

**Policy 1110 (Formerly Policies 1110, 1111, and 1112).  
Responsibilities and Expectations of Board Trustees  
February 22, 2005**

**Revision Date: February 9, 2010**

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**Overview**

This policy shall be renewed annually at the first meeting of the board during the school year, or at the inaugural meeting of a newly elected board.

The school exists for the child. The Board of Education shall attempt to harmonize all relations between the home and the school in conjunction with responsibilities as outlined in the School Act.

Acting under the authority of the province, Board members are representatives of the community, whose duty it is to foster and protect the welfare of the community through the school. The Board members shall acquaint themselves with the school district policies and practices and use their influence to create public opinion favorable to educational policies. The public is invited and welcomed to all Open Board meetings; however, emergent affairs that cannot be made public shall be taken up at an in camera meeting or through a meeting of the Board as a Committee of the whole.

1. The community has a right to expect that each Board member:
  - 1.1 take her/his responsibility seriously;
  - 1.2 stay abreast of what is happening in the schools;
  - 1.3 spend District funds appropriately and be accountable for a personally allocated funds;
  - 1.4 regard themselves as a representative of the people and respect their interest; and
  - 1.5 act broad-mindedly and impartially.
  
2. To support Board unity, a member should:
  - 2.1 subordinate personal interests;
  - 2.2 adhere to the policy-making and legislative functions of the Board;
  - 2.3 accept and support majority decisions of the Board;
  - 2.4 identify self with Board policies and actions; and
  - 2.5 refuse to speak or act on school matters independently subsequent to Board action.

3. To demonstrate leadership, a member should:
  - 3.1 suspend judgment until the facts are available;
  - 3.2 make use of pertinent experience;
  - 3.3 help identify problems;
  - 3.4 have the ability to determine satisfactory solutions to problems;
  - 3.5 devote time outside of Board meetings as Board business may require;
  - 3.6 be willing to accept ideas from others; and
  - 3.7 have enthusiastic interest in the welfare of the children.
  
4. To show her/his understanding of the executive function, a member should:
  - 4.1 understand the delegation of administrative responsibility;
  - 4.2 support the Executive Officers in their authorized functions;
  - 4.3 encourage teamwork between the Administrative Staff and the Board; and
  - 4.4 recognize problems and conditions that are of executive concern.
  
5. To foster good group relationships, a member should:
  - 5.1 have the ability to communicate effectively;
  - 5.2 commit to democratic processes, including the right of all groups to be heard;
  - 5.3 endeavor to understand how groups think and act; and
  - 5.4 assist others in working effectively.
  
6. To maintain effective interpersonal relationships, a member should:
  - 6.1 be willing to work with fellow Board members in spite of personality differences;
  - 6.2 display both tact and firmness in relationships with individuals;
  - 6.3 treat everyone fairly and ethically; and
  - 6.4 foster harmonious relationships.
  
7. To support courageous action, a member should:
  - 7.1 be able to weather criticism;
  - 7.2 maintain firm convictions; and
  - 7.3 share responsibilities for Board decisions.

## **Trustee Code of Ethics**

As a member of the local Board of Education representing all the citizens of this community and responsible to the electorate through the democratic process, trustees recognize:

1. That fellow citizens have entrusted them, through the electoral process, with the educational development of the children and youth of the community.
2. That trustees are the children's advocates and their first and greatest concern is the best interest of each and every one of these children without distinction as to who they are or what their background may be.
3. That trustees are educational leaders who realize that the future welfare of the community, of the Province, and of Canada depends in the largest measure upon the quality of education we provide in the public schools to fit the needs of every learner.
4. That legally the authority of the Board is derived from the Province which ultimately controls the organization and operation of the school district and which determines the degree of discretionary power left with the board and the people of this community for the exercise of local autonomy.
5. That as a representative of the taxpayer and responsible for public monies, trustees must provide sound fiscal responsibility in all their decisions and ensure that maximum resources for the education of children are available within the context of financial accountability.
6. That trustees must never neglect their personal obligation to the community and their legal obligation to the Province, nor surrender these responsibilities to any other person, group, or organization.

In view of the foregoing, trustees will:

1. Devote time, thought and study to the duties of a Board member so that they may render effective and creditable service.
2. Work with fellow board members in a spirit of harmony and co-operation in spite of differences of opinion that arise during vigorous debate of points of issue.
3. Consider information received from all sources and base personal decisions upon all available facts in every case; un-swayed by partisan bias of any kind, and thereafter, abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the Board.
4. Work together with fellow board members to communicate to the electorate all the facts about their schools, to the end that they will readily provide the finest possible school program, school staff, and school facilities.

