

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Background

School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) is committed to the success and well-being of students, employees, and other members of the school community as well as being committed to inclusive practices, community and cultural development, and social-emotional and lifelong learning. The success our students achieve is testimony to the contributions from our employees who are passionate about and dedicated to furthering the values of the District and educating and supporting our students. By working together and striving to achieve a clear set of goals and objectives, School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) will continue to be an employer of choice and a leader in student success. These Standards of Conduct are intended to help School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) employees put the District's values into action every day by providing guidance on the behaviours that support the District's Vision Statement. Through their actions and decisions, employees need to apply the District's vision and values on a daily basis. This is an essential part of the District's commitment to students, parents, employees and the broader School District community.

Responsibility

Understanding and complying with the principles set out in this document is critical to the District's goal of building and maintaining the trust of the School District community. The employee Standards of Conduct are designed to cultivate our individual and collective accountability and serves to advance the District's vision of Learning Without Boundaries. It is intended to provide general expectations for behavior and reporting and does not account for every occurrence or circumstance. Employee conduct must instill confidence and integrity and not bring the District into disrepute. Employees are responsible to know, understand, and act in accordance with the principles outlined in this Procedure and the other relevant Administrative Procedures. This means not only complying with these procedures and applicable policies and laws but also with their 'spirit and intent'. The District will take seriously any failure to comply with these Standards of Conduct and will take corrective action where appropriate. Employees with doubts or questions concerning any aspect of this Procedure are encouraged to discuss the matter with their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager and/or direct non-union supervisor.

Principles

1. Professional Conduct

It is expected that all employees be professional and respectful in all their interactions with students, parents, employees, and the general community. Employees are expected to conduct their employment responsibilities in an honest, trustworthy, impartial, diligent, and non-offensive manner. Employees are expected to be engaged in work for the duration of their scheduled work hours, to follow

district procedures and the relevant collective agreement articles when required to be absent from work, and to perform their duties in a safe, thorough, and conscientious manner. Employees shall follow the directions from the District, their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager and/or direct non-union supervisor, and adhere to the policies, practices, and procedures of the District, the relevant collective agreement, and the applicable law (e.g. *BC School Act*, *Workers Compensation Act*).

All employees are responsible for upholding the District's responsibilities under the *BC Human Rights Code*. Employees are expected to be aware of the diversity that exists in the school community and be mindful of interacting with everyone in an inclusive manner that respects that diversity. Employees are further expected to actively contribute to a working and learning environment that recognizes and welcomes diversity, and is safe, positive, and supportive for all staff, students, and other members of the school community.

Employees must refrain from any comments or behaviours which are known or ought to be known to discriminate on the basis of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, Indigenous identity, age or unrelated summary criminal conviction. The District will take seriously employee behavior or actions that contravene the *BC Human Rights Code*.

2. Relationships with Students and Parents

Employees are role models and need to exhibit the highest qualities of character, including honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, and compassion. Employees are expected to treat students equitably and with respect. Employees must never abuse the privileged position of authority, trust, and influence they hold with students. Employees must respect and maintain appropriate boundaries between themselves and students, acting at all times in a manner consistent with their obligations to the District and under any applicable professional code of conduct. In meeting these obligations, employees must remember they are role models to students and must only speak to students about school-appropriate matters, use appropriate language and tone when communicating with students, and refrain from unnecessary physical contact with students. All communications with parents and students, both in person and electronic, must respect those appropriate boundaries by being formal, courteous, respectful, and relevant to school-appropriate matters. Employees should seek assistance from their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager and/or direct non-union supervisor as necessary.

Student safety and supervision is critical, and it is important employees exercise care and due diligence in carrying out their supervision duties and role as a responsible adult. Should an employee become concerned with the safety or well-being of a student they are required to report their concern to the Principal/Vice Principal and any other authorities (BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), police etc.), if applicable, immediately.

3. Relationships with Other Employees

Employees are expected to interact with each other in a respectful manner.

Employees are generally expected to discuss interpersonal conflicts with one another directly in a timely and professional manner and then seek assistance from their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager and/or direct non-union supervisor or their union if the conflict remains unresolved.

