506 Employee Code of Conduct

Adopted: November 26, 2008
Revised: June 23, 2010

Guiding Principles

Each employee of the School District community has the right to interact in an environment that fosters positive growth and maximizes opportunities for success. To contribute to this positive environment, each employee is responsible for acting in a manner which is conducive to promoting the safety, comfort, well-being and dignity of all.

The *Employee Code of Conduct* is designed to provide a basic understanding of the Board's standards of conduct and accountability, which reflect~~s~~ the Board's core values as outlined in *Policy 106: Statement of Mission, Mandate and Core Values.*

Each employee is personally responsible for following the legal, professional and ethical standards that apply to his or her job function. Employees should make decisions consistent with the spirit and letter of these principles. Supervisors have the responsibility to ensure this policy is followed.

All employees of the Board have a responsibility to understand and act in accordance with the principles and procedures of this policy. There may be consequences including possible disciplinary action for any serious breaches of the *Employee Code of Conduct*.

Administrative Procedures

Relationships with students

Employees are role models and need to exhibit the highest qualities of character, including honesty, integrity, trustworthiness and compassion. Employees must act in accordance with the privileged position of authority, trust and influence they hold with students. This policy supports and enhances professional codes of ethics applicable to employees.

Working relationships

The conduct and language of employees should meet acceptable social standards as in any professional business environment. In their working relationships, employees are expected to apply the principles of human rights, equity, dignity and respect. The workplace must also be free from discrimination and harassment as outlined in *Policy 505: Employee Welfare*.

Conflict of Interest

Employees have the right to be involved in activities as citizens of the community; however, employees must keep their role as private citizens separate and distinct from their responsibilities as employees of the Board. Employees must avoid situations that could result in a conflict of interest.

Acceptance of 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 other than:

- 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.

Notwithstanding the above, an employee may not accept gifts or any other complimentary item valued in excess of $200 without approval from his/her supervisor.

Outside Remuneration

Employees may not use vendors or their employment with the Board to achieve personal gain outside of the employee incentive programs that are communicated to all employees.

Employees may engage in remunerative employment with another employer, carry on a business, and receive remuneration from public funds for activities outside their position provided that:

- It does not interfere with the performance of their duties as an employee
- They do not have an advantage derived from their employment with the Board (e.g., tutoring students currently enrolled in their class)
- It does not involve the use of the Board's premises, services, equipment or supplies to which employees have access by virtue of their employment
- They are not on School District sick leave while working elsewhere.

Dress Code

Employees are expected to come to work wearing appropriate and professional attire. Common sense, reasonableness and good judgment should prevail when selecting work attire that is appropriate for the intended educational activity and in accordance with WorkSafe BC and other safety considerations.

Examples of inappropriate attire (not an exhaustive list):

- Clothing with offensive, threatening or inappropriate logos/words
- Provocative, revealing or suggestive attire
- Overly casual attire.

Employee Attendance Guidelines/Tardiness

Employees are expected to attend work on a regular and consistent basis. The Board will support programs and practices that promote employee wellness, aid in helping employees to return to work from an absence, and promote early intervention strategies to assist employees in improving their attendance.

Definition of Absence

Employees are absent if they have been scheduled to work and do not report to work. Approved leaves and vacation are excluded from this definition for the purpose of these guidelines.

Absenteeism may be separated into two classifications:

- Non-Culpable absenteeism may be caused by illness or other occupational disabilities beyond the employee's control, and is usually for medical reasons
- Culpable absenteeism is considered to be within the control of the employee. Examples may include chronic tardiness, being absent or leaving early without authorization, and invalid use of sick leave.

The Board is responsible for:

- Reviewing attendance with employees, discussing expectations and providing encouragement and support
- Showing concern for an employee's well being
- Encouraging a committed work ethic.

Employees are responsible for:

- Notifying the ADT (Absence Dispatch Tracking) system and their supervisor, if applicable, when they are not able to attend work because of illness/injury
- Maintaining timely and respectful communication with their supervisor
- Following their health practitioner's advice and considering early intervention services' recommendations, based on joint Board/Union processes
- Making every effort to schedule appointments or medical treatments at dates and times that do not conflict with the employee's work schedule.

