

Report to / Rapport au:

**OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE BOARD
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA**

24 February 2025 / 24 février 2025

Submitted by / Soumis par:

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**SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO INQUIRY I-25-02 - P1 AND P2 CALLS FOR
SERVICE AT OR AROUND SCHOOLS.**

**OBJET: RÉPONSE À L'ENQUÊTE I-25-02 – P1 ET P2 APPELLENT AU
SERVICE DANS OU AUTOUR DES ÉCOLES.**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Service Board receive this report for information.

RECOMMENDATIONS DU RAPPORT

**Que la Commission de service de police d'Ottawa prenne connaissance du
présent rapport à titre d'information.**

INQUIRY

Provide statistics on the number of Ottawa area schools, grades seven to twelve, in all school boards, that have had Priority 1 and 2 calls at the school or within 100 meters of the school exterior (but not at a residential address) in the following time periods:

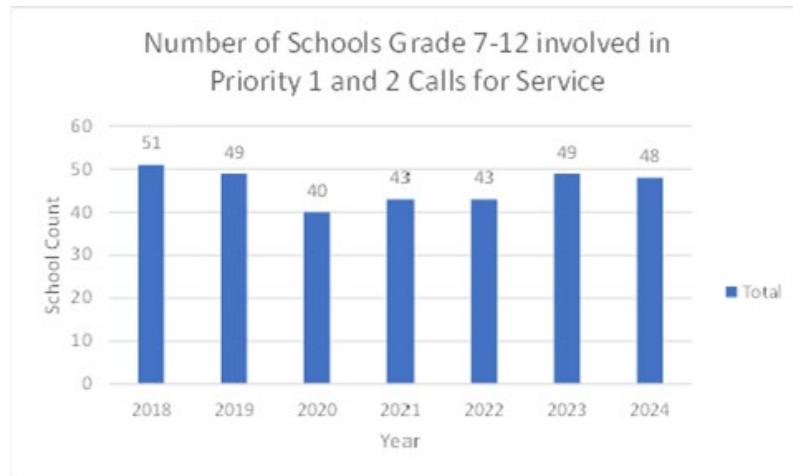
- a. January 1, 2025, to January 30, 2025
- b. January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024
- c. January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023
- d. January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022
- e. January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021

- f. January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020
- g. January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2019

RESPONSE

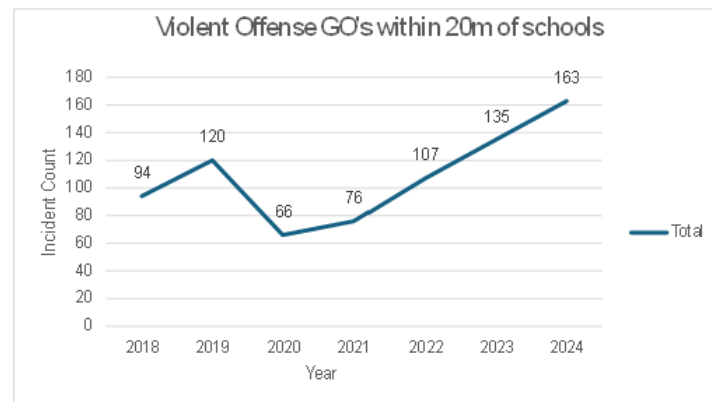
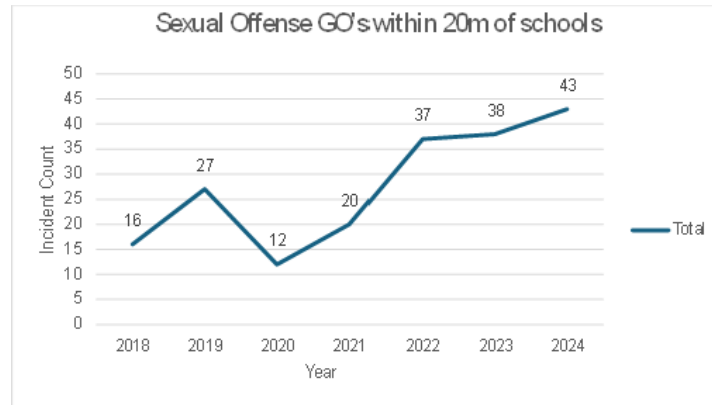
The Ottawa Police Service (OPS) is committed to building positive relationships with youth in the community by partnering with all school boards to promote safety, education, and mentorship. OPS Youth Strategy focuses on collaborating with key partners to address the root causes of victimization and youth criminality; while creating opportunities for young people to thrive and providing the support they need to make informed, positive life choices.

