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Memo

To: Ontario District School Boards

Date: May 2016

Re: Police / School Board Protocols

Attached is a summary of the new provisions in the **2015 Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol** (the “Model Protocol”), developed by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS) and the Ministry of Education (MOE), which Protocol supersedes the 2011 edition under the same title.

The new provisions to the 2015 Model Protocol serve to promote the well-being of all students in Ontario schools, which is one of the key goals in the government’s renewed vision for education. Effective school / Police partnerships provide the best possible education for students in a safe school community, which is a shared responsibility that requires a commitment to collaboration, co-operation, and effective communication.

Executive Summary

The 2015 Model Protocol includes the following key changes:

- emphasizes the importance of implementing violence-prevention strategies to create and maintain a safe school environment.
- updates information on threat management / awareness services;
- incorporates changes to the policy on lockdown procedures (in Appendix B of the Model) and training provisions, specifically as they relate to part-time / occasional / itinerant teachers; and

- outlines requirements for a new policy regarding bomb threat procedures (in Appendix C of the Model).

School Boards and local Police services are expected to revise their own local Protocols by **September 2016**.

The 2015 Model Protocol sets out in detail the revisions summarized above. We have conducted a thorough comparison of the 2011 and 2015 Model Protocols and would be happy to discuss the changes in further detail.

We have also reviewed various School Board Emergency Plans that address bomb threats, however most do not appear to be in compliance with all of the necessary requirements as outlined in the 2015 Model Protocol.

Please feel free to contact us.

Kindest regards.

Bob Jennifer Nicola Kimberley

May 2016

Summary of changes to the
2015 Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol
which supersedes the 2011 edition

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PURPOSE

The Purpose section of the Model Protocol has been revised to include:

- language which reflects EDU's fourth goal: "promoting student well-being";
- a reference to data-driven decision-making;
- a section discussing MCSCS' Provincial Approach to Community Safety and Well-Being; and

Additional pieces of legislation which must be considered when drafting local Protocols (eg. Fire Protection and Prevention Act, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Victims' Bill of Rights).

SECTION 7 – A COORDINATED APPROACH TO VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The prominence of the role of schools and the Police in violence prevention has been reinforced in the Model Protocol to promote better collaboration and partnerships in local communities.

The Model Protocol has increased the prominence of the section on School/Police Role in Violence Prevention. The Model Protocol has essentially the same recommendations as contained in the 2011 version, Section 18 –School/Police Role in Violence Prevention, subject to a limited number of additions, such as:

- promoting positive mental health and reducing the stigma associated with mental health issues;
- launching, leading, or being part of local planning tables that mobilize community members and agencies to participate in activities designed to address and reduce risk factors and to enhance protective factors for youth at risk of conflict with the law.

*Please see page 11 of the Model Protocol for a non-exhaustive list of examples of strategies both schools and the Police can use to help prevent violence in schools.

SECTION 8 – OCCURRENCES REQUIRING POLICE RESPONSE

Two incidents for which Police must be notified were added:

- non-consensual sharing of intimate images;
- bomb threats.

SECTION 18 – PROTOCOL REVIEW PROCESS

The Review process has been revised to recommend that the input of local Police governance bodies be solicited during local Protocol reviews (every 2 years).

SECTION 20 – THREAT MANAGEMENT / AWARENESS SERVICES

The Model Protocol has strengthened the language on risk-assessment to threat management / awareness services, which includes:

- identify the need for and value of early intervention and threat management / awareness services and outline services available in the local community
- a multi-disciplinary / multi-agency approach to threat management can be highly effective in preventing and managing potentially harmful or violent situations
- multi-disciplinary teams can be formed by school boards in collaboration with Police and other community-based service providers

- a multi-disciplinary team and a Protocol provides for appropriate sharing of information and makes a collective and timely response possible
- multi-disciplinary threat management teams should not be used as a substitute for Police Threat Assessment Units
- in situations where a multi-disciplinary team has determined that a student may pose a risk of violence, the Police / School Board Protocol should specify that the team should contact Police for assistance
- the Threat Management Protocol should be reviewed with the biennial review of the Police / School Board Protocol.

