

Stop Trafficking!

Awareness Advocacy Action

Anti-Human Trafficking Newsletter • August 2026 • Vol. 24 • No. 8

FOCUS: This month's issue highlights the essential role of school personnel in preventing human trafficking.

School personnel are positioned to educate students about the many aspects of grooming, exploitation, and human trafficking, because they have regular interaction with students. They are also able to identify and report suspected cases of trafficking or exploitation, and support those who are victims.

Moreover, since schools are locations where young children and teens congregate, they are ripe for recruiting for human trafficking. Traffickers often use fellow students, who are often exploited themselves, to identify and recruit peers in class with them. Traffickers also may pose as “boyfriends”, offering gifts and emotional support as part of the grooming process, especially to students who are socially isolated.

To help prevent trafficking on school grounds, schools should also implement campus security measures and screen visitors to school buildings and events.

https://www.schoolsafety.gov/sites/default/files/2024-01/SchoolSafety.gov_Human%20Trafficking%20Resources%20for%20the%20K-12%20Community_January%202024.pdf

Signs of Potential Trafficking Among Students

The [U.S. Department of Education](#) highlights several warning signs of potential trafficking of students.

- Victims of human trafficking may continue to attend school but may show signs of trauma, with a decrease in academic performance, chronic truancy or excessive sleepiness.
- Victims may suddenly possess expensive items such as clothes, jewelry, or phones, or talk frequently of traveling to other cities.
- Some victims may show evidence of physical abuse, such as bruises or tattoos

Officers and staff at Solano Community College saved an 18-year-old girl from human trafficking after finding her crying on campus and escorting her to the college's Department of Public Safety. The student had recently been kicked out of her home and was homeless. An older woman invited her to stay with her, but after moving in, the student was told she needed to do “whatever she had to” to earn money to help pay the rent. The woman took photographs of the student and posted them on a prostitution website. Before any trafficking activity occurred, the student reached out to a college employee for help, leading to immediate intervention and appropriate support services.

<https://www.facebook.com/fox40/posts/officers-and-staff-at-solano-community-college-saved-an-18-year-old-girl-from-hu/1458843029159670/>





Awareness

Building a Safe and Supportive School Environment

Schools must create a safe environment so that children, especially those whose lives lack safety and security, feel safe from exploitation. Implement regular assessments of students' understanding of safety topics, such as digital safety and healthy relationships, to measure the effectiveness of ongoing education and guide future improvements.

All staff, including teachers, counselors, nurses, and administrators, should be trained in clear reporting procedures to handle sensitive information effectively and ensure prompt action when needed. Staff should also be trained to recognize red flags of potential trafficking or exploitation and build support networks within the school community for survivors of human trafficking and more vulnerable youth to protect them.

School and district leaders can also engage with parents and guardians to raise awareness about grooming both online and offline, and signs of human trafficking, which can also take place, without a parent's knowledge, while a child is living at home.

Schools should establish formal partnerships with law enforcement agencies and anti-trafficking organizations to provide ongoing resources and insights into best practices for creating safe environments.

Several school districts display the National Human Trafficking Hotline number. Others invite local law enforcement, school resource officers, and survivors to speak with staff and students during regular joint training sessions and community events to raise awareness.

The Law and Training of School Personnel

As of mid-2026, there are no federal mandates regarding training educators about human trafficking in the United States. Although it is increasingly required at the state level, many U.S. states do not have universal, statewide mandatory training requirements for all school personnel.

Laws vary by state. Connecticut requires training for all employees with student contact, including annual updates, while teachers in schools in California, Tennessee, Utah, and Virginia receive training on awareness and reporting protocols. In most states, education on human trafficking is voluntary for teachers and staff.

State laws on school training are often updated and integrated into child safety efforts by the state's Department of Education or Department of Children and Families. The Polaris Project has historically identified Wyoming, Arkansas, Montana, and South Dakota as having some of the weakest overall trafficking laws, which often correlates with a lack of comprehensive, mandatory training in schools. Advocacy is vital to strengthening protections and training requirements.

