DATE:	August 15, 2024
SUBJECT:	Reminders and Requirements related to Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect; Human Trafficking, Prevention and Awareness; Fingerprinting and Do Not Hire Registry
CATEGORY:	Mandatory Reporting, Required Training and Signage, Fingerprinting, Do Not Hire Registry
NEXT STEPS:	Review and share with district and campus personnel

Educators can play a vital role in recognizing the signs of maltreatment of children, including suspected child abuse and neglect and human trafficking. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has various resources available to support Texas school systems with prevention and awareness and identifying and reporting these concerns. The purpose of this correspondence is to provide information regarding mandatory reporting requirements and training concerning child abuse and neglect, including human trafficking and resources to support school systems.

Additionally, this correspondence seeks to inform campus and district personnel of required actions and recommendations for school systems as they relate to employee fingerprinting, mandatory reporting and the Do Not Hire Registry.

Mandatory Reporting

School system personnel are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect, including the trafficking of a child, within 48 hours, per Texas Family Code § 261.101. School system personnel may not delegate this duty or rely on another person to make the report. A report shall be made to:

- any local or state law enforcement agency;

- the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS*); or

- the state agency that operates, licenses, certifies or registers the facility in which the alleged abuse or neglect occurred.

If the matter to be reported potentially involves human trafficking, report it to district police, local or state law enforcement **and** DFPS.

- A report to DFPS is required if the alleged abuse or neglect involves a person responsible for the care, custody or welfare of the child.

In cases of emergency, please call 911.

Required Actions

Each Texas public school system **must** adopt and implement policies concerning sexual abuse, trafficking and other maltreatment of children (this includes providing child abuse anti-victimization programs in elementary and secondary schools). Additionally, per TEC §28.004, each school entity must

ensure that the Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) gives recommendations for the appropriate grade level and instruction regarding child abuse, family violence, dating violence and sex trafficking awareness curriculum and that parental rights and consent requirements are followed.

Student-facing posters that meet the requirements of 19 TAC §61.1051(e) and (f) **must** be posted in at least one high-traffic area (hallway, above a water fountain, gym, locker room, counselor's office, etc.) on every campus in both English and Spanish. The TEA, in partnership with Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, has developed posters in English and Spanish that satisfy the requirements of 19 TAC §61.1051(e) and (f).

Each school shall post No Human Trafficking warning signs pertaining to the criminal offense of human trafficking at conspicuous places reasonably likely to be viewed by all persons entering the premises (TAC §61.1053(b)). TEA has three sample signs (based on location) that may be used directly or as a template for local development. See TEA's Human Trafficking of School Aged Children Webpage for more information.

Chapter 22 Subchapter C, of the Texas Education Code (TEC), **requires** school entities to ensure that certain individuals are fingerprinted to undergo a national criminal history records review and that other individuals undergo a name-based criminal history record information review. In addition, superintendents of districts and chief operating officers of public charter schools are **required** to certify annually that the district or charter school has complied with TEC, §22.085.

Texas school systems **must**, according to TEC §22.092(b), discharge or refuse to hire any individual listed on the Registry of Persons Ineligible for Employment in Public Schools (Do Not Hire Registry). The Registry is available to public and private schools for searching purposes.

Training Requirements
School Board Members
- Must receive one hour of training every two years that covers legal requirements, best practices, and district policy relating to sexual abuse, human trafficking, and other maltreatment of children.

- Training must be provided by a registered provider, authorized provider, or Lone Star Governance (LSG) coach. For more information, visit the TEA School Board Trustee Training Webpage.

Superintendents
- Effective September 1, 2019, an individual who holds a superintendent certificate that is renewed on or after January 1, 2021, must complete at least two and a half hours of training every five years on identifying and reporting potential victims of sexual abuse, human trafficking, and other maltreatment of children, in accordance with TEC § 21.054(h).

- For more information on approved training providers, visit Continuing Professional Education.

General Trainings
- Training **must** be provided to all new school employees and all other staff not previously trained on prevention techniques for and recognition of sexual abuse, trafficking and all other maltreatment of children, including the sexual abuse, trafficking and other maltreatment of

children with significant cognitive disabilities. **(*School systems have discretion on selecting what training(s) are used for this purpose.)**

- **Upcoming Webinar -** Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Mandatory Reporting and Related Requirements Training Overview, August 26, 2024 from 2:00-3:00 pm**. [Webinar Registration](#)**

- **Texas Gateway Module -** TEA developed a free training module in the Texas Gateway called "[Prevention and Awareness of School-Aged Human Trafficking](#)" that can be used in coordination with existing [child abuse](#) prevention and mandatory reporting training to meet expanded educator training requirements on Human Trafficking.

- [Title IV School Safety Initiative](#) – Provides information and guidance to ESCs, school systems and parents on human trafficking prevention and awareness.

Resources

- [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services - Report Abuse, Neglect or Exploitation](#)

- [TEA Child Abuse Prevention Overview](#)

- TEA collaborated with the [Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas (CACTX](#)) on the following resources:
  - A Texas School Employee's Guide to Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))
  - Child Abuse Hotline on an 11" X 17" poster ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))
  - Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Resource [Toolkit](#)

  **School districts can contact their local CAC for additional resources about training and prevention. [Visit CAC Find a Local Center](#) to learn more about your local children's advocacy centers.

- [TEA Human Trafficking of School Aged Children](#)
  - No Human Trafficking Signage in English and Spanish (Color Block) [8x11](#) | [11x17](#)
  - No Human Trafficking Signage in English and Spanish (General Street) [8x11](#) | [11x17](#)
  - No Human Trafficking Signage in English and Spanish (Perimeter) [12x18](#)

- TEA has developed a [guidance document](#) to aid school systems in utilizing the Do Not Hire Registry.

- TEA has also developed a [guidance document](#) to aid school systems regarding the Fingerprinting Process.

- Requirement to Report to TEA- [Superintendent Reporting Requirements](#)

- Do Not Hire Registry and Fingerprinting Requirements [Guidance and Help Desk](#)

Questions

If you have any questions regarding child abuse, mandatory reporting and human trafficking prevention and awareness requirements, please contact the Office of Special Populations and Student Supports PreventingHumanTrafficking@tea.texas.gov, 512-463-9414.

If you have any questions regarding Fingerprinting and the Do Not Hire Registry requirements, please utilize the Help Desk Frequently Asked Questions or Submit a Request.