SECTION 21 – EMERGENCY PLANNING AND THREATS TO SCHOOL SAFETY

The 2015 Model Protocol added two new requirements:

- all school boards must establish policies that require individual schools to develop Bomb Threat Response Plans and Procedures; and
- Boards must ensure that staff, students and stakeholders are aware of their respective responsibilities for each individual school plan.

SECTION 22 – TRAINING

The Training section has been revised to encourage school boards to make best efforts to include all staff in annual training of Police / School Board Protocols (eg. including part-time, itinerant, and occasional staff).

Resources such as DVDs and other methods may be used for training.

APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY

The Glossary includes two new terms:

- Barricading
- Non-consensual sharing of intimate images.

APPENDIX B – LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES

The revised Model Protocol requires that every school develop an Emergency and Crisis Response Plan. The Response Plan must include a Lockdown Plan and Procedures.

The Lockdown Plan and Procedures have been updated (in Appendix B) and every school should be guided by the provincial policy in developing its Lockdown Plan.

The 2015 Model Protocol provides an updated Policy to supplement the Lockdown Procedures already in place in all Ontario schools to ensure elementary and secondary School Lockdown Plans meet basic requirements, as well as maintaining a level of consistency across the Province.

The Changes to the Lockdown Policy:

- recommend that schools plan in advance the manner by which Police will gain access to the school in the event of a lockdown, especially for schools that lock their doors during the school day
- require that all staff, including occasional, part-time and itinerant teachers, have the ability to lock their classroom doors in the event of a lockdown
- clarify that cell phones should not be used in classrooms during a lockdown, unless necessary to communicate
- recommend that barricading classroom doors be considered during a lockdown
- reinforce the importance of having schools account for child care centres and community groups
- advise that procedures should be in place for instances when lockdowns last for an unusually long period of time.

The Policy recommends that 1 of the 2 mandatory lockdown drills be “non-routine” (eg. taking place during recess or at the beginning or end of the school day).

APPENDIX C – BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES

The Model Protocol includes a new Bomb Threat Policy which is now a requirement by the Ministry of Education. The plans and procedures reflecting this Policy must now be included in the school’s Emergency and Crisis Response Plan, which must be appended to the Protocols already developed by school boards and Police services.

The following is a summary of the Policy aimed to help elementary and secondary schools ensure that their Bomb Threat Plans meet basic requirements, as well as a level of consistency across the Province.

Mandatory Requirements

1. All publicly funded school boards in Ontario must establish a bomb threat response policy to ensure the development and implementation of individual school plans.
 2. Each board must ensure that its staff, students, and other partners are aware of their obligations/responsibilities within the individual school plans.
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Roles and Responsibilities	At a minimum, plans should include expectations with respect to staff, students, parents and Police with clearly defined roles and responsibilities (see Page 46 of the Model Protocol for detailed roles and responsibilities)
Floor Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Floor plans should be accurate, up-to-date and posted throughout the school• In a multi-level building, it is suggested that only the floor plan relevant to a specific level be posted on that level• Floor plans should clearly identify entrances and exits, as well as routes to be taken during evacuation• Floor plans should be made available to all emergency service responders• Police should be provided with both hard copies and electronic copies of the floor plans in the event of a technological malfunction
Identification of Rooms and Buildings, and Facilitation of Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure facility master keys are current and available for emergency service responders• If there are more than one building on school grounds, each building should be clearly identified, on all sides, with a building identifier, such as a number• All exterior doors should be clearly identified• All rooms within the building should be clearly marked with room numbers• This site plan should be consistent with the fire safety plan provided to the fire department for emergency fire response
Command Post	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each plan should designate primary, secondary and off-site command post locations• Usually the main office will be the primary command post location, with another area within the school identified as an alternate (secondary) command post location• The individual school plan should identify a third off-site command post location in case the first two are not available• Information regarding the command posts should not be publicly circulated
Facility Assessment and Physical Security	Each school's bomb threat plan should detail proactive measures in a number of areas. In developing plans, schools should: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• determine likely locations in and around the school for the placement of suspicious packages/devices;• provide for controlled access to critical areas of all facilities• consider the use of electronic surveillance or closed-circuit television (CCTV) and post signage for use of such technology if employed;• address ways to ensure that emergency exits are kept clear from obstructions;

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- provide for the regular inspection of first aid and firefighting equipment;
 - include, and provide for the regular view of, document-safeguarding procedures;
 - assess whether interior/exterior and auxiliary lighting is adequate;
 - develop an inspection procedure for all incoming packages; and
 - consider other potential threats.

