

## **TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Board of Trustees works as a team to model civility, integrity, transparency and stewardship.

In carrying out the role, each Trustee will:

- 1) Understand that the role of the Trustee is governance of the system;
- 2) Understand that fiduciary responsibility supersedes any conflicting loyalty such as that to advocacy or interest groups and membership on other Boards or staffs, or acting as an individual consumer of the Division's services.
- 3) Represent all public school supporters and be responsible to the electorate through the democratic process. While elected from specific wards, Trustees must represent the best interest of the entire division.
- 4) Keep informed of community developments and bring to the attention of the Board and Superintendent issues that may affect the Division.
- 5) Be informed of trends and issues that impact education.
- 6) Prepare in advance and participate actively in all Board functions and committee meetings.
- 7) Listen carefully and respect the opinions of others.
- 8) Recognize that authority is only vested in the full Corporate Board as a legal entity.
- 9) Consider information received from all sources prior to arriving at a decision at the Board Table.
- 10) Reflect the Board's policies and resolutions when communicating with the public.
- 11) Respect issues of a sensitive or confidential nature.
- 12) Refer administrative matters to the Superintendent.
- 13) Declare any conflict of interest between personal or professional life and position on the Board, and abstain from discussion or voting upon declaration.
- 14) Be objective in decision making, always considering Divisional needs rather than self interest.
- 15) Refrain from engaging in private communications while at Board Meetings.
- 16) Consequences for the failure of individual Trustees to adhere to the Trustee Code of Conduct are specified in Policy 5 Appendix - Trustee Code of Conduct Sanctions.

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Legal Reference: Section 60, School Act  
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## **TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT SANCTIONS**

- 1) Trustees shall conduct themselves in an ethical and prudent manner in compliance with the Trustee Code of Conduct, Policy 5. The failure by Trustees to conduct themselves in compliance with this policy may result in the Board instituting sanctions.
- 2) A Trustee who believes that a fellow Trustee has violated the Code of Conduct may seek resolution of the matter through appropriate conciliatory measures prior to commencing an official complaint under the Code of Conduct.
- 3) A Trustee who wishes to commence an official complaint, under the Code of Conduct shall file a letter of complaint with the Board Chair within thirty (30) days of the alleged event occurring and indicate the nature of the complaint and the section or sections of the Code of Conduct that are alleged to have been violated by the Trustee. The Trustee who is alleged to have violated the Code of Conduct and all other Trustees shall be forwarded a copy of the letter of complaint by the Board Chair, or where otherwise applicable in what follows, by the Vice-Chair, within five (5) days of receipt by the Board Chair of the letter of complaint. If the complaint is with respect to the conduct of the Board Chair, the letter of complaint shall be filed with the Vice-Chair.
- 4) When a Trustee files a letter of complaint, and a copy of that letter of complaint is forwarded to all Trustees; the filing, notification, content and nature of the complaint shall be deemed to be strictly confidential, the public disclosure of which shall be deemed to be a violation of the Code of Conduct. Public disclosure of the complaint and any resulting decision taken by the Board may be disclosed by the Board Chair only at the direction of the Board, following the disposition of the complaint by the Board at a Code of Conduct Hearing.
- 5) To ensure that the complaint has merit to be considered and reviewed, at least one (1) other Trustee must provide to the Board Chair within three (3) days of the notice in writing of the complaint being forwarded to all Trustees, a letter indicating support for having the complaint be heard at a Code of Conduct Hearing. Any Trustee who forwards such a letter of support shall not be disqualified from attending at and deliberating upon, the complaint at a Code of Conduct Hearing convened to hear the matter, solely for having issued such a letter.
- 6) Where no letter supporting a hearing is received by the Board Chair in the three (3) day period referred to in Section 5 above, the complaint shall not be heard. The Board Chair shall notify all other Trustees in writing that no further action of the Board shall occur.
- 7) Where a letter supporting a hearing is received by the Board Chair in the three (3) day period referred to in Section 5 above, the Board Chair shall convene, as soon as is reasonable, a special meeting of the Board to allow the complaining Trustee to present his/her views of the alleged violation of the Code of Conduct.
- 8) At the special meeting of the Board, the Board Chair shall indicate, at the commencement of the meeting, the nature of the business to be transacted and that the complaint shall be heard in an in-camera session of the special meeting.

