

Sault Police Announce Renewed Partnership with Local School Boards to Reintroduce High School Liaison Officer

(November 7, 2024) The Sault Ste. Marie Police Service (SSMPS) is pleased to announce a renewed partnership with the Algoma District School Board (ADSB) and the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board (HSCDSB) that will see the return of a full-time, uniformed High School Liaison Officer to local high schools. This partnership will provide students, staff, and families with enhanced safety, education, and relationship-building opportunities.

The new High School Liaison Officer is Constable Lyndsey Pilkington, who has been a police officer for nine years. Prior to joining the Sault Police, Lyndsey earned her Bachelor of Education degree and worked as a teacher in both Canada and Australia.

"Connecting with youth has always been a focus of mine, whether in the classroom or in uniform," said Constable Lyndsey Pilkington. "I'm looking forward to being a consistent presence and role model in our high schools, supporting students, and working together with staff to create a positive and safe environment for everyone."

The High School Liaison Officer will be shared between four ADSB high and alternative schools and one HSCDSB high school, ensuring students from across the region benefit from the officer's presence and support. The position will be jointly funded by ADSB, HSCDSB, and the SSMPS, reflecting a shared commitment to fostering safe and welcoming environments for all students.

The focus of the High School Liaison Officer will be on education, awareness, and building positive relationships within the school communities. Through responding to incidents involving students, participation in school activities, and informal interactions, the officer will work to support students' safety and wellbeing, while also promoting a deeper understanding of the role of police in our community.

"We are excited to see the return of a full-time High School Liaison Officer to our schools," said Hugh Stevenson, Chief of Police. "It's important for youth to connect with police officers as people – not just as law enforcement. This renewed partnership is an important step in building trusting relationships and ensuring our students feel safe and supported."

The Sault Ste. Marie Police Service has not had a High School Liaison Officer since before the pandemic. Prior to this renewed partnership, the Sault Police occasionally visited schools as part of Dynamic Patrol initiatives, which provided a visible presence and fostered interactions with students. The new High School Liaison Officer will build upon these efforts, offering more consistent support to students, staff, and families.

"We are pleased to revive the High School Liaison Officer partnership and to have Constable Pilkington at our secondary and alternative sites more regularly," said Director of Education, Lucia Reece. "We had much positive feedback from students, staff and parents in previous years and during the Dynamic Patrol pilot, as many recognized how this role contributes to building strong relationships between our students and the police, as well as fostering an environment of trust and respect."

"We are excited to welcome a School Liaison Officer to our high school, as this role will help build strong relationships between police and our students," said Fil Lettieri, Director of Education at HSCDSB. "Through this partnership, we aim to increase awareness of important safety issues and create an environment where students feel support. By fostering these connections, we hope to empower our students to become responsible, engaged members of our community."

The Sault Ste. Marie Police Service, in collaboration with the ADSB and HSCDSB, remains committed to enhancing safety, education, and positive community relations. Constable Pilkington will begin her duties on November 12, 2024, with a focus on making meaningful connections and being an accessible resource for staff and students.

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