Bomb Threat Intake Procedures

- A checklist should be made available to staff members who are most likely to receive a bomb threat
- The call taker who receives a bomb threat by telephone should try to keep the caller on the line as long as possible if there is no harm or does not prevent them from initiating response procedures
- Staff should be trained to record precise information during a bomb threat call (e.g. the exact wording of the threat, the time and date of the call, the phone number, whether the caller is male or female, any background noise, etc.)
- The call taker should attempt to notify the school principal during the telephone call if possible. Alternatively, the school principal should be notified immediately after the call.
- Following the call, the phone number of the received call should be “locked-in” if this feature is available. This process should also be posted at all phones that can receive calls
- School plans should address who will contact the local Police service and fire department and provide details about the bomb threat
- Plans should also address bomb threats that are received through electronic means
- Procedures should include how to immediately isolate the received message, remove it from any external posting, and communicate the information to the school principal during and after hours, including on weekends and holidays

Initial Assessment

- Plans should identify in detail the information that needs to be immediately assessed by the principal during the initial stages of a bomb threat. The initial assessment should be based on the following:
 - The information recorded on the bomb threat checklist;
 - Any other notes made by the call taker;
 - Activities taking place in the school at the time of the threat (e.g. examinations);
 - Whether a specific location for a bomb was stated or the entire school was threatened;
 - Whether the threat was specific to the current time or a future time/date;
 - Any recent negative incidents involving a student, staff member, or anyone
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else connected with the school;

- Whether there have been any other recent bomb threat or hoaxes;
 - The likelihood of anyone having the opportunity to place a bomb in the state location; and
 - Whether a suspicious device/package has been located
- The Police must be notified once the initial assessment has taken place and have been made regarding a visual scan and/or evacuation
 - Initial contact with the Police should not be delayed. As such, contacting the Police while the principal is conducting the assessment should be considered
 - The fire department should also be notified regarding the bomb threat
 - School plans should specify who will contact the Police and fire department
 - Police should be contacted in every incident of a “bomb threat”
 - Plans should also include a list of information to be provided to the Police, such as the information recorded on the bomb threat checklist; the status of any evacuation; the in-school contact person for the Police
 - Plans should include procedures for continual assessment of the situation and for relaying further information to update the principal

Visual Scans

- School plans must detail procedures for safe, visual scans conducted by designated staff
- Principals should receive training to enable them to make sound decisions as to whether, and when, a safe visual scan is appropriate
- Under no circumstance should a staff member conducting a visual scan touch a suspicious device or package
- If a suspicious package/device is detected, the immediate area should be evacuated and reported to the principal
- For threats to the entire facility, plans should identify and prioritize areas to be virtually inspected. Consideration should be given to accessibility by a potential suspect, evacuation routes, evacuation locations, command posts, and staging areas for emergency services personnel.

Procedures following the location of a Suspicious Device /Package

- Plans must include procedures regarding actions to be taken if an explosive device or a suspicious device/package is located any time before emergency service responders arrive on the scene
 - The school principal should be notified immediately of the discovery of a suspicious package/device and of any action taken to that point
 - Police should be notified or updated when confirmation is received regarding the precise location of the package/device
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- Legitimate property may have been left behind in an evacuated area, so attempts should be made to establish ownership of any suspicious device/package (this should be done by making inquiries, not handling the package)

Evacuation Procedures

- Every school plan must detail procedures to facilitate a safe and effective partial or full evacuation of the facility, including notification processes
- Plans should also detail the process to end any partial or full evacuation
- Bomb threat drills and fire drills will involve evacuation plans that are similar, however the two plans should be treated and practiced separately
- Staff should be aware of who is authorized to order evacuation of an re-entry to the facility
- When announcing an evacuation, it is advisable to use clear, concise language rather than codes or fire alarms
- Plans should address practices for ensuring that evacuation routes and alternate routes are clear from obstructions
- Provisions with the evacuation of physically challenged persons should be in place
- Attendance should be taken at the evacuation location, with all students and staff accounted for, and with the command post notified as to when the evacuation is complete

