

From: Erin.MacDonald
Sent: August 4, 2021 12:42 PM
To: Jackie Hong
Subject: RE: CBC Yukon request for comment - Hidden Valley sexual abuse

Hi Jackie,

We have no further comment.



Erin MacDonald
Director, Community Relations and Engagement
Education
Office: 867-667-5701 Cell: 867-332-7008 | Yukon.ca

I respectfully acknowledge that I work within the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

From: Jackie Hong <jackie.hong@cbc.ca>
Sent: August 4, 2021 9:43 AM
To: Erin.MacDonald <Erin.MacDonald@yukon.ca>
Subject: Re: CBC Yukon request for comment - Hidden Valley sexual abuse

*** External email: Do not click on links or attachments except from trusted senders. ***

Hi Erin,

This did not answer any of my questions. I am not asking for comment on the lawsuit.

The matter of if and when the department or school ever notified parents of the situation is not before the courts.

The ending of the employment of the EA is not before the courts.

You also did not provide any comment or acknowledgement of the systemic review launched by the child and youth advocate, as we had discussed on the phone yesterday. That matter is, again, not before the courts.

Again, I ask — did the department at any point notify parents about the criminal charges against or eventual convict of the EA?
When did the EA cease being an employ of Hidden Valley?

The Yukon child and youth advocate has launched a systemic review of safety and supports at Hidden Valley. She has also made some immediate recommendations, such as have a social worker assigned to the school. Will the department be cooperating with the review, and will it act on the advocate's immediate recommendations?

On Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 8:36 AM <Erin.MacDonald@yukon.ca> wrote:

Hi Jackie,

Where there is concern that a child or youth is being victimized, we urge families to reach out to the RCMP, the school, or the Government of Yukon's Victim Services Branch (1-800-661-0408, ext: 8500) who can offer specialized support through Project Lynx to support children and youth victims of crime and their families.

As this matter is now before the courts, we are not in a position to comment further at this time.



Erin MacDonald

Director, Community Relations and Engagement

Education

Office: 867-667-5701 Cell: 867-332-7008 | Yukon.ca

I respectfully acknowledge that I work within the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

From: Jackie Hong <jackie.hong@cbc.ca>

Sent: August 3, 2021 10:15 AM

To: Erin.MacDonald <Erin.MacDonald@yukon.ca>

Subject: Re: CBC Yukon request for comment - Hidden Valley sexual abuse

*** External email: Do not click on links or attachments except from trusted senders. ***

Hello Erin,

Just wondering if you got my request yesterday, and if I can expect something by tomorrow?

Thanks.

On Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 11:24 AM Jackie Hong <jackie.hong@cbc.ca> wrote:

Hello Erin,

I've received a few messages from parents with children at Hidden Valley Elementary following the story I did about the lawsuit over sexual abuse at the school.

The parents say they're concerned that they were not notified by the education department about the criminal charges against the educational assistant or his eventual plea/conviction.

Can you confirm if the school or department ever sent any communications to parents at Hidden Valley about the sexual abuse a student experienced at the hands of an education assistant? As well, has the school provided any supports to parents and/or students in regards to the situation (ex. counselling)?

As well, I see that the EA is no longer with Hidden Valley and following his criminal conviction is barred from working with children - can you confirm when his employment with Hidden Valley ended?

My deadline is Wednesday at noon.

Please let me know if you require more information.

Thank you.

Jackie Hong

Reporter, CBC Yukon

(867) 334-6576

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From: ecoinfo

Sent: August 4, 2021 2:05 PM

Subject: Media monitoring August 4, 2021 p.m.

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Wednesday, August 4, 2021

CBC interviews, 12 to 1 p.m.

- 12:13 Audio: B. Hanley, Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health, "Excerpt from Hanley's recent COVID update"
- 12:17 Audio: J. McLean, Minister of Education, "Excerpt from the most recent COVID update about schools reopening"
- 12:25 "CBC Olympic update"
- 12:42 A. Maje Raider, Executive Director, Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, "Maje-Raider talks about a report on the risks of misogyny and colonization associated with mining"
- 12:55 D. O'Donovan, Director, Yukon Emergency Measures Organization, "O'Donovan gives an update about evacuation alerts in the Dawson City area"

Local news

Yukon University students will be headed back to campus on September 7th (CBC 12:30 p.m.)

