When your organization is facing claims of sexual abuse, physical violence, harassment or bullying, you need BLG's experienced and thoughtful institutional abuse claims defence team. We will minimize your reputational risk, help you make difficult and time-sensitive decisions that ensure the safety of vulnerable people while limiting your exposure, and use a trauma-informed approach every step of the way.

Learn how to identify risks, reduce the impact and manage the crisis effectively in a complementary 60-minute training session with our lawyers — perfect for your leadership team.

BLG's institutional abuse claims defence team excels at every stage of these claims, from proactive risk reduction and crisis management to claim resolution and post-resolution actions.

We can provide support with:

- Drafting and reviewing sexual violence policies, employee relationship policies, codes of conduct and reporting procedures, including development, review and implementation. We ensure mandatory and statutory obligations are met.
- Employee training on sexual abuse and violence, including program development, review, implementation and reporting.
- Employee policy and procedure sign-off procedures.
- Developing and training a crisis management team.
- Reporting obligations to authorities.
- Advising on investigations.
- Advising on response to media inquiries.
- Litigation strategy, including risk assessment, claim valuation, witness preparation and securing experts.
- Claim resolution, including mediation, settlement and trial.
- Updating crisis plans.
- Implementing actions to correct any systemic issues.
- Proper internal reporting and recordkeeping,
- Ongoing engagement with stakeholders and regulators, including advice on notification or reporting obligations, delivering promised information and internal disciplinary action review following any internal or external investigations.

We represent both insurers and institutions, including:

- Schools and educational institutions, such as universities, colleges, school boards, independent schools, daycare centres and camps.

- Religious organizations.
- Sports organizations such as athletic clubs and associations.
- Healthcare facilities, including hospitals, clinics, long-term care homes and treatment centres.
- Government service providers, such as police services, correctional facilities and recreation centres.

Experience

- The Canadian branch of a worldwide religious institution in achieving a precedent-setting victory by securing the dismissal of a sexual abuse class action on all certification criteria. This minimized media attention and established a critical precedent for handling institutional abuse claims.
- An independent school in successfully resolving a high-profile action commenced by a former student and involving significant media scrutiny. The claim required balancing nuanced legal issues with significant reputational risk and was resolved following a lengthy discovery process and a full day multi-party mediation.
- An athletic club in a claim commenced by a former athlete against the club and her former coach. BLG took a trauma-informed approach and successfully resolved the matter at mediation.

Related Expertise

Class Action Defence

Education

Crisis Management

Insurance Claim Defence

Health Law

BLG Can Also Help You With

Workplace Harassment

Municipal Liability

Sports & Gaming Law

Key Contacts

Rebecca Bush
PARTNER AND NATIONAL BUSINESS LEADER, SPECIALIZED DISPUTES

Toronto
RBush@blg.com
416.367.6162

Samantha Bonanno
PARTNER

Toronto
SBonanno@blg.com
416.367.6308

Allison Foord
PARTNER

Vancouver
AFoord@blg.com
604.640.4079

Michelle Doody
PARTNER

Ottawa
MDoody@blg.com
613.787.3510

Josiane Brault
PARTNER

Montréal
JBrault@blg.com
514.954.2557

Cecilia Hoover
PARTNER AND LEADER, INSURANCE GROUP

Calgary
CHoover@blg.com
403.232.9151