Re-entry Procedures

- Each school plan must include procedures for ending evacuations and ensuring safe re-entry into the school
- Plans may include a general announcement via the public address (PA) system by a designated authority, or may include a room-to-room visit from Police and/or the principle

Procedures Following an Explosives Incident

- Every plan must include procedures for dealing with an explosives incident that occurs within a school building or in the school yard
- Plans for responding to an explosives incident should address: criteria for full or partial evacuation; considerations related to the provision of emergency care; considerations related to the notification of emergency services; and containment of the explosion scene
- In the event of an explosives incident, school principals should be notified immediately and informed of any action taken

Evacuation Considerations

- The area around the explosion should be immediately evacuated, and students and staff should be directed to a designated evacuation location
 - It should be determined whether an evacuation of the entire site is necessary, or whether a partial evacuation of the area around the explosives incident will suffice
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Emergency Services Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The fire department, emergency medical services (EMS), and the Police should be called immediately
Containment of the Explosion Scene	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Once the area has been evacuated, staff and students should not re-enter an explosion scene
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plans should specify primary and secondary communication systems which allow for accurate transmission of information between officials, staff, students, and emergency services personnel• Provisions for internal communications with staff and students and external communication with emergency services personnel and parents/other stakeholders should also be specified• Radios and walkie-talkies are not recommended as secondary systems, given that radio signals may detonate sensitive explosive devices and the Protocol should emphasize the importance of reminding all responders of the danger of using radio communication in a bomb threat situation
Child Care and Other Facility Occupants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools that have licensed child care centres and/or other tenants and community groups should consider these individuals/organizations when developing and implementing procedures and conducting training drills• School boards should ensure that individuals/organizations sharing school facilities are informed and understand that they are required to follow the school board procedures• It is also important for the school principal to consider after-school programs, night school, sports programs, etc.
Outside of School Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Procedures must address the notification of, and the actions to be taken by, staff and students who are outside the school building(s) when a bomb threat is received• Re-entry into the building should not be permitted unless directed to do so• Exterior PA systems may not be the best option, as it may cause panic and/or bring unnecessary attention from the members of the community. The use of a personal messenger to identify the off-site evacuation location is recommended.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each board must ensure that its staff, students, and other stakeholders are aware of their obligations/responsibilities within the individual school plans• Orientation for new staff should include mandatory training in bomb threat responses• Schools should establish a method to conduct bomb threat review training for all staff during each school year• Schools should consider holding assemblies to train secondary students on bomb

threat and explosives incident procedures, as well as related evacuation plans

- Due to the young age of some elementary students, it is suggested that classroom teachers be responsible for training students at the elementary level
- Any training provided to students with special education needs should be consistent with the expectations and accommodations outlined in their Individual Education Plans
- When the school has visitors in the school over an extended period, as in the case of a service provider, it is necessary to inform the visitor of the school's bomb threat procedures and explosives incident evacuation procedures.

Drills

- Similar to fire drills, drills and education related to evacuation following a bomb threat or explosives incident can help maintain order in the event of an incident
- School personnel should work cooperatively with Police partners on drills
- The principal is responsible for setting the date of drills and overseeing the drill, with Police/support assistance
- Consideration should be given as to notifying parents/guardians in advance of developing plans
- A short debriefing should be held after all drills to identify areas of improvement

Media

- Plans shall include provisions for dealing with the media in the event of an incident
- It is strongly advised that media personnel from the Police department, school board, the fire department and EMS share press releases prior to their release to the media

Communication with Parents / Guardians and the Community

- Consideration should be given to informing parents of bomb threat and explosives incident procedures at the beginning of the school year. This can be done via sending a newsletter to each home, providing an information bulletin, or posting an announcement on the school website
- Parents are to reinforce the importance of understanding the procedures and following staff direction with their children

School Recovery Following an Incident

- Plans should include provisions related to recovery after an incident involving a bomb threat, a suspicious package/device, and an explosion
 - A debriefing should always be held following an explosive incident and the seriousness or nature of the incident will determine who should be included in the debriefing
 - Communication with parents and students is vital
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Plan Review

- Each plan, school as well as the board plan, should be thoroughly reviewed annually
- Records as to the date of the review and the person who reviewed it with their signature should be kept on file