Not every unpleasant interaction, instance of disrespectful behaviour, or workplace conflict is bullying and harassment. Bullying, harassment, and violence in the workplace are serious employment offences. Employees must not make comments or engage in conduct which they know or ought to know is intimidating, humiliating, hostile, offensive, discriminatory, or violent. Allegations of bullying and harassment will be dealt with in accordance with Administrative Procedure 465 Workplace Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment, which outlines that the District recognizes the right of all employees to work in an environment free from bullying, discrimination and harassment.

Reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of employees or the place of employment (e.g., managing an employee's performance, taking reasonable disciplinary actions, assigning work) is not bullying or harassment¹.

Administrative Procedure 408 Protection of Employees from Violence in the Workplace outlines the expectations and procedures for managing violence in the workplace.

4. Off-Duty Conduct and Social Media

The District respects employee privacy and personal autonomy in activities outside of work, however, an employee's actions at work and in their personal life have the potential to negatively affect the District's operations, reputation and work environment and employees are accountable for those actions. Employees must remember they are role models within the community and must not engage in off-duty activities, including online and social media activity, which place them in a conflict of interest whether actual or perceived or which may negatively affect the District's operations, reputation or work environment.

The District welcomes the responsible use of social media technologies and other forms of electronic communication, however the usage must be undertaken in a manner that is respectful, privacy compliant, not in conflict with the role of district staff in the school and broader community, and consistent with an employee's duty of fidelity and loyalty to the employer.

It is important for employees to be aware of privacy and other social media settings and to assume a broader audience than may be intended; to make thoughtful choices regarding the use of social media (including what is posted, liked, re-posted and commented on); and to consider the impact those choices may have on the District's operations, reputation or work environment. Even where an employee attempts to separate their personal online activities from their professional identity, they still bear the onus of any electronic activity and engage in such activity knowing

¹ WorkSafe BC, *Worker Fact Sheet: Workplace Bullying and Harassment*

they may not be able to control the actions of others or keep the online activities separate from the workplace.

Employees are responsible for ensuring their presence online separates their personal interests from their professional obligations with the District and does not negatively affect the District's operations, reputation or work environment or the employee's duty of fidelity and loyalty to the employer.

5. Drug, Alcohol, and Medication Use

The District, and those who perform services on its behalf, have a shared responsibility to maintain a safe and healthy work environment. Employees are role models for students and fellow employees. An employee who is or appears to be impaired during their work hours or while engaged in district work, can have a serious adverse effect on the health, safety, and productivity of district employees, and may undermine parent and community confidence and compromise the reputation of the District.

For the purposes of this Procedure, the term "drugs" includes but is not limited to cannabis or any substance which affects a person's physical or mental capacity or functioning, which causes a marked change in consciousness, or which has a physiological effect when ingested or otherwise introduced into the body, and includes both legal and illegal forms of such substances, but does not include alcohol, or medications taken pursuant to a valid prescription and in accordance with a physician's directions.

Employees must not perform duties for the District while impaired by the effects of alcohol, drugs, or medications. To support this requirement, the District prohibits:

- the use or consumption of alcohol, drugs or medication that may have an impairing effect, at any time when an employee is at work, on or off district premises;
- the use or consumption of drugs during lunch or other breaks;
- the use or consumption of alcohol or medication that may have an impairing effect, during lunch or other breaks that undermines parent and community confidence or compromises the reputation of the District; and
- the possession², storage, distribution, offering for sale, or sale of alcohol, drugs or related paraphernalia, or medication that may have an impairing effect, at any time when an employee is at work on or off district premises.

Employees are responsible for their use or consumption of alcohol, drugs, and medication preceding work and must allow sufficient time for any impairing effects of those substances to have fully resolved prior to the employee attending the worksite.

If an employee believes that a worker is impaired by alcohol, drugs, or medication, or observes what appears to be an unsafe or harmful condition or act, the employee must take reasonable action to prevent that worker from working and report it to their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager and/or direct non-union supervisor immediately.

² This does not include gifts of alcohol received that are brought home the same day.

