



The Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) is launching its first-ever Drone as First Responder (DFR) pilot project, bringing innovative aviation technology directly into front-line emergency response.

The DFR system deploys remotely piloted drones to certain emergency calls, often arriving on scene within approximately 60 seconds to provide first responders with immediate, real-time situational awareness. It is one of the first DFR pilot projects in Canada.

This rapid-response capability allows officers to assess risks earlier, plan safer approaches, and coordinate more effectively before arriving on

scene. The pilot will be supported by drone dock sites strategically positioned throughout the Region to provide continuous overlapping coverage. Several launch locations are already fully prepared, with additional sites to come.

With the release of this pilot, Chief Peter Moreira emphasized DRPS's commitment to responsible innovation, stating that the initiative "allows us to respond faster, see more, and make better informed decisions—while maintaining strong privacy protections and public transparency."

All DFR operations comply with Transport Canada authorizations, the approved

Privacy Impact Assessment, and all provincial and federal privacy legislation. The system:

Is not used for general surveillance.

Does not use facial recognition or automated identification technology.

Only launches for specific emergency or operational incidents, similar to dispatching a patrol unit or helicopter. The DFR system is expected to support:

Unknown risk or high risk calls. Missing persons investigations. Large, complex, or evolving scenes.

Natural disasters or sudden emergencies. Any situation where rapid aerial intelligence improves safety.

DRPS Launches Drone as First Responder Pilot Project

By providing real-time overhead views, the pilot strengthens responder preparedness and may reduce risk for both officers and the public.

Public transparency is a core element of the project. DRPS will release public-facing materials through-out the pilot to help the community understand how the system works and how privacy is protected. To support community awareness and transparency, DRPS will host a Drone as First Responder Community Information Night where residents are invited to learn more about the pilot project.

The Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS) is launching its first-ever drone as First Responder (DFR) pilot project, bringing aviation technology into front-line emergency response.

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said a police statement.

It said this rapid-response capability allows officers to assess risks earlier, plan safer approaches, and coordinate more effectively before arriving on scene.

The pilot will be supported by drone dock sites strategically positioned through-out the region to provide continuous overlapping coverage. Several launch locations are already fully prepared, with additional sites nearing to come.

By providing real-time overhead views, the pilot strengthens responder preparedness and may reduce risk for both officers and the public.

Public transparency is a core element of the project. DRPS will release public-facing materials—including previously collected video footage—to help the community understand how the system works and how privacy is protected. Presentation-style information sessions will also support community engagement.

At the recent community event. The room was at

Pickering, Councillor Lisa Robinson was in attendance. When asked her thoughts on this. She stated. "Durham is building a culture of control, one vague policy at a time. The Drone as First Responder program is a textbook slippery slope: introduced for 'emergencies,' but with discretion so broad it could easily surveil lawful protests, peaceful families, or everyday life. Our excellent police deserve tools to protect us—not tools that quietly watch us."

Throughout the pilot period, DRPS will collect data on response times, operational efficiency, safety considerations, call types, and overall effectiveness. Findings will guide future decision-making and inform upcoming funding applications

The Drone as First Responder (DFR) pilot project is one of the first in Canada that will deploy remotely piloted drones to certain emergency calls, often arriving on scene within approximately 60 seconds.

Local Students **Take Up Arms Along NDP Opposition** Against OSAP

QUEEN'S PARK — Official Opposition Leader Marit Stiles stood alongside Ontario students and advocates this morning, continuing the NDP's call for Doug Ford to reverse the cuts to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP).

"Doug Ford's OSAP cuts couldn't have come at a worse time for Ontario's youth," said Stiles. "Youth unemployment is sky-high, cost of living is out of control, and now this government is making sure that students are buried in thousands of dollars of debt before they can even get their first job.

"The Conservatives say OSAP funding was unsustainable, but the reality is that their underfunding of our colleges and universities is unsustainable. Ford has starved this sector for

decades, and now he's handing the bill to the next generation."

"We know that a majority of Ontario's students rely on OSAP," said Shadow Minister for Colleges and Universities Peggy Sattler (London West). "The Ford government is shifting the burden of debt on to students in financial need.

"This government restricted OSAP in 2019. Now, students in need are being saddled with thousands of dollars of debt for simply trying to build a future for themselves. If Ford doesn't reverse this decision, he is putting our province's future on the line. We need to tear down financial barriers to education, not build more."

"The good news is, it's not too late," added Stiles. "Ford has always loved a good flip-flop. New Democrats will stand

with students, families, and advocates to fight back against these cuts so we can build a better future for Ontario's youth."

My name is Peggy Amienyaru and I am the student representative of Clarington on the KPR school board. I am helping organize a student walk-out at Courtice Secondary School in response to recent changes to Ontario's OSAP policies under Premier Doug Ford's government. The protest will take place on March 2nd at the front of school, main entrance

Students across multiple Durham Region schools participated because we are concerned about how OSAP changes will affect our ability to afford post-secondary education. For many students, OSAP is the difference between attending university

and not attending at all.

We believe this is a story about youth civic engagement, access to education, and the tangible impact of provincial policy decisions on students in Durham Region. Not numbers or statistics—people.

The cuts exist through the structural change of OSAP. Previously, students were eligible for up to 85% of their OSAP funding to be non-repayable grants with only 15% being loans.

Now, OSAP has shifted to a loan-focused program, with the cap on eligibility for grants being only 25%. For students from low-income backgrounds, this change is devastating and severely impacts their ability to obtain higher education.

This structural change paired with the lift on the tuition freeze and the rising cost of living will have negative effects on students across the province.

The position my co-organizer and I maintain is that the recent OSAP changes are unfair to students who rely on financial aid to access post-secondary education. These changes reduce funding and increase the financial burden they carry, making it harder for many students in Durham Region to afford school.

We believe attack on educa-

tion is especially ludicrous considering the highly competitive job market in Ontario at present.

Ford's lifting of the tuition freeze, allowing post secondary schools to raise tuition by 2% annually for the next three years, adds to the financial burden students/new graduates will be saddled with.

Our stance maintains that the provincial government grossly underfunds the education sector in Ontario—these actions impact students province-wide.

My name is Jannah Shah, and I am the founder of the "4 education" movement. I am a student at Eastdale Collegiate and Vocational Institution in Oshawa. I am reaching out on behalf of our student-led initiative regarding the Durham District School Board and the Durham Catholic District School Board-wide walkouts (student-led, not board-affiliated) taking place in response to recent cuts to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) and the lifting of the seven-year-long tuition freeze.

On Instagram, pages can be found @dbsstudents4education and @dcdb_students_4_education.

Students across our two school boards are deeply concerned about how these changes will affect our acces-

sibility to post-secondary education. Many of us rely on OSAP to make college and university financially possible, and increased tuition only adds to the uncertainty that we students and our families are already facing. Due to this reasoning, I chose to begin this movement and create a network of passionate students who want to make an impact. Through this, we found that walkouts would be the most effective way for us to make a change.

The event will include student speakers, personal stories about how OSAP impacts our futures, and a call for action and change directed at our provincial government. We expect our biggest turnouts to be at Eastdale CVI and O'Neill CVI; however, we have 26 schools across both boards taking part, and that number is growing daily. In addition, the two main people who helped organize these district-wide walkouts attended those schools. The two main people whom I highly suggest you speak with at the walkouts are Grace Cowan (O'Neill) and myself, Jannah Shah (Eastdale). We will gladly answer any questions you have regarding the walkouts and the 4 Education Movement.




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