



U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking

Ending Slavery Is Everyone's Work

Red Flags for Human Trafficking

Students who are victims of trafficking are usually reluctant to come forward due to a sense of shame or stigma associated with forced prostitution or an inability to recognize that he or she is a victim. School personnel need to be aware of behavioral indicators of a child sex trafficking victim which may include, but are not limited to:

- an inability to attend school on a regular basis and/or unexplained absences
- frequently running away from home
- references made to frequent travel to other cities
- bruises or other signs of physical trauma, withdrawn behavior, depression, anxiety, or fear
- lack of control over a personal schedule and/or identification or travel documents
- hunger, malnourishment, or inappropriate dress (based on weather conditions or surroundings)
- signs of drug addiction
- coached or rehearsed responses to questions
- a sudden change in attire, behavior, relationships, or material possessions (e.g., expensive items)
- uncharacteristic promiscuity and/or references to sexual situations or terminology beyond age-specific norms
- a “boyfriend” or “girlfriend” who is noticeably older and/or controlling
- an attempt to conceal scars, tattoos, or bruises
- a sudden change in attention to personal hygiene
- tattoos (a form of branding) displaying the name or moniker of a trafficker, such as “daddy”
- hyperarousal or symptoms of anger, panic, phobia, irritability, hyperactivity, frequent crying,
- temper tantrums, regressive behavior, and/or clinging behavior
- symptoms of daydreaming, inability to bond with others, inattention, forgetfulness, and/or shyness

Additional behavioral indicators for victims of labor trafficking may include the following:

- being unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips
- being employed but not having a school-authorized work permit
- being employed and having a work permit but clearly working outside the permitted hours for students
- owing a large debt and being unable to pay it off
- not being allowed breaks at work or being subjected to excessively long work hours
- being overly concerned with pleasing an employer and/or deferring personal or educational decisions to a boss
- not being in control of his or her own money
- living with an employer or having an employer listed as a student's caregiver
- a desire to quit a job but not being allowed to do so

Source: <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-americas-schools/risk-factors-and-indicators>