Without limiting what appears below, the Board Chair shall ensure fairness in dealing with the complaint by adhering to the following procedures:

8.1 The Code of Conduct complaint shall be conducted at an in-camera session, Code of Conduct Hearing, of a Special Board Meeting convened for that purpose. All preliminary matters, including whether one (1) or more Trustees may have a conflict of interest in hearing the presentations regarding the complaint, shall be dealt with prior to the presentation of the complaint on behalf of the complaining Trustee.

8.2 The sequence of the Code of Conduct Hearing shall be:

8.2.1 The complaining Trustee shall provide a presentation which may be written or oral, or both;

8.2.2 The respondent Trustee shall provide a presentation which may be written or oral, or both;

8.2.3 The complaining Trustee shall then be given an opportunity to reply to the respondent Trustee's presentation;

8.2.4 The respondent Trustee shall then be provided a further opportunity to respond to the complaining Trustee's presentation and subsequent remarks;

8.2.5 The remaining Trustees of the Board shall be given the opportunity to ask questions of both parties;

8.2.6 The complaining Trustee shall be given the opportunity to make final comments; and

8.2.7 The respondent Trustee shall be given the opportunity to make final comments.

8.3 Following the presentation of the respective positions of the parties, the parties and all persons other than the remaining Trustees who do not have a conflict of interest shall be required to leave the room, and the remaining Trustees shall deliberate in private, without assistance from administration. The Board may, however, in its discretion, call upon legal advisors to assist them on points of law or the drafting of a possible resolution.

8.4 If the remaining Trustees in deliberation require further information or clarification, the parties shall be reconvened and the requests made in the presence of both parties. If the information is not readily available, the presiding Chair may request a recess or, if necessary, an adjournment of the Code of Conduct Hearing to a later date.

8.5 In the case of an adjournment, no discussion by Trustees whatsoever of the matters heard at the Code of Conduct Hearing may take place until the meeting is reconvened.

8.6 The remaining Trustees in deliberation may draft a resolution indicating what action, if any, may be taken regarding the respondent Trustee.

- 8.7 The presiding Chair shall reconvene the parties of the Code of Conduct Hearing and request a motion to revert to the open meeting in order to pass the resolution.
- 8.8 All documentation that is related to the Code of Conduct Hearing shall be returned to the Superintendent or designate immediately upon conclusion of the Code of Conduct Hearing and shall be retained in accordance with legal requirements.
- 8.9 The presiding Chair shall declare the Special Board Meeting adjourned.
- 9) A violation of the Code of Conduct may result in the Board instituting, without limiting what follows, any or all of the following sanctions:
- 9.1 Having the Board Chair write a letter of censure marked “personal and confidential” to the offending Trustee, on the approval of a majority of those Trustees present and allowed to vote at the Special Meeting of the Board;
- 9.2 Having a motion of censure passed by a majority of those Trustees present and allowed to vote at the Special Meeting of the Board;
- 9.3 Having a motion to remove the offending Trustee from one (1), some of all Board Committees or other appointments of the Board passed by a majority of those Trustees present and allowed to vote at the Special Meeting of the Board, for a time not to exceed the Trustee’s term as Trustee.
- 10) The Board may, in its discretion, make public its finding at the Special Meeting or at a Regular Meeting of the Board where the Board has not upheld the complaint alleging a violation of the Board’s Code of Conduct, or where there has been a withdrawal of the complaint or under any other circumstances that the board deems reasonable and appropriate to indicate publicly its disposition of the complaint.

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Legal References:

School Act, Sections 60, 61, 68, 72, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 246