Alcohol and drugs cannot be possessed², stored, served, or consumed on any district property, including for the purpose of attending, sponsoring, or hosting school or district events. Third parties who use district property for events, where alcohol will be stored, served, or consumed, must have a rental agreement with the District. When attending, sponsoring, or hosting school or district events off district property, and after an employee's regular hours of work, staff are expected to exercise good judgement, model the responsible consumption of alcohol, and ensure they and others act reasonably and safely in a manner which does not adversely impact the reputation or operation of the District. This includes but is not limited to:

- ensuring any school or district sanctioned events, where alcohol may be served or consumed is voluntary for employees to attend, and is held at a licensed business establishment where any alcohol is served by the third-party in full compliance with the *BC Liquor Control and Licensing Act* and the *Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation*; and
- ensuring compliance with Section 253 of the *Criminal Code of Canada* and the *BC Motor Vehicle Act* (impaired driving laws); and
- ensuring the school or district event organizer makes announcements regarding the responsible consumption of alcohol and offers taxi reimbursement if necessary; and
- ensuring no alcohol is purchased using school, committee, or district funds.

Drugs cannot be possessed, stored, served, or consumed while attending, sponsoring or hosting school or district events off site at any time.

Disclosure and Accommodation

Where an employee is required to use medication (including but not limited to medical cannabis) during their hours of work or at a time that could cause the employee to be impaired during their hours of work, whether on or off of district premises, and pursuant to a valid prescription in accordance with a physician's directions, they are required to adhere to the following:

- the employee must notify their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager or direct non-union supervisor prior to using medication during their hours of work or at a time that could cause the employee to be impaired during their hours of work, and prior to attending work impaired; and
- the employee must provide medical confirmation (not including diagnosis) that they are authorized to use the medication. Any medical license or prescription relied on for the use of medical cannabis must be issued in accordance with the applicable statutory requirements.

The District understands that certain individuals may develop an addiction or substance use disorder related to their use or consumption of drugs, alcohol, or medication, and that this may be defined as a disability. Employees with addictions or substance use disorders are encouraged to obtain treatment before their use of drugs, alcohol, or medication affects safety or their work. Where an employee has or suspects they may have an addiction or substance use disorder, they are required to notify their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager, or non-union supervisor prior to their

use of drugs, alcohol, or medication during their hours of work, whether on or off of district premises, and prior to attending work impaired. Where an employee discloses their use of medication that could cause them to be impaired during working hours, or discloses an addiction or substance use disorder in accordance with this Procedure, the District will work with the employee to determine what, if any, accommodation could reasonably be provided to that individual. No employee who discloses use of medication or an addiction or substance use disorder prior to breaching this Procedure will be disciplined solely because of the disclosure or their involvement in a rehabilitation effort.

6. Professional Attire

Employees are expected to come to work wearing appropriate and professional attire. Employees need to refrain from coming to work in attire or with accessories that include symbols, pictures, phrases, or logos, which promote substance abuse, racism, sexism, profanity, or simply bear offensive material. Common sense, reasonableness and good judgment should prevail when selecting work attire that is appropriate for the intended work, educational or business activity and in accordance with WorkSafe BC and other safety considerations.

7. Appropriate Use of District Property

Employees are responsible for exercising all reasonable care to prevent abuse to, excessive wear, loss or damage to district-owned equipment, vehicles or materials entrusted to their care.

Board assets, whether in physical or intangible form, are intended to help employees achieve business goals. Board assets are primarily to be used for legitimate business purposes. Employees may occasionally use company resources such as a photocopier machine, telephone, or e-mail for personal use if there are no measurable increased costs, and other employees or students are not distracted or inconvenienced by the use of those resources. Any use must be consistent with any applicable Board policies (e.g. Administrative Procedure 140-1 Digital Responsibility for Employees). Administrative Procedure 458 Employee Drivers and the Use of School District Vehicles outlines additional procedures that govern the use of district-owned vehicles and employee drivers.

8. Appropriate Use of Confidential Information and Technology

All non-public district data and information is confidential and the property of the District. Employees must exercise significant care, diligence, and discretion when dealing with confidential information, including but not limited to, information relating to district business, employees, and students. Confidential information must not be deliberately or inadvertently accessed, disclosed, released, transmitted or copied from district systems except where expressly permitted by district protocols.