5. Provide leadership to the community through setting goals.
6. Remember at all times that as an individual, trustees have no legal authority outside the meeting of the Board, and to conduct their relationships with staff, the community, and all the media of communication on the basis of this fact.
7. Abide by all applicable provincial and federal legislation and regulations that they are subject to, including but not limited to the *Criminal Code*, *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, *Human Rights Code*, *Workers' Compensation Act*; and in particular the *School Act*, their *Oath of Office*, and the *policies of the Board*.
8. Resist every temptation and outside pressure to use the position as a Board member to benefit either themselves or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the school jurisdiction. Trustees shall voluntarily and immediately declare the nature and extent of any pecuniary conflict of interest, whether direct, indirect, or deemed, in matters before the Board or a committee of the Board and abstain from deliberating or voting on the matter.
9. Recognize that the primary function of the Board is to establish the policies by which the schools are to be administered, and that the administration of the educational program and conduct of school business shall be left to the employed superintendent of schools and his/her staff.
10. Encourage active co-operation by citizens, organizations, and the media in the district with respect to establishing policy on current school operation and proposed future developments.
11. Provide to the best of their ability effective Board service to the community in the spirit of teamwork and devotion to public education as the greatest instrument for the preservation and perpetuation of our representative democracy.
12. Preserve the confidentiality of information discussed at closed board or committee meetings and shall not release privileged information in any format to the public until the Board has done so in an official capacity.
13. Act with integrity and present themselves to the public and staff in a responsible manner. Trustees will support safe, inclusive workplaces and communities and provide fair and respectful treatment to students, parents, staff, members of the community and fellow Board members.
14. Be committed to responsible digital citizenship, whether in a personal or official capacity, minimizing the risks associated with the use of digital communications (such as texting, email, and social media) and acting in accordance with the standards of behaviour set out in this policy when using digital communications.

15. Uphold the *Human Rights Code*, *Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, other relevant legislation, and Ministry of Education and Child Care mandates to support safe, inclusive environments free of discrimination and racism; and represent and advocate for the best interests of all learners in the community, including those with disabilities and diverse abilities, under-recognized populations, Indigenous communities, and the First Nations on whose traditional territories the District operates.

### **Procedures for Breaches of the Trustee Code of Ethics**

In the event a trustee breaches the code of ethics or fails to fulfill their duties, every attempt will be made to resolve issues early and with measures that are commensurate with the underlying factual context. The Board will act in accordance with administrative fairness, including avoiding bias and/or the perception of bias.

Proactive and informal measures (such as registering an informal complaint or mediated conversations with the trustee) will first be used to address the breach or failure to fulfill duties. If proactive measures do not result in changed behaviour, disciplinary measures may be imposed in a remedial and restorative manner in proportion to the seriousness of the breach. These measures may include, but are not limited to:

- writing a letter of apology;
- participating in a restorative justice process;
- participating in specific training, coaching, or counselling as directed by the Board;
- being subject to a motion of censure passed by a majority vote of the Board at an in-camera meeting; or
- being removed from one, some, or all Board committees or other appointments by a majority vote of the Board at an in-camera meeting.

When deemed appropriate by the Board, at its discretion and by resolution of voting trustees, outcomes of an official complaint process may be made public, subject to the privacy provisions of the *School Act* and the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

### **Expectations of Trustees**

The Board of Education wishes to ensure an efficient and effective operation. In order to accomplish this, the following duties and responsibilities have been adopted so that all will know the expectations for a Trustee so that they may render effective and credible service.

### Training and Professional Learning

As soon as possible following an election, the Board will provide opportunities for newly elected trustees to participate in onboarding training in the six key areas of: Governance, Legislation, Roles and Responsibilities; Relations with First Nations; Working with People; Values-Based, Evidence-Informed Decision Making; Planning for Student Success; and Financial and Resource Management.

All trustees will endeavor to model lifelong learning, enhance their knowledge of their roles and responsibilities, and become acquainted with current educational topics and trends by taking advantage of educational conferences, workshops, and training sessions that are made available by local or provincial affiliations.

### Attendance at Meetings/Functions

All Board meetings and Board functions have compulsory attendance and only under exceptional circumstances should they be missed. These meetings/functions include:

1. Regular Board meetings;
2. Special Board meetings;
3. Meetings of Committee to which the Trustee is appointed;
4. Advisory Council Meetings;
5. Special functions such as Trustee Inservice, new Trustee orientation, and other functions agreed to by the Board.

In the event that a trustee cannot attend a meeting or fulfill their obligation, they are to contact the Chair as soon as possible. If a trustee misses two consecutive board meetings, without providing valid reasons to the Chair, the trustee may be required to forfeit their indemnity for that period.

### Preparation

It is each trustee's responsibility to ensure that they have done the necessary reading and background work to ensure that they are familiar with the issues to be discussed at Board meetings and/or Committee meetings.

### Behavior

As an elected representative of the public, it is mandatory that at all times a trustee adhere to the Trustee Code of Ethics as set out in this policy.

### Responsibilities

The Chair is an ex-officio member of all committees.

Trustees are responsible to ensure that in the event they cannot fulfill their commitment to a committee or meeting they are to notify the Board and every attempt will be made to find a replacement.

The Chair, as the elected representative of the Trustees, is responsible for monitoring the attendance, fulfillment of duties, and behavior of their colleagues and in the event a trustee acts irresponsibly, the Chair is to take action as per the procedures outlined above. In the event that the Chair is the trustee at fault, it becomes incumbent upon the Vice-Chair to take the necessary action.