

**The Region of Peel
French Language Services Child Protection
Protocol**



Acknowledgements

The following community members have contributed to the creation and implementation of the Region of Peel French Language Service Protocol.

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This protocol is endorsed by:

The Children's Aid Society of the Region of Peel

Conseil scolaire de district catholique MonAvenir

Conseil scolaire Viamonde

Revision Date: October 4, 2022
 September 1, 2022
 May 6, 2022

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A. Introduction

The French Language Services (FLS) Protocol denotes the agreement and commitment of three organizations, The Children’s Aid Society of the Region of Peel (Peel CAS), Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir and Conseil scolaire Viamonde, to work cooperatively and collaboratively to achieve a continuum of child-welfare services that help to prevent child abuse and better serve children (0 – 17) in the Francophone community in Peel Region. The Protocol reflects the right of Francophone families to receive services in French pursuant to the French Language Services Act. Peel CAS is responsible for the provision of child welfare services pursuant with the Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA) and the French Language Services Act. To reach these goals, each organization recognizes the ongoing need to foster cooperative working relationships. Each organization also recognizes that the Francophone community of Peel Region is culturally diverse. This requires an approach to service delivery that is both linguistically and culturally sensitive and safe.

Mission: Community partners working together for the safety and well-being of children and families by providing access to services for the Francophone community in Peel

Vision: Improving capacity and delivering service in a manner that is linguistically and culturally specific and safe.

Values:

- Collaboration and Diversity**
- Accountability to the children, families and community serve**
- Respect and compassion**
- Excellence, learning and innovation**
- In a supportive environment – WE CARE**

This protocol has been developed:

- To ensure that the Francophone community of the Region of Peel has access to child protection services in the French language
- To meet the needs for French Language Services in Peel pursuant to the *French Language Services Act*
- To establish clear lines of communication to encourage and ensure effective collaboration
- To establish a liaison process
- To allow ongoing review, revision and updating of the Protocol
- To provide necessary in-service training/orientation for personnel from each organization with consideration given to the delivery of training in French

B. Statement of Principles

1. The safety of children is the goal of this Protocol and always the priority for all actions and decisions. This Protocol functions concurrently with the multi-agency *Peel's Community Commitment to Children and Family Wellness; Child Abuse Investigation Protocol (2020)* to ensure effective service delivery for Francophone persons in the Region of Peel. Through a lens of inclusion and intersectionality, Peel CAS will ensure the provision of an active offer of French language services to children, youth, families, and community partners in the Region of Peel.
2. Through a lens of inclusion and intersectionality, Peel CAS will ensure the provision of an active offer of French language services to children, youth, families and community partners in the Region of Peel.

Black and Indigenous children and youth are overrepresented in Ontario's child welfare system. This is due to the historical and ongoing legacy of colonization and historical legacy of slavery that have resulted in anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism. It is important to recognize that overrepresentation begins at the referral stage based on racial and ethnic stereotypes. The organizations involved acknowledge the importance in recognizing how personal and systemic biases affects a decision to contact Children's Aid Society. Peel CAS is committed to providing ongoing presentations to Conseil Scolaire Catholique MonAvenir and Conseil Scolaire Viamonde regarding Duty to Report and the agency's services and supports.

3. The organizations recognize that collaboration, cooperation, and coordination are required for the delivery of integrated and/or shared services to meet the needs of Francophone children and families.
4. The relationship among the partner organizations and their staff members will be characterized by mutual respect. Partners are committed to resolving any differences and to work together for the welfare of French speaking children and their families.
5. Peel CAS will make arrangements for the provision of service in French to members of the Francophone community. French language capacity cannot be a barrier for a Peel CAS employee to work with a child, family, or school board.
6. Peel CAS participates in meetings and processes in the interests of children and their families. French language capacity at Peel CAS shall not be a barrier to engage or participate in meetings and processes when it is in the interest of a child and their family.
7. Perceived or actual lack of services in French within Peel CAS shall not be a barrier for a school board employee to be able to report child protection concerns.
8. Peel CAS recognizes the diversity within Peel's Francophone community. Peel CAS support families while respecting their cultural beliefs, values, and traditions and will work to ensure that children, youth, and families have access to culturally relevant and ethno-specific supports and services.
9. The development of a Liaison Group, comprised of at least one representative from each partner organization, will ensure and facilitate communication, continuous improvement of service, education, training, promotion of and management of the protocol.

C. Roles and Responsibilities

Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir and Conseil scolaire Viamonde

Afin de veiller à la sécurité des enfants, le personnel du Conseil scolaire a la responsabilité de signaler les situations où il y a lieu de soupçonner de mauvais traitements et/ou de la négligence. Les conseils scolaires s'engagent à collaborer de plein gré avec Peel CAS.

To ensure the safety of children, the staff at Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir and Conseil scolaire Viamonde have the responsibility to report all suspicions of child abuse and/or neglect and to fully collaborate with Peel CAS. They are committed to working with community partners to ensure the well-being and safety of all children.

Children's Aid Society of the Region of Peel

Peel CAS has the primary responsibility, under *the Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, to investigate child protection allegations and thereafter to support infants, children, youth (0 -17) and families. Peel CAS aims to promote safety and well-being for children, in collaboration with their families and community.

D. Allegation Against a School Board Employee

Peel CAS recognizes the impact of a child protection allegation against board employees and shall strive to afford a timely response to such allegations. The Principal or Supervisor and the respective Superintendent of the board employee, in consultation with Human Resources, shall be involved in the planning process and will develop an action plan with Peel CAS. The availability and cooperation of the Principal and Board Staff is essential in enabling Peel CAS to conclude the matter as quickly as possible as per board policy). The outcome of the investigation will be communicated to the school board.

Peel CAS further recognizes that a French language school board employee that is the subject of an investigation, or who is participating in an investigation, has the choice to receive services in French.

If Peel CAS is not able to assign a French-speaking worker to the case, every effort will be made to arrange for the interviews to be completed by a staff person with appropriate qualifications resourced from a partner CAS and only as a last resort to utilize a qualified interpreter. Peel CAS will arrange for paper and/or electronic correspondence to be sent in French to the school board parties in the case.

E. Child Protection Investigation and Post Investigation Service

Community collaboration embraces the principles of child protection as a shared responsibility in the Region of Peel.

Peel's Community Commitment to Children and Family Wellness; Child Abuse Investigation Protocol (2019) outlines the protocol for community partners in the Region of Peel to work together to share the responsibilities for child protection and well-being. This document should be referenced concurrently with the French Language Services Protocol, to ensure effective service delivery for Francophone persons in the Region of Peel.

All signatory agencies, in different roles and responsibilities, are committed to the provision and coordination of child abuse investigations and services to ensure a child-friendly and child-centered protection and service system.

F. Protocol Management

1. The signatory organizations of this Protocol will develop internal policies and procedures to embrace the principles and the practice of this protocol and will develop means to share this protocol with their staff.
2. The signatory organizations will appoint a representative(s) to join the Liaison Group for the purposes of conflict resolution, consultation, continuous improvement, and future protocol review. The Liaison Group will meet minimally 2 times a year, at the beginning of the school year and prior to the end of the school year.
3. This protocol will be reviewed minimally every 5 years.