Alcohol and Drug Use

The Board accepts the responsibility to provide its employees with a safe, healthy and productive work environment. Employees have the responsibility to report to work capable of performing their tasks productively and safely. The use of illegal drugs and the inappropriate use of alcohol and medications can have serious adverse impacts in the workplace and on others, in particular, students.

The following provisions apply to all employees while they are engaged in Board's business, working on Board property, and operating Board vehicles and equipment. Violations of these provisions will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

All employees are expected to perform their job in a safe manner consistent with established practices. In addition, it is expected that everyone:

- Will report to work free from the influence of drugs and alcohol
- May be requested to undergo substance abuse testing if there is evidence, or reasonable suspicion, of drug or alcohol use while at work
- Will cooperate with any work modification related to safety concerns
- Will seek advice and follow appropriate treatment if they have a current or emerging problem and follow recommended monitoring programs after attending treatment.

In accordance with Board protocols and the *School Act,* the safety and well-being of students is the primary concern. All Board employees have a shared responsibility for workplace safety and the safety of children. Employees are encouraged to be aware of other employees, contractors or visitors in terms of fitness for duty and safety. If an individual is on Board premises in an unfit condition whereby they may endanger themselves or others, employees are expected to take appropriate action and advise their supervisor or manager of the situation. Employees are to intervene as appropriate to

encourage a co-worker to access assistance before an alcohol or drug problem impacts performance or safety.

The *Employee Code of Conduct* strongly supports rehabilitation activities and opportunities by taking steps to investigate any violation of the standards set out under this policy and guiding employees who seek assistance. For example, the Board provides an *Employee and Family Assistance Program* (EFAP) for crisis counselling.

Whistleblower Protection

There is a shared responsibility between employees and the Board to prevent harm and injury. Employees who have information about potentially fraudulent, injurious, illegal or dishonest behaviour of any employee should bring such information to the attention of their supervisor, the Director of Human Resources or submit an anonymous report as provided below.

Employees are required to come forward with any such information, without regard to the identity or position of the suspected offender, and are expected to cooperate in the investigation of reported violations. If an employee is uncomfortable making a report to their supervisor, an employee may report anonymously any fraudulent, illegal or dishonest behaviour, activities or conflict of interest. To make an anonymous report, employees should phone the *Whistleblower Hotline* [see *Resources*].

The Board will treat the information in a confidential manner and will seek to ensure that no acts of retribution or retaliation will be taken against anyone for making a report in good faith.

To protect the privacy of the persons involved, the identity of anyone who reports a suspected violation or who participates in the investigation shall not be subject to disclosure unless there is a legal obligation to do so.

Failure to report criminal wrongdoing can itself be understood to condone the crime; we thus emphasize the importance of reporting.

Related Policies

The following is a general description of key points in related policies. [Electronic links to policies provided on the website]

Policy 611: Privacy

As the custodian of both student and employee personal information, the Board has a legal obligation to protect personal information in its custody or control from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, and disposal. In fulfilling these responsibilities, the Board complies with the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (*FIPPA)* and the *School Act.*

Policy 505: Employee Welfare

In accordance with *Policy 505,* it shall be the responsibility of each employee to observe the Board's health and safety policies and procedures, to support the right of all employees to work in

an environment free from discrimination and personal and sexual harassment, and to report any threatening statement or behaviour. Employees shall comply with the *BC Human Rights Code*.

Policy 609: Communications Systems

The Board manages a telecommunications system, a website and an e-mail and conferencing system which are provided in support of the delivery of educational programs and the management of the organization. The Board believes that all system users are responsible for ensuring that these communication systems are used effectively, lawfully and in a manner relevant to the operations of the School District.

This policy shall be subject to an annual review to assess its compliance with current laws and regulations.

Resources

Employees' Whistleblower Phone Number is posted in NovaCom / Employee Central / HR Info & Forms
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)