



# Briefing Note

## Sexual Abuse Prevention Program (SAPP) Update

### Issue

This briefing note provides an overview of the history and current status of the Sexual Abuse Prevention Program (SAPP), as well as additional considerations from Bill 98, *Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023*.

### Background

In 2021, the provincial government amended the *Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996* to require all Ontario Certified Teachers (and new applicants for certification) to complete a sexual abuse prevention program.

The Ontario College of Teachers partnered with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection to develop an online program (the Sexual Abuse Prevention Program), which was launched in January 2022.

The Program consists of a series of video modules, each with a distinct focus on subjects that include how to recognize when a student may be disclosing that they have been abused and how healthy relationships with trusted adults can help individuals who have experienced abuse successfully recover.

Due to the popularity of the Program, the College discussed ongoing access for members with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. This will respond to the requests of many members (and Council) that this important training be available as an ongoing resource for educators. We are

happy to report that the Canadian Centre for Child Protection supports this initiative, and we are currently reviewing system changes that will enable members of the College to repeat the Program after they have successfully completed it.

### SAPP Compliance

Under the Teachers' Qualification regulation (O. Reg. 176/10), sections 50.1 to 50.4, all College members are required to complete the SAPP training as part of their ongoing education requirements. While the regulation provided members with an opportunity to seek an extension of time to complete the Program, there is no provision for an exemption from the Program. Any member who failed to request an extension and/or failed to complete the Program by September 14, 2022 now has a notation: "Sexual Abuse Prevention Program / Incomplete" reflected on their public register profile page.

As of May 9, 2023, 94.4% of members in good standing had completed the program and an additional 1.5% of the membership obtained an extension to September 15, 2023. 4.1% of members (10,193) were recorded as "Incomplete".

Bill 98 proposes to make consequential amendments to the SAPP. Regarding the removal of suspensions, if Bill 98 passes, the Registrar will be prohibited from removing any kind of suspension of a

certificate or issuing a new certificate until the individual in question successfully completes the Sexual Abuse Prevention Program requirements. This includes members who are suspended for non-payment of fees or failure to provide information to the College.

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### **Importance of Completing the Program**

The completion rate for the Program has been exceptional and the rate of completions continues to increase from 89.3% in September 2022 to 94.4% in May 2023. However, the College is committed to having all teachers complete their SAPP training. This commitment is echoed by the Minister of Education who has repeatedly highlighted the importance of the Program.

Beyond frequent and ongoing messaging about the SAPP to the membership and general public, the College sends targeted reminders to anyone who is currently recorded as Incomplete or whose extension is soon to expire.

Given the Program was originally envisioned to have been completed by September 14, 2022 (subject to any extensions), or within one year of having become a member, the College is bolstering its communications to make clear that failure to complete the Program (i.e. any member with an “Incomplete” status on the public register) contravenes the Teachers’ Qualification regulation. This has important implications since, under

section 1, paragraph 14 of the Professional Misconduct regulation (O. Reg. 437/97), “failing to comply with the Act or the regulations or the by-laws” is defined as professional misconduct.

Therefore, members who fail to complete the Program are now, or soon will be, in a state of professional misconduct and could be subject to the complaints, investigation, and discipline processes of the College.

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### **Proposed Direction**

College staff will continue to keep Council apprised of efforts to bring the completion rate to 100%, including reviewing steps taken by other regulators around non-compliance with ongoing education requirements and other regulatory tools available to the College to promote completion.

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**Date:**  
May 23, 2023