All employees are responsible for being familiar with the District Privacy Management Program and related protocols to ensure compliant practices and appropriate safeguards are followed when accessing, working with and storing confidential information to ensure it is stored securely and protected against unauthorized access. Employees accessing district systems and information away

from the workplace must take steps to ensure others, including other household members, do not have access to confidential district information.

Compliance is required in accordance with the BC *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. If employees are aware of any inappropriate disclosure of confidential, sensitive or non-public information, they must notify their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager and/or non-union supervisor or the District Privacy Coordinator.

Administrative Procedure 140-1 Digital Responsibility for Employees also covers the obligations of employees with respect to their conduct when using technology, on or off duty.

9. Professional Qualifications

Employees must hold and retain any qualifications and licenses required by the job description and profession (as confirmed by their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager or non-union supervisor). This includes keeping required qualifications and licenses current and valid. Employees who are members of a recognized profession which is required for the position and supported by the District, are expected to:

- keep abreast of professional developments in the relevant field;
- perform their duties in accordance with the recognized standards of that profession, and
- abide by any code or standards of conduct adopted by the relevant professional association.

If an employee's professional obligations or standards are in conflict with these Standards of Conduct or with the District's directions to the employee, the employee must promptly notify and seek guidance from their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager and/or direct non-union supervisor.

10. Criminal Conduct

Employees must immediately notify the Executive Director of Human Resources if they are charged with a criminal offence which *may* be relevant to their employment, including but not limited to, a relevant or specified offence under the BC *Criminal Records Review Act*. Employees who are not sure whether to disclose a particular charge should err on the side of caution and seek advice from Human Resources.

11. Compliance with Law

Employees must fully comply at all times with both the letter and the spirit of all laws applicable to their job. Employees must never commit or condone an illegal act or counsel another employee to do so. If an employee is aware of an action or practice which they think may be in violation of the law, they must raise this concern with a Principal/Vice Principal, Manager or non-union supervisor without delay.

12. Conflict of Interest

The District recognizes the right of its employees to pursue their private (personal) social, political and financial affairs. However, the right to pursue private activities must be balanced against employees' primary duty to the District. All employees have a fiduciary duty and duty of fidelity and loyalty to the employer and must conduct themselves and arrange their affairs in such a manner as to prevent a conflict of interest between their role as private citizens and their responsibilities as employees of the District.

Employees have a responsibility to uphold a standard of conduct that preserves and enhances confidence in the reputation, integrity, objectivity, and impartiality of the activities of the District. A conflict of interest involves situations in which the personal or private interests of an employee (or the employee's family or close business associates) conflicts with the interests of the District, or when there is a reasonable basis for the perception of such conflict. A conflict of interest may arise in a variety of ways including not limited to:

- When an employee's private activities or financial interests are, or appear to be in conflict with their responsibilities and duties towards the District;
- When an employee's private interests, assertions, actions, or activities hinder their ability to act in the best interest of the District or is perceived as such;
- When an employee gains an advantage in their private activities or financial interests as a result of knowledge, or involvement in the business of the District;
- When an employee gains a benefit directly or indirectly from the District's business relationship with contractors or other individuals;
- When an employee's assertions or actions compromise, or undermine the trust which the public places in the District, or disparages, defames, embarrasses, or damages the reputation of the District; or
- When an employee engages in any unauthorized activity or speaks publicly on a matter where this could be perceived as an official act or representation of the District.

Employees must exercise care in the management of their activities and private personal affairs so as not to benefit from, or appear to benefit from:

- The use of information acquired during the course of their duties, where such information is not generally available to the public;
- The use of equipment, supplies, facilities, staff, and other resources; or
- Any decision or corporate transactions over which they can influence decisions.

Political Participation

Employees may participate in the democratic process at any level, including being a member of a political party, supporting a candidate for elected office, campaigning in elections, and running for or holding public office. However, this must be done on their own time, and with care to ensure separation between their private activities and their association with the District. Employees may be able to run for office if their duties with the District and their duties of public office would not give any rise to any actual or apparent conflict of interest. Employees must not use school district facilities, equipment, or resources in the support of these activities.

