

York Region teacher charged in sexual assault against student

By Brock Weir

A 28-year-old Vaughan woman has been charged in a sexual assault investigation involving one of her students.

York Regional Police have charged Mariana Riossi with three counts of sexual assault and three counts of sexual exploitation. Ms. Riossi, an occasional teacher within the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB), has been recently listed as an art teacher at St. Theresa of Lisieux Catholic High School in Richmond Hill.

On January 26, Police began an investigation after receiving information about a teacher believed to be involved in a sexual relationship with a teenaged male student between October and December of last year.

The accused has been working as an occasional high school supply teacher within the York Catholic District School Board since 2014 and, to ensure there are no additional victims, are asking anyone with information to come forward.

The charges have not been proven in court. Ms. Riossi's next court date is set for March in Newmarket.

“These allegations are certainly upsetting for the YCDSB,” said the Board in a statement. “We take very seriously our responsibility to ensure a safe and respectful working and learning environment for all our students and staff. Ms. Riossi was immediately removed from her teaching assignment, and is currently on leave, as per Board practice. This is an active investigation and we are cooperating with the York Regional Police.

“These are serious charges and we are always very concerned by any circumstances in which students are at risk and there have been allegations against a staff member. Staff from the Board's Psychology Department and Chaplaincy team are available to provide support to staff and students with concerns [and] they will be available for as long as needed.”

A sexual assault includes any non-consensual contact of a sexual nature, say York Regional Police. They encourage victims to report incidents of sexual assault, including historical offences.

There is no statute of limitations for sexual offences and offenders can be prosecuted well after the date of the offence.

“If someone is not ready to report [but is] however seeking support, please contact York Region Victim Services (victimservices-york.org), the Cedar Centre (cedarcentre.ca) or the Women's Support Network (womenssupportnetwork.ca),” says Constable Laura Nicolle.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the York Regional Police Special Victims Unit at 1-866-876-5423 x7075 or contact Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS or online at www.1800222tips.com.