



**SD42 POLICY: 7100**

**EMPLOYEE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

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**PHILOSOPHY**

The Board of Education ("Board") recognizes the profound impact that the work performed by and conduct of School District employees has on the lives of our students, families, and the community at large. As stewards of learning and development, the Board embraces a shared philosophy that serves as the foundation for these Standards of Conduct.

The Board believes in fostering an inclusive culture of care and belonging where the well-being, diversity, identity and success of all learners (both students and staff) is supported and celebrated. The Board's commitment to the highest standards of professional conduct is grounded in the following principles.

**SCOPE**

This Standards of Conduct policy applies to all School District employees.

Trustees of the School District are not employees, and their conduct is governed by [Board Policy 2919: Trustee Code of Conduct](#).

**STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

Employees are role models and need to exhibit the highest qualities of character, including honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, and compassion. Employees must act lawfully and in accordance with the privileged position of authority, trust and influence they hold with students. While the Board respects the privacy and autonomy of employees in their personal lives, their actions, both in the workplace and outside it, have the potential to negatively impact the reputation and credibility of the School District. Employees whose personal conduct has the potential to harm the reputation of the School District, including the Board of Education, are accountable for their actions.

Employees will act lawfully and be free from undue influence and not act, or appear to act, in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, family, friends or other business.

Employee Standards of Conduct are further detailed below.

**Loyalty**

Employees have a duty of loyalty to the Board as their employer. They must act honestly in good faith and, in the course of their duties, in the best interests of the employer.

**Accountability**

Employees are responsible for the duties entrusted to them and to take ownership for their decisions and actions. This includes being accountable for acts of commission (taking deliberate actions) and omission (choosing not to act when appropriate). Employees are encouraged to maintain clear and detailed records of their decisions, actions, and processes to support transparency and accountability.

## **Confidentiality**

Employees have a duty to comply with all policies and procedures relating to maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of personal information, including [Board Policy 5700: Privacy Management Program](#), and related procedures in the [Board Policy Manual](#). Confidential information, in any form, that employees receive through their employment must not be disclosed, released, or transmitted to anyone other than persons who are authorized to receive the information. Employees with care or control of personal or sensitive information, whether it is verbal, written in documents, on electronic media, or on electronic devices, must handle and dispose of the personal or sensitive information appropriately in accordance with [Procedure 5700.2 Personal Information Protection](#). Employees who are in doubt as to whether certain information is confidential must ask the appropriate authority before disclosing, releasing, or transmitting it.

The proper handling and protection of confidential information is applicable both within and outside of the workplace and continues to apply after the employment relationship ends.

Confidential information that employees receive through their employment must not be used by an employee for any purpose other than the performance of their duties, and never for the purpose of furthering any private interest or as a means of making personal gains.

## **Public Comments**

Employees are free to comment on public issues but must avoid engaging in activities or making public statements that could be perceived as an official act or representation of the School District unless authorized to do so in accordance with [Board Policy 10200 Communications](#).

## **Political Activity**

Employee conduct in relation to political activity is outlined in [Policy 10820 Political Activities](#).

## **Interactions with School Board Trustees**

Outside of Board meetings, an individual trustee has no more authority than any member of the community, except when explicitly delegated certain duties and powers by the Board. For this reason, employees should seek the advice and approval of the Superintendent or their designate before responding to or acting on any direct request from an individual trustee.

## **Providing Service**

Employees must provide service in a manner that is courteous, professional, and aligned with established standards. They are expected to be sensitive and responsive to the changing needs, expectations, and rights of a diverse public while performing their duties.

## **Workplace Behaviour**

Positive workplace behavior fosters a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone can thrive. Every employee plays a vital role in shaping and contributing to a respectful and collaborative workplace, making a meaningful impact on our shared success and well-being.

Employees must treat each other with respect and dignity and must not engage in discriminatory conduct protected by the BC [Human Rights Code](#). The protected grounds include Indigenous identity, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, or conviction of a criminal or summary conviction offence that is unrelated to the employment or to the intended employment of an individual.

Further, employees must ensure their conduct in the workplace aligns with the standards of

respectful and professional behaviour, contributing to a positive and inclusive work environment. Bullying, harassment, or any other conduct that compromises the integrity of the School District will not be tolerated. These expectations are further outlined in [Board Policy 7210: Workplace Discrimination or Bullying and Harassment, which provides additional details on the School District's commitment to maintaining a respectful workplace.](#)

Other inappropriate conduct includes any form of disorderly or misbehaving actions, including abuse of power, intimidation, verbal or physical abuse, deceit, or adverse treatment of others.

All employees may expect and have the responsibility to contribute to a safe workplace. Employees must comply with the School District's health and safety program, policies and related procedures while performing their duties. Employees must report any safety hazards or unsafe conditions and follow the provisions outlined in the [WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.](#)

### **Use of Impairing Substances**

The School District is committed to maintaining a safe and productive work environment. Employees play a vital role in this commitment by reporting to work fit for duty, free from the effects of impairing substances.