One form of labor trafficking among students is coerced drug dealing.

<https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/documents/human-trafficking/human-trafficking-americas-schools.pdf>



Curriculum and Student Education



The A21 [K-12 Human Trafficking Education Curriculum](#) is for K-12 students in the United States. This curriculum aims to provide students with knowledge about how to identify and respond to situations where they may be vulnerable to exploitation and human trafficking

Also by A21, this paperback booklet version of the “Steps to Staying Safe Storybook” is designed to help children ages 3-6 learn more about human trafficking prevention through visual storytelling. Parents, caregivers, educators or anyone who interacts with children can use this storybook or give as a gift, to help spread essential trafficking prevention messages, in a creative way. This storybook is designed to help children better understand the dangers of tricky people, what they can do and who they can ask for help.



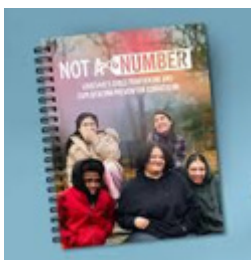
[Global Sisters Report](#)

distributes lesson plans regarding several topics related to human trafficking.



National
Educators to
Stop
Trafficking

[NEST](#) equips teachers and youth leaders with age-appropriate curriculum to educate and empower youth.



[Not a Number](#) is an interactive child trafficking and exploitation prevention curriculum designed to provide youth with information and skills in a manner that inspires them

to make safe choices. Youth learn to identify and utilize healthy support systems that may decrease their vulnerabilities.

[The Empower Youth Program](#) is an

innovative tool that equips you with the power to stay safe from people and situations that intend to take advantage of you and your friends. We call these people exploiters. They want to find a weakness or need in our lives and will use that to deceive us and trick us into doing something that benefits only them. As you go through these lessons, you will learn about the strategies exploiters use to take advantage of us and the strategies you can use to stay safe from exploitation.





Advocacy

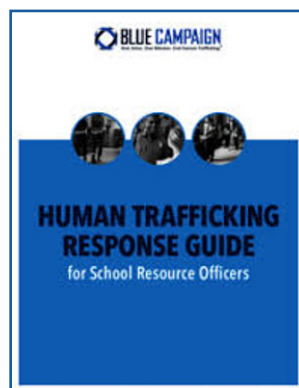
Chromebooks

Sexual predators are reaching children through school-issued Chromebooks. Chromebooks grant students open access to almost the entire Internet, which includes grooming from sexual predators, exposure to hardcore pornography, cyberbullying, sextortion, and more. Google Chromebooks should only allow access to specific, vetted websites deemed both educational and age-appropriate on school-issued devices. Chromebooks are included on this year's [Dirty Dozen](#) list issued by the National Center on Online Sexual Exploitation (NCOSE). Profit-driven design has eclipsed protection for too long. Please click [here](#) to tell Google to stop evading responsibility and make child safety the default.

Teachers can also create projects or assignments that allow students to explore topics related to human trafficking, such as how what they purchase, such as their clothes, or what they eat, can impact labor trafficking and forced labor.

School Resource Officers

For School Resource Officers, the US Dept of Homeland Security has provided [this kit](#) to help officers recognize the signs of trafficking and know what to do if they suspect human trafficking or exploitation.



In February 2025, a lawsuit was filed against Klein ISD in Houston, alleging the school ignored signs that a former teacher and her son were trafficking students, despite signs of abuse such as bruises on a victim and reports of suspicious behavior. The lawsuit seeks damages for the alleged failure to protect students.

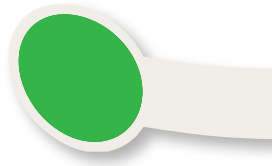
Staff Development

The U.S. Department of Education has published [Addressing Human Trafficking in America's Schools Staff Development Series](#), a three-part video training designed to help educators and school staff identify potential trafficking, develop appropriate school-level responses, and implement effective prevention strategies.