Yukon University students will be headed back to school soon. The University is preparing for the resumption of in-person classes this fall. Maggie Matear is Interim President of the University. She says there will be a mix of online and in-person classes this year and there will be measures in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19. "We are going to be returning to many of the pre pandemic conditions that we saw before we had to send everybody home about 17 months ago. Some of the things have changed as a result of COVID and I think have changed for the better. We're really excited about that to bring people back and have everybody participate in that collegial environment again." University staff were scheduled to return to campus today. The first day of classes is set for September 7th.

CPAWS Yukon encouraged as US orders new review of drilling in Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (CHON 12:30 p.m.)

The US Bureau of Land Management has released a notice of intent to create a new supplemental environmental impact statement to the 2019 review that looked at what affects oil and gas drilling would have on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The move comes after Interior Secretary Deb Holland said she found deficiencies in the 2019 review. Malkolm Boothroyd is the campaign's coordinator for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society Yukon, an environmental charity and advocate for protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. "So it's great that the Biden administration is recognizing that there are flaws in the previous review and is going back and redoing the analysis. And because [inaudible] that any thorough review of environmental [inaudible] environmental review of oil drilling in [inaudible] will find that it's a terrible idea." In 2017, the Trump administration passed law to authorize leasing to oil and gas companies in the Arctic Refuge. US President Joe Biden signed an executive order on his first day in office to suspend oil and gas leasing. But Boothroyd says the leases are still in place and theoretically could be reactivated. Boothroyd also says there will be opportunities for Yukoners to voice their opinions on protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and that Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society will let them know when and how to do so.

Territorial news

The Yukon government is rolling back some of its restrictive health measures as COVID-19 vaccination rates continue to rise (CKRW 12 p.m.)

The Yukon government is rolling back some of its restrictive health measures as COVID-19 vaccination rates continue to rise. As of today, mask use in indoor spaces will no longer be mandatory — but is strongly encouraged — particularly when people are in crowded, close quarters

where it's difficult to physically distance. Self-isolation after domestic travel will no longer be required for vaccinated or unvaccinated people, and bars and restaurants will be able to return to full capacity for bar and countertop service. Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Brendan Hanley says mask use will continue, however, at airports and in offices of health, such as dentists and massage therapists and optometrists.

Education minister says Yukon schools to return to 'near normal' operations (CKRW 12 p.m.)

Meanwhile, Education Minister Jeanie McLean says the upcoming school year will look different than last year. She says schools will not be mandating the use of masks. "Students will not be required to wear a mask in the classroom this year. But all students aged five and older, including staff, should wear masks in all indoor settings outside of the classroom, such as common areas and hallways." McLean says the school buses will be operating normally, but mask use will be required for riders and drivers that are over the age of five.

Evacuation alert still in place for areas around Dawson due to wildfires (CKRW 12 p.m.)

Yukon Protective Services says the evacuation alert is still in place for several areas for fire zone in Dawson. According to social media, the Coal Creek fire grew slower than expected yesterday, but there was some growth east towards the Dempster Highway. Last evening all areas of the fire received some rain, as did the Dawson Airport, Rock Creek, Henderson Corner and the farms across the Klondike River. The fire is burning northeast of Dawson between the North Klondike and Dempster highways. It's about 6,500 hectares in size. Volunteer fire departments will be in the neighbourhoods today, ensuring residents are aware of the alert and are prepared to evacuate. An air tanker group is based in Dawson and is set to assist as needed.

Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office launches systemic review of school safety and supports at Hidden Valley Elementary School (CKRW 12 p.m.)

A systemic review of school safety and supports at Hidden Valley Elementary School has been launched by the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office. This comes after the conviction and sentencing of an educational assistant who was formerly employed at Hidden Valley after sexual interference against a child. Child and Youth Advocate, Annette King says that the goal of the review is to promote a return to school that has safety and trust built into it. "We're going to be doing a review about the response when allegations of sexual abuse come out, how the school responds, how they communicate and how the supports that are provided to the students, to the educators and to the families." King says there needs to be immediate action to bring the state of calm to both students and parents in the school community.

Full-time in-class instruction will resume in Yukon's schools in the coming weeks (CBC 12:30 p.m.)