Employees are responsible for ensuring they are capable of performing their tasks productively, competently, and safely. The use of impairing substances that impacts an employee's fitness for work will not be tolerated.

Supervisors have a responsibility to fulfill their duty to inquire and duty to accommodate when an employee has, or appears to have, challenges related to impairing substances. Similarly, employees are responsible for disclosing any circumstances that may affect their fitness for duty and for cooperating with any support or accommodations provided by the School District.

Impairing substances are any substances that, when ingested or consumed, negatively affect a person's cognitive, emotional, or physical functioning. This includes, but is not limited to, alcohol, cannabis, illicit drugs, and medications with impairing effects. The use or inappropriate consumption of these substances can have serious adverse impacts in the workplace and on others, in particular, students.

While engaged in School District business, working on School District property, or operating motor vehicles or equipment, all employees are expected to:

- Report to work fit for duty.
- Ensure their ability to perform job duties is not compromised by the use or after-effects of impairing substances.
- Consult with their physician or pharmacist to determine if their use of any impairing substance may affect their fitness for duty or the safety of any person at work or in the workplace.
- Inform their supervisor if they are taking or have taken an impairing substance that may negatively impact their fitness for duty while at work or the safety of any person at work or in the workplace. However, employees are not required to disclose a specific diagnosis related to the use of impairing substances.
- Take appropriate action and immediately inform their supervisor if they reasonably believe that another employee is on School District premises or carrying out School District work in an unfit condition that poses a danger to themselves or others.
- Remain fit for duty if working on-call or decline the call-in if unfit.

Furthermore, employees:

- May be requested to undergo testing if there is evidence, or a reasonable suspicion, that impairing substances may be affecting their performance, behaviour or attendance or compromise workplace safety.
- Will seek advice and comply with recommended treatment programs as prescribed by an addiction specialist physician should they have a current or emerging addiction to any impairing substances. In addition, employees will comply with any recommended medical monitoring programs as recommended by this physician. Human Resources provides confidential support for employees who voluntarily disclose an addiction diagnosis.

The School District supports rehabilitation and provides opportunities for employees seeking assistance. Any violation of this policy will be investigated with an emphasis on supporting employees who seek assistance.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

Employees, in the course of their duties, must prioritize the interests of the School District over personal interests and actively avoid situations that could lead to conflict of interests or the appearance of a conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest occurs when an employee's private affairs or financial interests are in conflict, or could result in a perception of conflict, with the employee's duties or responsibilities in such a way that:

- the employee's ability to act in the public interest could be impaired; or
- the employee's actions or conduct could undermine or compromise:
  - the public's confidence in the employee's ability to discharge work responsibilities; or
  - the trust that the public places in the School District.

While the Board recognizes the right of employees to be involved in activities as citizens of the community, conflict must not exist between employees' private interests and the discharge of their School District duties. At commencement of employment with the School District, employees must arrange their private affairs in a manner that will prevent actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

Employees must not expect or request preferential treatment for themselves or their families because of their position. They must also avoid any action that could lead members of the public to believe they are seeking such treatment.

Employees who find themselves in an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest must disclose the matter to their supervisor.

Examples of conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to, employees:

- Being indebted to a person who could benefit from or seek special consideration or favour.
- Giving preferential treatment in official duties to individuals, corporations, or organization, including non-profits, in which the employee their relatives or friends have an interest, financial or otherwise.
- Benefiting from or being reasonably perceived by the public to benefit from, information acquired solely through their employment.
- Benefiting from, or being reasonably perceived by the public to benefit from, a School District transaction that the employee can influence (e.g., investments, sales, purchases, borrowing, grants, contracts, regulatory or discretionary approvals, appointments).

### Personal Relationships Who Work Closely With One Another

Personal relationships, including romantic or familial connections, may create perceptions of favoritism, bias, or conflicts of interest. Employees involved in such relationships must disclose them to their supervisor. No reprisal will be taken against employees for disclosing these relationships in good faith. The supervisor will work with the employees to implement appropriate measures, such as reassignment or adjusted reporting structures, to maintain a professional and objective work environment.

For example, employees who are direct relatives—defined as spouses, domestic partners, parents, children, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, in-laws, or any other familial relationship by blood, marriage, or legal arrangement—or who permanently reside together may not be employed in situations where:

- One employee has influence, input or decision-making power over the other employee's performance evaluation, salary, working conditions or similar human resource decisions.
- The working relationship affords an opportunity for collusion that may harm the School District's interests.

This restriction may be waived if the Superintendent determines that adequate safeguards are in place to protect the School District's interests.

### **Acceptance of Gifts and Other Complimentary Items**

The School District promotes integrity and transparency in all interactions. Employees are expected to adhere to ethical standards when it comes to accepting gifts and other complimentary items.

Employees shall not, either directly or indirectly, demand or accept for personal benefit a gift, favour or service from any individual, organization or corporation except for the following instances:

- The normal exchange of hospitality between persons doing business together.
- Tokens exchanged as part of protocol (e.g., Christmas, retirement, appreciation).
- The normal presentation of gifts to persons participating in public functions.

