



# Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse, Neglect, and Human Trafficking Requirements Checklist | SY 2020-2021

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) amended its child abuse prevention, mandatory reporting, and educator training requirements to include human trafficking, in alignment with updates to state law concerning the definition of child abuse and neglect ([TAC § 61.1051. Subchapter EE. Commissioner’s Rules on Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect including the Trafficking of a Child](#)). This rule became effective on November 6, 2019.

School-aged children are vulnerable to all forms of abuse including human trafficking. Educators are one of the largest professional reporters of child abuse. It is critical for educators to identify and report suspected child abuse, neglect, including trafficking in-person or via remote settings.

This guide is designed to help the School Board, administrators, educators, and other school personnel to understand the training, reporting, and other policy and protocol requirements required by Texas law.

## Required Posting on Texas Campuses

[TEC §38.0042](#) requires all school campuses to post in at least one high-traffic\* area, in both English and Spanish, a poster, at student eye-level, with information that includes the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Abuse hotline telephone number, instructions to call 911, and directions to the [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org).

(\*Examples of high traffic areas may include above water fountains, hallways, the cafeteria, counselor’s office, library, gym, etc.)

- [TEA No Go Tell Poster- English](#)
- [TEA No Go Tell Poster- Spanish](#)

## To Report Abuse

- If it is an emergency— Call 911 or law enforcement immediately
- If it is a heightened concern— Call Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-858-5400
- If it is a hunch or worry— Report online at Texas Abuse Hotline
- Other reporting options are— National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or
- Cyber Tipline at [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com) or 1-800-843-5678

## Information Handbooks Must Include the Following Information for Students and Parents

- Methods for increasing staff, student, and parent awareness of issues regarding:
  - sexual abuse, trafficking, and other forms of maltreatment of children,
  - including prevention techniques and knowledge of likely warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim.
- Actions a child who is a victim of sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment should take to obtain assistance and intervention.
- Available counseling options for students affected by sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment.

## Child Abuse Anti-Victimization (Prevention Education) Programs for Students

Local district policies must include child abuse anti-victimization programs in elementary and secondary schools consisting of age-appropriate, research-based prevention designed to promote self-protection and prevent sexual abuse and trafficking.

### Trainings

#### Superintendent

##### HOW OFTEN

- 2.5 hours of training every 5 years

##### EFFECTIVE DATE

- September 1, 2019

*(\*\*Superintendents certified prior to Sept 1, 2019, are not required to comply until on or after January 1, 2021.)*

##### TRAINING TOPICS MUST INCLUDE

- Warning signs indicating a child may be a victim of sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment
- Internal procedures for seeking assistance for a child who is at risk for sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment, including referral to a school counselor, social worker, or another mental health professional.
- Techniques for reducing a child's risk for sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment
- Information on community organizations that have relevant research-based programs that are able to provide training or other education for school districts or open-enrollment charter school staff, students, and parents
- Must maintain records that include the name of each staff member who participated in training

##### LEGAL CITATION

- [TEC 21.054\(h\)](#)

#### School Board

##### HOW OFTEN

- At least 1 hour every 2 years

##### EFFECTIVE DATE

- Waived; January 31, 2021

##### TRAINING TOPICS MUST INCLUDE

- Legal requirements to report potential victims of child abuse, human trafficking, and other maltreatment of children
- Must familiarize board members with the requirements of [TEC, §38.004](#) and [§38.0041](#), and [TAC §61.1051](#)
- Best practices of identifying potential victims of child abuse, human trafficking, and other maltreatment of children
- District policy, procedures, and processes for victims of child abuse, human trafficking, and other maltreatment of children
- Information on resources and organizations that help support victims and prevent child abuse, human trafficking, and other maltreatment of children
- Must maintain records that include the name of each member who participated in training
- Not required but recommended that school board understand the policies and procedures for reducing a child's risk for sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment

#### LEGAL CITATION

- [TEC §11.159\(c\)](#)
- [TAC §61.1\(b\)\(7\) - \(c\)\(4\)](#)

#### Educators

#### HOW OFTEN

- Required as part of new employee orientation or employees not previously trained
- Recommended annually as part of staff development programs at regular intervals determined by the board of trustees, as needed, or as required by TEA

#### EFFECTIVE DATE

- District policies addressing sexual abuse, sex trafficking, and other maltreatment of children must be distributed to all school employees at the beginning of each year
- Policies must also be addressed in staff development programs at regular intervals determined by the board of trustees

#### TRAINING TOPICS MUST INCLUDE

- Factors indicating a child is at risk for sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment, including children who have significant cognitive disabilities
- Warning signs indicating a child may be a victim of sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment
- Internal procedures for seeking assistance for a child who is at risk for sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment, including referral to a school counselor, a social worker, or another mental health professional
- Techniques for reducing a child's risk for sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment
- Information on community organizations that have relevant research-based programs that are able to provide training or other education for school districts or open-enrollment charter schools, staff, students, and parents
- Must maintain records that include the name of each staff member who participated in training

#### LEGAL CITATION

- [TEC, §38.0041\(c-f\)](#),
- [TAC, §61.1051 \(c\) \(d\)](#)

