth development.

## **B. Executive Summary**

The School Liaison Program was initiated in January of 2000 with the identified need to increase service to area schools. The goal was to foster and maintain a safe and non-threatening environment for students, staff and community members.

The School Liaison Officer (SLO) provides a visible and positive image of law enforcement as well as a confidential resource to counsel students and to provide guidance, advice and leadership. The SLO also brings a positive influence into the schools to encourage youth to make positive choices in their lives. Furthermore, the SLO works to protect the school environment in order to maintain an atmosphere where teachers can feel safe to teach and students can feel safe to learn.

With the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)*, the SLO must ensure that youth are provided with a form of diversion as a pre-charge option if he/she has not been through the judicial system. Under the *YCJA*, the SLO is given the authority to hand out a verbal or written warning, a Youth Referral Notice or use a mediation conference known as the Restorative Justice Process.

The Restorative Justice Process is a pre-charge measure used as a form of school discipline. In this instance the student agrees to participate in a meeting with the other student(s), parents, and teachers, Vice-Principal and/or the Principal. During this process a discussion is held in order to address the impact made upon all persons involved in the occurrence. The discussion provides clarity as to what took place and allows all participants to agree on an appropriate resolution to the problem.

The SLO is involved with the Restorative Justice Process as well as certain occurrences that require police intervention that do not fall under this category, i.e. occurrences involving violence to other persons or involving infractions under the *Controlled Drug and Substances Act*.

Due to the elimination of canine drug searches, drug possession and drug usage along with the trafficking of drugs within the school setting continues to be a concern. The SLO is trying to impart upon the students that all occurrences involving drugs will be investigated and that those persons involved will be dealt with via the YCJA/CDSA. School staff has also been reminded to report all occurrences involving drugs to the police in order that they be tracked and dealt with appropriately.

### **C. Activities**

In 2009, the SLO investigated criminal occurrences such as assaults, threatening, drug related activities and mischief. With these types of occurrences is the expectation of a rapid response from the SLO. As a result, the SLO must continue to prioritize calls for service in order to adequately deal with the demands when dealing with school related problems.

There continues to be an issue with having only one SLO to handle the increased volume of calls for service. The SLO is required to spend extended periods of time at one given school when dealing with a particular matter and as is often the case many students are involved, which prolongs the investigation. Often, the actual time spent at a school is not recorded by way of an RMS entry as the officer simply attends in order to speak with a youth regarding a non-criminal matter at the request of a staff member.

Many requests were addressed this year for other issues such as bi-annual lockdown practices, classroom presentations on bullying, drugs, harassment, internet safety and violence. Requests were also made for public relation appearances for events such as parent/teacher nights and graduations, where the SLO was asked to present the Good Citizenship Award. The SLO was also asked to address staff and faculty regarding student problems at one local secondary school with the anticipation that it may become an annual event.

### **D. Performance Indicators**

In 2009, there were two hundred and twenty-two (222) school related calls for service within the territorial boundaries of the North Bay Police Service. Although not all of these calls were handled by the SLO, they did, however, fall within the mandate of the School Liaison Program. These were calls that directly involved either the SLO or other patrol officers. As previously mentioned, there were a large number of calls for service that were not logged as they were simply a demand for the SLO's presence during a talk with a student. These non-reportable calls, deemed as minor occurrences, were often resolved by

explaining the consequences of the students' actions along with a verbal caution and/or school discipline given by staff (i.e. school suspension).

In 2009 forty-two (42) criminal charges were laid along with two (2) Provincial Offence Notices issued. As well, there were fifty-three (53) Youth Cautions or Warnings given and seventeen (17) Youth Referrals.

The forty-two (42) criminal charges laid were broken down as follows: 7 – assaults; 1 – assault causing bodily harm; 3 – assaults with a weapon; 3 – threats; 2 – mischief (including false fire alarm); 1 – public mischief; 2 – theft under, 1 – criminal harassment; 12 – bail violations; 2 – drug related; 1 – possession of stolen property; 6 – robbery; 1 – other *criminal code offence*.

In comparison to the previous two years, there appears to be a decrease in the number of reported occurrences in 2009. However, the number of calls for service remained high as discretion was used by the SLO as to whether or not to log a call. Although these calls were documented in the SLO's notebook, many visits were not logged on RMS. What is comparable is the number of actual number of criminal charges laid. Although there was a slight decrease this year, the actual number of charges has remained relatively constant over the past three years.

## **E. Anticipated Issues for the Future**

### Drugs

As cited in the 2008 Annual Report, the use, possession and distribution of both illicit and prescription drugs in our schools continues to be a concern for not only the SLO but for school staff. Although there were only two (2) drug-related criminal charges laid this past year, the SLO has been made aware of many occurrences within the high schools where marijuana and drug paraphernalia were found by staff and subsequently turned over to police for destruction. This is a clear indication that there are drug related occurrences taking place within the schools. This is also an indication that the issue of illicit drugs has not declined but rather has remained somewhat constant.