Yukon government officials say schools will mostly be back to normal this fall. Education Minister Jeanie McLean says full-time in-class instruction will resume in the coming weeks. Some COVID-19 measures will stay in place and others will be dropped. Masks will not be mandatory in classrooms, for instance. It is recommended that staff and students older than five wear them in common areas, however. "I am so excited that students can return to school with some normalcy this year but as we prepare to return to the classroom, it is important to understand that we will continue to see cases in our territory." McLean says school buses will operate normally. She says mask-wearing will be required for drivers and students aged five and up. McLean says all registered riders have been assigned seating. Officials say in the past year there's been no transmission of COVID-19 in classrooms. They say unorganised social activities present a high risk of transmission, and they say they're confident kids will remain safe if protocols and schools are closely followed.

Yukon's Child and Youth Advocate has launched a systemic review of safety and supports at Hidden Valley Elementary School (CBC 12:30 p.m.)

Yukon's Child and Youth Advocate has launched a systemic review of safety and supports at Hidden Valley Elementary School. It comes after a CBC story last month that revealed an educational assistant at the school had sexually abused a student in 2019. Annette King says she's heard concerns from parents. She says the review is about ensuring children, educators and parents get the support they need. "Our intention for this review is not to catch somebody that did something wrong or blame anybody. It's to take charge and show that the professionals can do this to support the families. We really just want the children to feel safe to go to school. And in order to do that, the families need to feel supported." King says she expects the review will be completed in January. In the meantime, she's made immediate recommendations for education officials to act on. They include assigning a full-time social worker and clinical counsellor to Hidden Valley Elementary. Speaking to reporters this morning, Education Minister Jeanie McLean refused to answer questions about the review.

The growth rates of fires near Dawson City are now slowing (CBC 12:30 p.m.)

Some good news for property owners near Dawson City currently under an evacuation alert due to a wildfire: Fire Information Officer Julia Duchesne says that the growth of the fire is now slowing. The alert applies to homes on the North Klondike Highway between Hunker Creek Road and Kilometre 680. And it also includes the Dawson City Airport, which remains open for now, as well as Henderson Corner and Rock Creek. Duchesne says the fire growth slowed thanks to Mother Nature. "So these areas are still under alert. However, you know, we got 11 millimetres of rain, so more than a centimetre of rain at the airport. We know that Rock Creek, the farms across the Klondike River there and Henderson Corner all received some rain and the entire fire did receive some precipitation." Dawson City itself is not threatened by the fire although smoke was affecting air quality in Dawson yesterday.

A new report says Indigenous and racialised women often face abuse at mines in Yukon and northern BC (CBC 12:30 p.m.)

A new report says Indigenous and racialised women often face abuse at mines in Yukon and northern BC. The report, released by the Liard Aboriginal Women Society, says there are systemic problems that need to be addressed. A third of the 22 women included in the report say they faced harassment, discrimination and violence at mines. The report says compounding the problem is that some women don't have a way to file grievances. Ann Maje Raider is the Executive Director of the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society. She says the report sheds light on long standing problems. "They said they wanted change and they don't want to see other women coming behind them to suffer the same things as they have." The report says women are often tasked with working menial, low paying jobs for long uncompensated hours. Carla Boss interviewed some of the women. She says First Nations women should be involved in policy making. Boss says that could introduce more cultural awareness at mines. "The women would feel safer if they had a couple of Elders up there." The report says onsite women's groups should be created. It says that will provide a safety net for women in dangerous situations.

Evacuation alert issued in Dawson City area due to wildfires (CHON 12:30 p.m.)

A fire 5.5 kilometres north east of the North Klondike Highway has prompted an evacuation alert in the Dawson City area — particularly properties along the North Klondike Highway from kilometre 680 to Hunker Creek Road — as well as the Dawson Airport, Henderson Corner and Rock Creek. The Yukon Emergency Measures Organization says anyone in the area must be prepared to evacuate on short notice. Residents and visitors should locate family members and designate a safe meeting place and gather essential items such as medication, eyeglasses, valuable papers and immediate care needs for dependents. As well, they should move livestock and pets to a safe area, arrange

transport and accommodation for their household, and monitor local news and the Government of Yukon website.

Today is the day COVID-19 restrictions are easing in Yukon (CHON 12:30 p.m.)

