



Essential Knowledge for Teachers and School Administrators on Human Trafficking

- Human trafficking is a **crime of exploitation that can affect students of any age, gender, background, or academic standing**, and it frequently occurs without physical abduction or violence. [\[fbi.gov\]](#), [\[state.gov\]](#)
- Traffickers often **target youth experiencing vulnerability**, including those facing family conflict, housing instability, poverty, substance use, immigration stress, or social isolation. [\[justice.gov\]](#), [\[un.org\]](#)
- Students may be recruited through **social media, gaming platforms, dating apps, or peer relationships**, often by someone posing as a boyfriend, girlfriend, mentor, or benefactor. [\[state.gov\]](#), [\[un.org\]](#)
- Warning signs can include **sudden changes in behavior, unexplained absences, withdrawal, secrecy about relationships, possession of expensive items, or intense anxiety about authority figures**. [\[justice.gov\]](#), [\[fbi.gov\]](#)
- **Any minor involved in commercial sex is legally a trafficking victim**, regardless of perceived consent, affection toward the exploiter, or lack of physical force. [\[fbi.gov\]](#), [\[state.gov\]](#)
- Victims may exhibit **trauma responses** such as shame, denial, aggression, dissociation, or loyalty to an exploiter, rather than asking for help directly. [\[fbi.gov\]](#), [\[justice.gov\]](#)
- Chronic running away, frequent moves between homes, or unexplained periods of disappearance can be **significant indicators of trafficking risk**, especially when combined with other warning signs. [\[justice.gov\]](#), [\[4a3c9045ad...ackcdn.com\]](#)
- Labor trafficking can also affect students through **forced work, unpaid family labor, debt bondage, or exploitation tied to immigration or housing**, not just sex trafficking. [\[justice.gov\]](#), [\[un.org\]](#)
- Staff should **never attempt to investigate or confront suspected traffickers**, but should follow mandated-reporting laws and school protocols immediately. [\[justice.gov\]](#), [\[un.org\]](#)
- **Trust-based, trauma-informed conversations** that avoid judgment or pressure increase the likelihood that a student will disclose concerns safely. [\[fbi.gov\]](#), [\[un.org\]](#)
- Early education on **healthy relationships, online safety, consent, and personal boundaries** is one of the most effective long-term trafficking prevention strategies. [\[state.gov\]](#), [\[un.org\]](#)

- Preventing trafficking in school communities depends on **ongoing staff training, clear reporting pathways, and coordination with child protection, law enforcement, and victim-service providers.** [[un.org](#)], [[state.gov](#)]
- For immediate danger call **911**, and to report tips you can call the HSI Tip Line at **1-866-347-2423**. [[dhs.gov](#)]
- To get help or share concerns, contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline at **1-888-373-7888** or text “**BEFREE/HELP**” to **233733** (24/7, confidential support). [[humantraffickinghotline.org](#)], [[dhs.gov](#)]

Blink3 is the **Universal nonverbal SOS** for victims of human trafficking and abuse, blinking3 times is a way to ask for help. Please see <https://blink3.org/> for more information, and free courses