### Organized fighting

During the end of the 2008-2009 scholastic year, the SLO received complaints of organized fighting taking place involving students while off school property. A large number of students would gather at an undisclosed area in the city during school hours (i.e. spare periods or lunch time), and engage in consensual fights. The SLO received complaints from residents as well as school staff confirming these types of occurrences were happening. However, it was difficult to investigate as the locations changed, as well as the individuals who participated. The SLO has made school officials aware of this concern and has begun to document certain occurrences in order to determine if a pattern develops.

## Assaults

Calls for service regarding physical behaviour displayed by a student at a school are not often reflected in the statistics. Many physical altercations continue to go unreported to police by school staff as school discipline is often administered without police involvement. Because calls are not properly documented with the police it is difficult to monitor any reoccurrence of violence by a youth.

The SLO has begun to address this issue. It is believed that the Restorative Justice Process has been used in occurrences that should have had more police involvement with proper diversion under the YCJA. This process is presently being reviewed by the SLO, along with the Youth Officer. The Youth Justice Committee has been made aware and closer monitoring of the Restorative Justice Process by certain schools will commence in January, 2010.

## Mischief/Graffiti

This year, the SLO continued to receive complaints regarding 'tagging' within certain high schools. However, there appeared to be a reduction of complaints due in large part to charges being laid by our Service's Street Crime – Property Unit.

Recent police intervention has been helpful in curbing criminal behaviour in this area as it was presented to the students that there were serious consequences when someone defaces another person's property. It would be beneficial to educate students in a classroom setting regarding this type of activity to serve as a reminder in order to keep mischief calls to a minimum.

## School Safety, Crisis Management and Police Response

With so many highly publicized violent occurrences taking place in North American schools it is assumed there will be more demand placed upon our service to increase police presence in area schools to reduce the risk of similar occurrences happening here.

Along with the demands of increased presence there have been requests for more safety presentations and procedures/protocols regarding major occurrences. Police are trained annually in dealing with major occurrences within the schools (i.e. Rapid Deployment); however, there is an increased requirement to have school staff properly educated in this area. Bi-annual Lockdown Practices have now become mandatory for all schools to better prepare and educate staff.

With these bi-annual practices, school officials are now being educated in the following the three phases of preparation:

- Shelter in Place - used during hazardous occurrences happening near a school (i.e. Chemical spills) where all the staff and students remain within the school with the doors and windows closed along with the ventilation system turned off.

- Hold and Secure – where there is a possible threat near the school and the school needs to be secured with outside doors locked and all staff and students safely within.
- Lockdown – where there is a threat within the school and all the staff and students protect themselves by locking themselves within their respective classes or areas of the school and await police arrival.

Due to the noted practices, there is a need for police to attend and monitor to ensure that everyone is properly trained.

Development of the School Police Emergency Action Response (S.P.E.A.R.) program is still continuing with aerial photos now available on disc. S.P.E.A.R. was designed to provide police and other emergency services with critical and accurate information to assist in responding to school emergencies. This innovative and comprehensive computer database, designed and first implemented by Peel Regional Police, takes a proactive approach to school security and emergency preparedness.

## **F. Performance Objectives for the Next Year**

### Proper Diversion Measure and Documentation of School Occurrences

The SLO is presently reviewing the Restorative Justice Process being used by the schools. School related calls should accurately reflect the statistics shown and provide police with the proper documentation of the incident on RMS. Identifying youth who have committed infractions and have received appropriate disciplinary or pre-charge diversion will also be documented. This will provide consistency when dealing with repeat offenders and ensure that a youth is dealt with according to YCJA guidelines.

Commencing in January 2010 all occurrences will be logged on RMS (i.e. Police Assistance, Trouble with Youth or Community Services) showing that a service was provided. Although the occurrences may not be reportable, they will be recorded for statistical purposes.

When a youth is diverted by way of a verbal/written caution or a Youth Referral, it will be important that the SLO or other Patrol Officers ensure the youth is properly classified in a reportable incident as “Youth Diverted”. This will avoid problems of youths being diverted once deemed repeat offenders. It will also provide the Youth Officer and the SLO with accurate and up to date information concerning the individual.

## **G. Other**

From October 19 - 23, 2009, the SLO, and Det. Ramsay of the Investigative Support Section, had the opportunity to take part in an Officer Educational

Exchange with the Abington Township Police Service in Pennsylvania, U.S.A. The purpose of this exchange was to learn more about their proactive approach in dealing with youth issues in their community. The efforts of the police service and the community support crime statistics in their area have reduced youth crime by 52 percent.

Valuable information and ideas were obtained from their police service with a view to its possible implementation in our community. Presentations along with recommendations have been made to Command Staff, the Police Services Board and to the Directors of all four (4) School Boards. The Police and all four School Boards are in agreement that there is a need for a more proactive approach within the schools.

Steps are being taken to develop a survey to be distributed to all the schools for the staff and students to complete. This survey will assist police to determine where resources are needed. The survey will also provide police with valuable information as to the status of our relationship with the youth population and school staff.

## **H. Appendices**

See Appendix A – School Liaison Performance Indicators

## Appendix A

### School Liaison Performance Indicators

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Calls for Service	406	399	254	222
Criminal Code Charges	13	51	50	42
Provincial Offences Notices	5	1	4	2
Youth Referrals	N/A	12	21	17
Cautions/Warnings	27	62	17	53