## Reporting and Policy Requirements

Requirement	Superintendents	School Board	Educators
Require every school employee, agent, or contractor who suspects child abuse or neglect to submit a written or oral report to at Local Enforcement or Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) within 48 hours or less, as determined by the board, after learning of facts giving rise to the suspicion.	✓	✓	✓
Educators and other school employees <b>may not</b> delegate to or rely on another person to make the report.	✓	✓	✓
Educators and other school employees who have cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report as required by law.	✓	✓	✓
Educators and other school employees who have cause to believe the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect involves a person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child are required to report to the (DFPS).	✓	✓	✓
Educators and other school employees have the right and responsibility to report suspected child abuse or neglect free of fear of retaliation.	✓	✓	✓
Educators and other school employees report of child abuse or neglect is confidential and immune from civil or criminal liability as long as the report is made in good faith and without malice.	✓	✓	✓
A person having cause to believe that a person with a disability is in a state of abuse, neglect, or exploitation shall report the information immediately to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS).	✓	✓	✓
Local policies must include the current toll-free telephone number of DFPS, 1-800-252-5400.	✓	✓	
Local district policies may not require school personnel to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect to a school administrator prior to making a report to DFPS or law enforcement.	✓	✓	
Local district policies must provide for cooperation with law enforcement child abuse investigations without the consent of the child’s parent, if necessary, including investigations by the DFPS.	✓	✓	

## Key Tips and Considerations for Administrator and School Board

- Develop and clearly articulate district or school-wide policies.
- Ensure local district policies incorporate child abuse definitions to include trafficking of a child.
- Develop protocols for identifying and reporting suspected abuse for school-aged children.
- Develop a procedure similar to the procedure used in cases of sexual assault or report child abuse for suspected victims of human trafficking.
- DFPS or law enforcement may visit your campus during the course of an investigation. Avoid the use of public media such as intercoms to notify the appropriate staff or students.
- Establish a known, private location within your campus where both reporters and/or students can confidentially meet with DFPS or law enforcement.

## Key Tips and Considerations for Educators

Do:

- Remain Calm
- Believe the Child
- Allow the child to talk
- Show interest and concern
- Reassure and support the child's feelings
- Take Action! It could save a child's life

Don't:

- Panic or overreact
- Press the child to talk
- Promise anything you can't control
- Confront the offender
- Blame or minimize the child's feelings
- Overwhelm the child with questions or ask the child to repeat their outcry over and over to additional school personnel
- Report to CPS solely based on the parent's refusal to seek psychiatric or psychological treatment of the child

## Prevention and Awareness of School-aged Human Trafficking Trainings Available for LEA Staff

- The [Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team](#) is collaborating with [3Strands Global Foundation](#) to generously offer all schools in Texas free access to an online human trafficking training and prevention education program.
- PROTECT Texas offers training modules for school personnel as well as age-appropriate, research-based prevention curricula for elementary, middle, and high school students. Please visit [PROTECT Texas](#) for more information and to register for 12 months of access.
- Children's Advocacy Centers are non-profits that serve as the first stop for children who have experienced sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, or witnessed a violent crime. CAC's are available to support Texas schools with the implementation of required training- <https://www.cactx.org/>

## Additional Resources and Materials Available for LEA Staff Regarding Prevention and Awareness of School-age Human Trafficking

- [TEA Human Trafficking of School-aged Children](#)
- [TEA Child Abuse Prevention an Overview](#)
- [TEA Superintendent Reporting Requirements](#)
- Free Training Module in Texas Gateway: [Prevention and Awareness of School-Aged Human Trafficking](#). (\*\*Can be used in coordination with existing child abuse prevention mandatory reporting training to meet expanded educator training requirements on Human Trafficking.)
- [TEA SY 20-21 School Board FAQ](#)
- [Title IV, Part A School Safety State Initiative](#)- provides resources and guidance to ESC, LEAs and parents concerning school safety and mental health issues that involve Texas schools.
- [Protect Texas](#)- a human trafficking prevention education and training program designed to reduce human trafficking. The project is a three-part PROTECT Texas online training, including An Introduction to Child Exploitation, Understanding Vulnerability and Trauma, and Red Flags, Reporting, and Implementing Prevention Education.
- [LOVE146- 5 Tips for Internet Safety During COVID-19](#) and [COVID-19 Anti-Trafficking PSA](#)- materials and resources available for educator use when discussing internet safety with students.
- [UNBOUND](#)- provides free training resources for parents and caregivers, school nurses, educators, bus drivers, and students in English and Spanish.
- Additional resources about Human Trafficking can also be accessed at [Unbound: Human Trafficking Happens Everywhere](#) webpage
- [Keeping Our STUDENTS Safe- Online Education Outreach- April 2020](#) hosts pre-recorded trainings
- [A21: Can You See Me?](#)- equips the general public to recognize indicators of human trafficking and report suspected scenarios.
- [Attorney General of Texas Human Trafficking- Be the One in the Fight Against Human Trafficking](#) is a training video that uses actual cases prosecuted in Texas to educate viewers about the realities of this heinous crime and equip them with the tools to recognize red flags and respond appropriately.
- [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Human Trafficking](#)- general information on Human Trafficking and how to report. [Tools That Teach: What is Trafficking?](#)
- A full list of signs of abuse and neglect can be found on the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services \(DFPS\) Recognizing the Signs of Child Abuse Webpage](#)
- DFPS offers guidance on [Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child: A Guide for Professionals](#) to assist professional reporters through online/hotline reporting and how to identify abuse and neglect. Videos and other resources are provided to assist professionals in navigating the DFPS system.
- For further training or questions, please contact the [CPS Community Engagement Specialist](#) in your area.

*\*\*The programs listed in this section are not a complete or exhaustive list of all programs available that LEAs could access.\*\**