### **Legal Proceedings**

There may be times when an employee is requested or required to engage in a legal proceeding. When an employee receives such a request as it relates to their duties, they must notify their supervisor prior to acting on it.

Employees must not sign affidavits relating to facts that have come to their knowledge in the course of their duties for use in court proceedings unless the affidavit has been prepared or approved by a lawyer acting for the Board.

A written opinion prepared on behalf of the Board by any legal counsel is privileged and is, therefore, not to be released without prior approval of the Superintendent.

### **Outside Remunerative and Volunteer Work**

Employees may hold jobs outside the School District, carry on a business, receive remuneration from public funds for activities outside their position or engage in volunteer activities provided it does not:

- interfere with the performance of their duties as a School District employee;
- bring the School District into disrepute;
- represent a conflict of interest or create the reasonable perception of a conflict of interest;
- appear to be an official act or to represent the School District opinion or policy;
- involve the use of work time or the unauthorized use of School District premises, services, equipment, or supplies; or
- gain an advantage that is derived from their employment with the School District.

Employees must first obtain permission from the Superintendent or designate, if such permission is required by their employment contract, before engaging in outside business activities, work or employment.

### **Operation of a Motor Vehicle**

Employees who are required by the employer to operate a motor vehicle in the performance of their duties must hold a valid driver's license and must immediately inform their supervisor if their driving privileges have been revoked or suspended while on or off duty. Employees will not operate a motor vehicle if their driving privileges have been revoked or suspended.

### **Allegations of Misconduct**

Employees have a duty to report any situation they believe contravenes this policy, violates the law, misuses public funds or assets, or poses a danger to public health and safety or a significant danger to the environment. Reports should be directed to the School District. Such matters will be treated confidentially, except where disclosure is authorized or required by law (e.g., under the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)).

Employees will not be subject to discipline or reprisal for reporting, in good faith, allegations of misconduct in accordance with this policy.

Employees must report their allegations or concerns as follows:

- Employees belonging to a bargaining unit (MRTA or CUPE), must report breaches in accordance with the related article of their collective agreement if the agreement has explicit reporting requirements. Otherwise, they must report in writing to their supervisor, or the next level of management not involved in the matter, who will acknowledge receipt of the submission and have the matter reviewed in a timely manner.
- Excluded employees must report breaches in writing to their supervisor, or the next level of management not involved in the matter, who will acknowledge receipt of the submission and have the matter reviewed in a timely manner.

If a written report is not immediately possible, employees may report verbally, with a follow-up written report provided as soon as practicable.

Employees may also report serious wrongdoing under (and as defined in Division 2 of) the [Public Interest Disclosure Act](#) in accordance with [Board Policy 7110 Whistleblower Protection](#) and related [Procedure 7110.1](#).



## **Standards of Conduct Breaches**

Employees are to abide by the requirements of the Standards of Conduct and shall endeavour to resolve interpersonal disputes in good faith. Staff must speak to their supervisor if they require any clarity about the Standards of Conduct. Any breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Superintendent of Schools or Designate**

- Provide timely policy orientation and advice to their respective teams to ensure all staff are regularly trained on the Standards of Conduct.
- Provide the district leadership team with guidance on an appropriate employer response to transgressions of the policy statement.
- Advise employees of the required Standards of Conduct.
- Promote a work environment that is free of discrimination.
- Deal with breaches of this policy statement in a timely manner, taking the appropriate action based upon the facts and circumstances.
- Seek out guidance and advice on issues that are complex and/or cannot be easily resolved.
- Delegate authority and responsibility, where applicable, to apply this policy statement within the district.

### **Human Resources**

- Provide new employees with an orientation on the Standards of Conduct.
- Provide advice on Standards of Conduct issues to employees and supervisors.
- Seek out legal guidance and advice on issues that are complex and/or cannot be easily resolved.
- Consult with the Superintendent on significant breaches of this policy.
- Provide guidance and support to the supervisor with the investigation of the alleged breach of this policy.

### **Supervisors**

- Provide an orientation to existing employees related to the Standards of Conduct and review the policy annually.
- Advise staff on Standards of Conduct issues, including assessing and addressing possible conflicts of interest.
- Take immediate action with reports of breaches of the Standards of Conduct, or breaches of other district policies and procedures and advise their immediate supervisor of the breach.
- With the support and guidance of the Human Resources department, investigate the alleged breach of this policy and provide a documented outcome to the employee(s) who has or has been alleged to have breached this policy.
- Ensure that applicable collective agreement provisions are adhered to with respect to any investigative processes and related disciplinary outcomes.

## **Employees**

- Understand their obligations under the Standards of Conduct and the requirement to comply with it.
- Check with their supervisor when they are uncertain about any aspect of the Standards of Conduct.
- Objectively and loyally fulfill their assigned duties and responsibilities, regardless of persons in power or their personal opinions.
- Disclose and cooperate with the employer to resolve situations in which they find themselves a party to a breach of this policy.
- Maintain appropriate workplace behaviour at all times.
- Report breaches of the Standards of Conduct to their supervisor, or to the next level of management not involved in the matter.