Today is the day COVID-19 restrictions are easing. Masks are no longer mandatory in indoor public spaces in the Yukon. Also, bars and restaurants can run at full capacity with countertop service, though dancing and mingling is still not allowed and no one has to self-isolate when they enter the territory. Face coverings are still recommended in crowded spaces, and establishments can ask that patrons wear a mask.

Yukon education minister confident upcoming school year will be near normal (CHON 12:30 p.m.)

With summer vacation coming to an end, students will return to full time in-person learning in just a few weeks. This morning, Jeanie McLean spoke at the weekly COVID-19 news conference. She says with eight out of 10 Yukoners vaccinated, she's confident that the upcoming school year will be near normal. Masks are recommended for school staff and students over five years old when they are in indoor spaces outside of the classroom as well as on the school bus. Physical distancing is recommended in school common areas and proper handwashing is highly encouraged. This morning, Dr. Hanley addressed growing global concerns about the Delta COVID variant. "Just as with the Gamma variant, Delta coronavirus will quickly infect as many people as possible and can easily do so in highly concentrated groupings of those who are unvaccinated. Just like Gamma, we will also see vaccinated people infected, but to a much lesser degree and with much better outcomes. We may also see vaccinated people transmit the virus to others, and recent studies suggest that may happen more than we thought. So prudence — even amongst fully vaccinated people — is definitely warranted until we learn more about how the Delta virus behaves and what kind of impact it will have in the provinces." Hanley says the Delta variant thrives in places where people are unvaccinated, but the importation risk for the territory in the coming months is low. He says the territory still needs to prepare for future outbreaks but given high vaccination rates in the Yukon, today's easing of restrictions is safe. The goal now is to get 90 percent of the population vaccinated. That would mean about 4,000 people getting their shot.

Yukon federal conservative candidate announces his campaign manager (CHON 12:30 p.m.)

Yukon conservative candidate Jonas J. Smith says that they're ready for a potential federal election and hoping to become the Yukon's next Member of Parliament. Smith has announced that Whitehorse businesswoman Linda Benoit will serve as his campaign manager if Canada heads to the polls. In the meantime, Smith is hosting a virtual town hall this Saturday to hear about Yukoners' challenges and priorities.

Yukon schools to return to 'near normal' operations, says minister (CBC online)

Territory has 61 active cases as more public health restrictions are eased. [Full story](#)

Yukon lifts some COVID-19 restrictions as active cases decline (National Post)

The Yukon government has lifted a series of public health restrictions as active COVID-19 infections decline and the vaccination rate rises. [Full story](#)

National news

Indigenous minister worries lifting COVID-19 restrictions could bring fourth wave (CKRW 12 p.m.)

As prairie provinces move away from mask mandates and other COVID-19 restrictions, Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller says he's concerned it could lead to a fourth wave for Indigenous people around Canada. Miller says there has been a good uptake of vaccination amongst the Indigenous population in Canada but a large portion — especially on reserves — are children under

the age of 12 who are unable to get a dose. As of August 3, there's been no more than 33,000 positive cases on reserves, the vast majority in the prairies.

Feds announce long-awaited deepwater port for Qikiqtarjuaq, Nunavut (CBC online)

\$40M port would service ships carrying supplies, as well as tourism and fishing vessels. [Full story](#)

Most new N.W.T. syphilis cases are in people without adequate housing (CBC online)

About 60% of cases territory-wide are among people who don't have adequate housing. [Full story](#)

Nunavut Speaker Paul Quassa resigns from role as Aggu MLA (CBC online)

Quassa's resignation, effective as of Aug. 13, comes just shy of the end of his term. [Full story](#)

A look at COVID-19 reopening plans across the country (Toronto Star)

[Full story](#)

International news

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Executive Council Office
Communications
T 867-393-7163 | Yukon.ca

From: Amanda.Dieckmann
Sent: August 4, 2021 4:00 PM
To: EDU - E1 Building All
Subject: Education in the News July 28 - August 4, 2021

Education-related items:

- [Yukon schools to return to 'near normal' operations, says minister](#)
 - [Education minister says Yukon schools to return to 'near normal' operations](#)
 - [Yukon's child and youth advocate Annette King launches safety review of Hidden Valley Elementary School](#)
 - [MLA Brad Cathers says the Yukon government has kept parents in the dark after a former educational assistant was convicted of sexual interference with a child](#)
 - [Whitehorse school under scrutiny after conviction of educational assistant](#)
 - [Feds contribute \\$42 million toward affordable, improved childcare](#)
 - [Lawsuit alleges sexual abuse at elementary school in Whitehorse](#)
-

Yukon schools to return to 'near normal' operations, says minister

No masks in classrooms, but will be required in indoor common areas and on buses

CBC News · Posted: Aug 04, 2021 11:13 AM CT | Last Updated: 4 hours ago

Yukon schools will be back to "near normal" operations when classes resume later this month, the territory's education minister says.

"We are confident that we can safely return students to the classroom in the coming weeks," said Minister Jeanie McLean at a news conference on Wednesday morning.

That means all students will be back to full-time in-class learning, "with some measures continuing to be in place to keep our schools as low-risk settings," McLean said.

Students won't be required to wear masks in class, she said, but they should wear masks in indoor settings outside the classroom such as hallways and other common areas.

Students will also be required to wear masks on school buses, as will drivers. Otherwise, McLean said, school buses will return to normal operation.

She said new operational guidelines for schools are still being developed and will be available "in the coming days."

Classes begin at Whitehorse schools on Aug. 23, while those at some rural Yukon schools begin either before or after that date.

Restrictions eased

As of Wednesday, masks are no longer be required in all indoor public places in Yukon. Other changes include bars and restaurants returning to full capacity for bar and countertop service, and the end of mandatory self-isolation for anyone entering the territory from within Canada.

The territory had 61 active cases of COVID-19 as of Tuesday evening, with seven new cases reported over the previous day.

Yukon's death toll from COVID-19 now sits at eight people, with two deaths reported in the last week. Both of those involved unvaccinated people.

Speaking at Wednesday's news conference, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Brendan Hanley said the territory's risk of importing new COVID-19 infections in the coming weeks and months is deemed to be low — but COVID-19 is not going to disappear completely.

"We will see introduction of Delta and other variants," he said. "We may see further outbreaks, and we may even see fading immunity in our population."

Hanley acknowledged that easing restrictions brings more risk, but he said risk is unavoidable no matter what the territory does.

"The risk of carrying on with broad restrictive measures as we wait for Delta to come would be high risk to our well-being, and high risk to our ability to adapt to the ongoing reality of COVID," he said.

The main strategy now is to get more Yukoners vaccinated. Another 4,000 to 5,000 people getting their shots would mean about 90 per cent of the over-12 population was vaccinated, Hanley said.

"Our goal is now shifting from one of overall containment to one that is focused on reducing the impacts of COVID by limiting its spread and avoiding as much severe illness and death as we can," he said.

"So do the right thing Yukoners, and get vaccinated."

As of Monday, 81 per cent of adult Yukoners and 64 per cent of youth aged 12 to 17 were fully vaccinated, while 86 per cent of adults and 75 per cent of youth had received their first shot.

Education minister says Yukon schools to return to 'near normal' operations (CKRW 12 p.m.) August 4

Meanwhile, Education Minister Jeanie McLean says the upcoming school year will look different than last year. She says schools will not be mandating the use of masks. "Students will not be required to wear a mask in the classroom this year. But all students aged five and older, including staff, should wear masks in all indoor settings outside of the classroom, such as common areas and hallways."

McLean says the school buses will be operating normally, but mask use will be required for riders and drivers that are over the age of five.

Yukon's child and youth advocate Annette King launches safety review of Hidden Valley Elementary School (CBC 7:30 a.m.) August 4

And finally, Yukon's child and youth advocate Annette King has launched a systemic review of safety and supports at Hidden Valley Elementary School. It comes after a CBC story last month that revealed an educational assistant at the school had sexually abused a student in 2019. King says she's heard concerns from parents. She says the review is about ensuring children, educators and parents get the support that they need. "Our intention for this review is not to catch somebody that did something wrong or blame anybody. It's to take charge and show that the professionals can do this to support the families. We really just want the children to feel safe to go to school. And in order

to do that, the families need to feel supported." King says she expects the review will be completed by January. In the meantime, she has made immediate recommendations for education officials to act on. They include assigning a full-time social worker and clinical counsellor to Hidden Valley Elementary.