Personal Relationships at Work

Personal relationships at work, such as close friendships, relatives, or intimate relationships, have the potential to lead to a conflict of interest. Typically, where these relationships exist, there must not be a direct reporting relationship, and neither employee should have influence over a hiring decision, job evaluation, promotion, or other decision affecting the employee with whom they have a relationship. Intimate personal relationships must not be engaged in on district property and must not impact the workplace. When relationships begin to develop, that could impact the workplace or give rise to a real or perceived conflict of interest, these relationships must be reported to the Executive Director of Human Resources. Disclosure will allow attempts to mitigate the possibility of a conflict. The District reserves the right to take appropriate action to eliminate the possible conflict of interest.

External Employment

Employees may take supplementary employment, including self-employment or volunteer work, providing:

- It does not interfere, influence or affect the performance of their duties or their obligation to the District;
- It does not represent a conflict of interest or the reasonable perception of a conflict of interest;
- The work is not performed in such a way as to appear to be an official act or to represent an opinion of the District;
- It does not negatively affect the operation or reputation of the District;
- It is not in direct competition with the activities of the District;
- They do not realize an advantage given their affiliation with the District; and
- They do not use work time or district facilities, resources, information, or equipment.

Employees should consult with their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager, or non-union supervisor prior to commencing employment external to the District.

Post-Employment Obligations

When employees leave the District they have ongoing responsibilities to the District, including:

- Protection of confidential information – the confidentiality of sensitive and/or personal information, as realized through their employment with the District, must be maintained. Confidential information must not be disclosed. It must not be used for personal gain or shared with future employers.
- Return of district property – Any property, materials, or documents, must be returned on or before one's last working day, including but not limited to, confidential information, files, records, keys, security passes, and any electronic equipment or mobile devices.

Gifts and Payments

Employees shall not accept or provide a gift, payment, favour or service from or to any individual or organization in the course of the performance of their assigned duties if that gift, payment, favour, or service:

- Is an item(s) other than that of minimal value and of a nature one could or would reciprocate;
- Is other than a normal exchange of hospitality between people doing business;
- Affects the fair and unbiased perception or the evaluation of the materials or services offered for use by the District; or
- May create the appearance of undue influence.

Employees must exercise tact and good judgement when accepting or providing gifts, payments, favors, or service. When in doubt, they should consult their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager and/or direct non-union supervisor.

Employees have an ongoing duty to recognize and make a full written disclosure to their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager, and/or direct non-union supervisor of any potential, perceived or real conflicts of interest, in advance of taking the action that gives rise to the conflict of interest. If the conflict could not be foreseen disclosure must occur immediately upon becoming aware of the potential conflict of interest. An employee making a report pertaining to their own conflict of interest must use Form A attached to this Administrative Procedure. When a Principal/Vice Principal, Manager and/or direct non-union supervisor receives such a disclosure they must review it to determine whether the employee has acted contrary to this Procedure. A decision will be made as to whether a conflict of interest exists, and any next steps required.

13. Duty to Report

Employees have an ongoing duty to report to their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager, and/or direct non-union supervisor immediately, any actions that have been taken by themselves or other employee(s) that are contrary to this Procedure and other Administrative Procedures or district policies/procedures.

Employees who fail to report to their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager, and/or direct non-union supervisor may be deemed to have breached this section of the Administrative Procedure and may be subject to employment consequences and further action as outlined in Section 15.

14. Duty to Action Reports Received

When a district representative receives a report from an employee or any other individual (student, parent, community member etc.) which outlines allegations of an employee's behavior or actions that may be contrary to the District's expectations or which may have breached any section of this Administrative Procedure, they must review the information to determine the appropriate next steps, which may include, but is not limited to, gathering further information, taking no further action, or engaging an informal or formal process.

Employees are required to participate in any employer process as directed by the employer and to maintain the confidentiality of that process.

An employee may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination if they: do not maintain confidentiality; retaliate/threaten to retaliate against an employee or any other individual (student, parent, community member etc.) who makes a report to the employer or who participates in an employer process; or retaliate/threaten to retaliate against a district representative who gathers further information or engages a process upon receiving a report.

15. Breach of this Administrative Procedure

Any breach of this Administrative Procedure may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees with questions concerning any aspect of this Procedure are encouraged to discuss the matter with their Principal/Vice Principal, Manager and/or direct non-union supervisor.

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