

Teen stabbed in hall of Brampton school

'Lots of bad things happen here,' pupil says after knifing in which another student faces charges

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A 17-year-old student at Brampton's Chinguacousy Secondary School remains in custody after another teen was stabbed four times in a school hallway yesterday.

Police said the 16-year-old victim was not a student at the school. He's in serious condition in hospital with stab wounds to his side but is expected to survive.

The attack just before 10 a.m. forced a two-hour lockdown at the school, in northeast Brampton near Williams Parkway and Bramalea Rd., and came just five days after the release of a damning report about violence and sexual assaults in Toronto schools.

Four nearby elementary schools were also locked for more than an hour during the incident.

"It feels like an unsafe school because lots of bad things happen here," said Chinguacousy Grade 10 student Raychel Wells, 15, who suggested that metal detectors should be installed at entrances. "It makes us feel like we can't go to school without bringing a knife ourselves."

Classmate Mandy Hnilo, also 15, said students were ordered to hide under cafeteria tables away from windows as heavily armed tactical officers scoured the school for weapons.

"We thought it was a drill, but then realized something serious was happening," she said.

In November 2005, a Grade 12 student at the school was wounded when a gunman opened fire at his car in the parking lot. That, too, forced a lockdown of 1,700 students.

Brian Woodland, of the Peel District School Board, called such violent incidents "a set of unfortunate coincidences that I don't think connect to that school or community."

Woodland said Chinguacousy, like all other high schools in Peel, has surveillance cameras and its own Crime Stoppers program.

"Police say that because of the swift action of staff and students at the school, they were able to quickly apprehend the suspect," he said.

"I think we do everything we can to ensure that staff and students are safe. Despite what happened, schools remain among the very safest places in the community."

That despite a 1,000-page report released last Thursday that said assaults, sexual harassment and the presence of weapons – combined with a reluctance among students, teachers and administrators to report violent incidents – have created a culture of fear throughout Toronto's public schools.

The report was the work of a panel commissioned by the Toronto District School Board after the shooting death last May of Jordan Manners, 15, at C.W. Jefferys Collegiate. It found startling levels of violence at high schools in the city's northwest end.

The panel said that weapons and violence in schools are "a city-wide reality."

Police remained at Chinguacousy Secondary School until mid-afternoon yesterday. Const. Wayne Patterson said officers recovered a weapon from the scene, but he declined to say what it was.

The accused youth is charged with aggravated assault, assault with a weapon, possession of a weapon and carrying a concealed weapon.

He is to appear today in Brampton court.