MLA Brad Cathers says the Yukon government has kept parents in the dark after a former educational assistant was convicted of sexual interference with a child (CKRW 7 a.m.) August 4

Lake Laberge MLA Brad Cathers is calling for better communication and transparency from the Yukon government in light of a serious crime having taken place at Hidden Valley Elementary School. Brad Cathers says the Yukon government, as well as the Department of Education, have kept parents in the dark after a former educational assistant was convicted of sexual interference with a child at the school. He is calling for supports to be made available as soon as possible. "Counselling and support is made available without further delay to parents, students and staff who may need it. As well as calling for answers and better communication from the government." Cathers says parents have had questions regarding their children's safety, questions that have been left unanswered.

Whitehorse school under scrutiny after conviction of educational assistant

Yukon Child and Youth Advocate to do 'systemic review' of safety at Hidden Valley Elementary

CBC News · Posted: Aug 03, 2021 2:29 PM CT | Last Updated: August 3

'The impacts of child abuse are influenced by how the adults respond,' said Annette King, the child and youth advocate, in a statement. (Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office)

Yukon's Child and Youth Advocate is doing a "systemic review" of safety at a Whitehorse school after a former educational assistant was convicted for sexual interference against a special needs student.

And the advocate is also urging Yukon's Department of Education to communicate to families "about the school's response to reports of harm," and assign a full-time social worker or clinical counsellor to the school.

The review and recommendations follow the 2020 conviction of a former educational assistant at Hidden Valley Elementary School. The assistant pleaded guilty to one count of sexual interference and was sentenced to six months' jail followed by two years of probation.

He's also prohibited from contacting the victim, from taking a job or doing volunteer work that would require him to be in contact with children under 16, and from being alone in a room with a child under 16 without another adult present.

"The Department of Education has yet to provide a formal response to the incident," the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office (YCAO) said in a news release on Tuesday.

Some parents have also written to the Department of Education, expressing frustration with the department's lack of communication about the case, or its response.

A spokesperson for Yukon's education minister said in an email to parents on Monday that a formal response from the minister would be provided "shortly."

The review and recommendations from the Yukon Child and Youth Advocate Office follow the 2020 conviction of a former educational assistant at Hidden Valley Elementary School in Whitehorse.

(Google)

The YCAO is an independent office of the Legislative Assembly that is meant to represent the rights and interests of children and youth who are eligible for or receive government services.

According to the release, the YCAO review of Hidden Valley school will aim to promote safety in schools, particularly students with special needs.

It's also meant "to ensure appropriate processes are in place to prevent abuse and to respond appropriately when abuse occurs," the release says.

The identity of the child, who was six at the time, is protected by a publication ban. CBC is not naming the educational assistant to protect the identity of the child.

The YCAO has also not named any of the people involved in the incident.

"The impacts of child abuse are influenced by how the adults respond," said Annette King, the child and youth advocate, in a statement.

"Parents need information and guidance on how to talk to their children. They need assurance that the school will address the issues and keep their children safe."

The YCAO is recommending a counsellor or social worker be assigned to the school as support for students and educators, and also to offer resources to help parents and educators speak to kids about sexual health and sexual assault.

Lawsuit filed by student

Last month, the student, via his father, [filed a statement of claim](#) against the educational assistant in the Yukon Supreme Court. The Yukon government is also listed as a defendant.

The lawsuit alleges that the abuse happened in 2019 and 2020, and that the Yukon government, as the educational assistant's employer, was vicariously liable for the abuse and failed to properly vet or supervise the assistant and protect the student.

The lawsuit has not been tested in court.

According to the statement of claim and documents from the criminal proceedings, the child was a special needs student at Hidden Valley Elementary School and in the care of the educational assistant when the abuse happened.

The abuse came to light after the child told his father the educational assistant had done a "body check" on him at a "secret room" in the school.

Feds contribute \$42 million toward affordable, improved childcare

Minimum wages for early childhood educators will go to \$30 an hour.

- [HALEY RITCHIE](#)
- Jul. 28, 2021 7:00 p.m. Yukon News

The Yukon is the third jurisdiction in Canada to reach an agreement with the federal government over universal childcare.

