

Human Trafficking Fact Sheet for Florida Schools

Florida is the third largest hub for human trafficking in the United States

What is Child Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is modern slavery. It involves exploiting a person through force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of forced labor and/or commercial sex. Victims of human trafficking include men, women, boys, girls and transgender individuals. Child human trafficking applies to persons under the age of 18. If the sex trafficking victim is under the age of 18, it is human trafficking regardless of whether force, fraud and/or coercion exist. The majority of reports we receive on school-age children are for sex trafficking.

Most school-aged Florida children spend five days a week, six to eight hours a day, in schools. As a result, schools are a potential environment for a variety of prevention and intervention activities for the children. School settings provide educators and school personnel with a unique opportunity to support the health and development of students. Ensuring a safe and supportive environment for students is the responsibility of all school personnel.

Warning Signs and Possible Risk Factors

Teachers and school staff are uniquely positioned to recognize changes in behavior and appearance which may be a sign of underlying problems among students.

Human trafficking can often go unnoticed, even by individuals interacting with a victim on a regular basis. Recognizing the indicators can help alert school administrators and staff to a human trafficking situation. While no single indicator is necessarily proof of human trafficking, recognizing the signs is the first step in identifying a problem.

Here are some questions to keep in mind:

Does the student –

- Have unexplained absences from school?
- Suddenly change his or her usual attire, behavior or relationships?
- Suddenly have more (and/or more expensive) material possessions?
- Chronically run away from home?
- Act fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense or nervous and paranoid?
- Defer to another person to speak for him or her, especially during interactions with school authority figures?
- Describe an adult as a friend or boyfriend/girlfriend?
- Show signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical restraint or other serious pain or suffering?
- Have new branding/tattoos?
- Appear to have been deprived of food, water, sleep, medical care or other life necessities?
- Have possession of his or her own identification documents (e.g., student identification card, driver's license/passport) or does someone else have them?

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Best Practice

A response protocol should be developed in collaboration with school district leadership; federal and/or local law enforcement; mental health, child welfare or victim services providers; and other appropriate community partners. Once the protocol is developed, annual staff training on the response protocol should be enacted.

Reporting – “If you see something, say something.”

- Florida Abuse Hotline: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)
- National Human Trafficking Resource Center: 1-888-373-7888
- BeFree Textline Text "BeFree" (233733)
- 1-800-Runaway
- 911

Free Resources

- [FDOE Child Human Trafficking chapter](#)
- [FDOE Human Trafficking webpage](#)
- [FSU Center for the Advancement of Human Rights](#)
- [Health and Human Services](#)
- [U.S. Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign](#)
- [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](#)
- [NetSmartz Workshop](#)
- [Polaris](#)
- [The Lifeboat Project](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)