Our findings to OPSB Vice Chair Carr’s request regarding the number of schools with P1 and P2 calls, found that the number of schools making such calls has remained consistent over the past five years, with a slight decline between 2020 and 2022 due to Covid-19 pandemic school closures. In 2018, 51 schools required a Priority 1 or 2 response from police, and the most recent data from 2024 shows that 48 schools required this type of response.



Current Trends

While these specific calls to schools remain steady year over year, it does not capture the growing concern we are seeing in the rising prevalence of sexual and violent offences involving youth. For example, comparing sexual offences involving youth over a 6-year time period, the incidents have steadily increased from 2018 to 2024. The data shows a **169% increase** in sexual offences (16 to 43). Violent offences have also increased over these years from 94 reported incidents in 2018 to 163 incidents in 2024 resulting in a **73% increase** over the 6-year period.



The increase in youth violence is not unique to Ottawa – we see both provincial and national statistics that also support this trend. Furthermore, the increase is being expressed to OPS from Ottawa’s youth justice and education partners. For example, Ottawa’s youth secure custody facilities are at capacity across the province, youth probation are experiencing caseloads with increased complexity and severity of behaviours, community programs and services are struggling to meet the demand, and Ottawa schools are navigating youth with concerning aggression leading to violent incidents.

We are hearing examples of school boards across Canada that are re-engaging with police services because of the increased concerns from students, parents and teachers. As recent as February 11th, 2025, Edmonton Public Schools announced that they have officially reintroduced police officers into six high schools, after halting the school resource officer (SRO) program in 2020. The reintroduction follows a public commitment from the Board of trustees in April 2024, which approved a formal partnership with EPS to explore enhanced safety measures within division schools.

Police Activities

OPS Community Youth Unit (CYU) collaborates closely with community partners to help address both the vulnerability youth are exposed to as well as the criminal behaviours

they are engaging in. As outlined in the OPS youth strategy, officers aim to spend 80% of their time building positive relationships, prevention as well as risk intervention.

They work with Ottawa's youth-serving agencies on issues like street-level violence, human trafficking, mental health, and substance use to connect youth to services, divert them from the criminal justice system, and address underlying needs. Further, the newly formed School Engagement Team officers (team of 4) are working closely with Ottawa schools to best assess risk through triaging school consults with school administrators, as well as participating in Violent Threat Risk Assessments when there is a concerning student.

Overview of the new School Engagement Service Delivery: This service delivery was developed following consultations with all four publicly funded school boards in Ottawa. It responds to their requests for more specialized assistance while maximizing the capacity of the CYU.

Key enhancements:

- **Dedicated Support:** Schools now have direct access to CYU officers who are subject matter experts in youth-related policing and available to address specific needs across Ottawa's school boards.
- **Proactive Engagement:** CYU officers are providing guidance, build relationships with students and staff, and support initiatives such as educational presentations and lockdown practices.
- **Streamlined Communication:** Clearly defined reporting protocols are in place to ensure efficient coordination between schools and OPS.

Conclusion

In short, the rising frequency and severity of youth victimization and offending are pressing concerns that demand immediate attention and action. The Ottawa Police Service is committed to addressing these challenges through its Youth Strategy, which is grounded in Ontario's Community Safety and Well-Being Framework. By focusing on proactive, community-based approaches, the OPS is making meaningful progress in supporting youth, reducing crime, and enhancing safety. Although renewed school engagement only began in January, early feedback from school boards suggests strong signs that this effort will have great impact moving forward.