The curriculum is divided into three key learning modules:

- Video 1: Identifying Potential Trafficking – Focuses on recognizing the behavioral indicators, risk factors, and warning signs that students may be vulnerable to or currently experiencing trafficking.
- Video 2: Generating School-Level Responses – Equips educators with trauma-informed and survivor-centered strategies for how to respond safely, protect student confidentiality, and collaborate with local authorities.
- Video 3: Preventing Trafficking of Students – Discusses how schools can foster safe environments, build protective factors, and educate families to reduce vulnerability to both sex and labor trafficking.

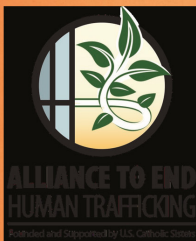
Each video includes reflection questions, making the series suitable for both individual independent study and group professional development.



Student Awareness Programs

Teachers, parents, and those working with youth should encourage student-led initiatives, such as awareness fairs, poster campaigns, and fair trade education to understand sex and labor exploitation.

The [Alliance to End Human Trafficking](#) created the Youth Video contest to raise awareness, educate, and empower students on how to identify and prevent human trafficking. Students across the United States had a chance to showcase their talent, earn cash prizes, and educate teens about human trafficking in a video contest titled “What Would You Do?” Check out the 2026 winning videos by clicking [here](#).



Stop Human Trafficking: Pathways to Prevention **What would you do?**

High School Video Contest

About the Contest

High school students across the United States are invited to participate in a short video contest responding to the prompt: **What would you do?** to prevent human trafficking. These videos will highlight potential human trafficking scenarios chosen by the students, and result in raising awareness, educating, and empowering students and others on how to identify and prevent human trafficking. The video can be created by a group, individual or class and must be under 3 minutes in length.

Win \$1,000 for 1st place, \$750 for 2nd and \$500 for 3rd!

TO LEARN MORE, PLEASE EMAIL:

Christine Commerce, Program Director

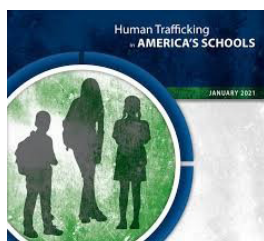
christine@alliancetoendhumantrafficking.org

Human Trafficking Resources for the K-12 Community

Published in Jan 2024, [Strategies for Schools to Address Human Trafficking](#) offers a comprehensive guide specifically for K-12 communities, detailing warning signs, safety protocols, and prevention strategies.



The United States Department of Education, Office of Safe and Supportive Schools, published the second edition of this report in 2021. Human trafficking in America's schools: What schools can do to prevent, respond, and help students to recover from human trafficking (2nd ed.).



This report is available for free by clicking [here](#).

Illuminating Justice: Student Research Symposium on Human Trafficking

For ALL UNDERGRADUATES AND GRADUATES

Participation is welcomed from all undergraduate and graduate students from any discipline, department, and institution.

Date: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2026

Location: UCF ROSEN COLLEGE OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

Address: 9907 Universal Blvd, Orlando, FL 32819

Time: 8:00am-5:00pm

*IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL

•Students from any college or university are invited to present their research on any aspect of the challenges related to human trafficking.

For more information and to register, click [here](#).

Alabama's Jefferson County Sheriff's Office and the Children's Aid Society of Alabama partnered on the [Child Trafficking Solutions Project](#) to provide resources for local youth during Human Trafficking Awareness Month.



Officials said children are among the most vulnerable targets, prompting the placement of informational signs inside every Jefferson County middle and high school bathroom. The signs outlined warning signs, common myths, and resources for help.

National Center for Missing &

Exploited Children To report child

sex trafficking, call **1-800-THE-**

LOST or use the CyberTipline.



**NATIONAL
HUMAN
TRAFFICKING
HOTLINE**

1-888-373-7888

National Human
Trafficking Hotline:
text **HELP** to
233733 (BeFree).

The Blue Campaign offers resources for educators and student leaders at the college and university level. [This toolkit](#) offers tips and resources to engage your campus and community to raise awareness of human trafficking. It also includes posters to display in public areas on campus.



Please click [here](#) to access Child Sex Trafficking: A Fact Sheet for Educational Professionals, published by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.



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- [Sisters of St. Francis of Clinton](#)
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