The federal government said it will contribute \$42 million over the next five years in order to create new spaces, improve the quality of care and raise the minimum wage for early childhood educators. “An affordable, Canada-wide early learning and childcare system is also good for parents. It’s good particularly for women with children who intend to not be forced to have to make a choice between going to work or taking care of their kids,” said federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development Ahmed Hussen.

The agreement, signed July 22 by Hussen and Yukon Education Minister Jeanie McLean, expands on the territorial government’s recent introduction of a subsidy for licensed child care.

The Yukon is the third jurisdiction to sign an agreement with the federal government, following deals in Nova Scotia and British Columbia.

The federal government’s plan is to introduce universal child care that will cost \$10 a day on average, for children under age six.

Deputy Prime Minister Chystia Freeland also made an appearance during the announcement via video call.

In the Yukon, the agreement signed with the federal government also pledges the creation of 110 new regulated early learning and child care spaces within five years.

The agreement will also provide a minimum wage of nearly \$30 an hour to fully qualified early childhood educators.

During a press conference on Friday officials said the funds will also go toward ensuring that early child care in the territory is fully inclusive of children with disabilities and learning challenges.

The agreement also outlines a plan to work with Yukon First Nations to make sure Indigenous children have access to culturally relevant spaces.

“It’s going to help us to develop and offer more culturally inclusive programming for children. With this agreement, we will be able to not only continue but enhance our collaborative work with First Nations, Yukon University and the Government of Canada to support training and career development for members of the Yukon communities and health and social service program delivery,” said Silver.

Silver elaborated that some of the funding will be used to provide more childcare spaces within First Nations communities. He noted that during discussion at the quarterly Yukon Forum, education has been a main priority.

He highlighted the work of Tr’inke Zho, a childcare centre in Dawson who provide care for children from 1-12 years of age. The centre also has an Aboriginal Head Start program that provides half-day tradition and culture-based learning programming for First Nation, Inuit and Metis children under five. The federal funds will also accompany the territorial government raising minimum wages for early childhood educators to just under \$30 an hour.

“I think that our childcare providers have been underpaid for a long time,” said McLean. “I think that increasing the wage to a minimum of \$30 is long overdue, they provide important services to us as

Yukoners. I am thrilled that they're going to be compensated in the way that they should for the professional work that they do."

Lawsuit alleges sexual abuse at elementary school in Whitehorse

The alleged abuse is said to have happened during the 2019/20 school year.

- [JIM ELLIOT](#)
- Jul. 28, 2021 3:00 p.m. Yukon News

A lawsuit filed in the Yukon Supreme Court alleges an educational assistant at a Whitehorse school sexually abused a student.

A Hidden Valley Elementary School student's father launched the suit on behalf of his child. They are identified in the court documents by their initials.

The defendant, also identified only by initials, is alleged to have sexually abused the student during the 2019/2020 school year. The lawsuit, filed July 14, claims the abuse consisted of inappropriate sexual touching and the use of the educational assistant's position of authority to coerce the student. The suit notes that the student was a vulnerable minor and the educational assistant was many years his senior. It seeks to hold the educational assistant directly liable to the plaintiff for the sexual assault.

The Yukon government is also named as a defendant on the lawsuit because the educational assistant was their employee when the alleged sexual abuse occurred. It states that the defendant's role as an educational assistant "materially enhanced the risk of the sexual abuse. "

The lawsuit claims that the Yukon government was aware or should have been aware of the educational assistant's sexual predation activities or tendencies toward young children like the plaintiff. It states that the territorial government failed to investigate their employee's suitability to be in charge of young children, supervise them in any reasonable fashion or conduct an adequate background check.

Because of this, the lawsuit claims the Yukon is vicariously liable for the alleged sexual abuse and its consequences.

The lawsuit claims a variety of damages resulting from the abuse. The young plaintiff is said to suffer from severe emotional and psychiatric illnesses, a loss of self esteem, inability or reduced ability to form healthy emotional relationships with others and inability or reduced ability to complete an educational program.

As a result, the lawsuit is seeking special damages and expenses, the costs of future medical, psychological, psychiatric, counseling and other services and damages in trust to cover extraordinary assistance from family and community members.

As of July 27, a statement of defence addressing the allegations had not been filed. The allegations have not been heard or proven in court.

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