

# SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER (TRUSTEE) CODE OF CONDUCT

[NAME OF SCHOOL BOARD]

Ontario Regulation 246/18: *Member of School Boards – Code of Conduct* has been revoked and replaced with a new Ontario Regulation 312/24 *Members of School Boards – Code of Conduct* that sets out certain mandatory provisions for a code of conduct. A Board's code of conduct may contain additional provisions if the provisions do not conflict with any of the required provisions set out in the new Regulation.

Please note that the provisions in **bold type** in the Code of Conduct below reflect the mandated provisions required to be in the Code from new Ontario Regulation 312/24.

## PURPOSE

1. A Trustee position is an elected position which carries with it the understanding that the electorate will decide at election time its support for the effectiveness of a Trustee. At the same time, it is important to recognize the public trust and responsibility the collective body carries and that this trust and responsibility is honoured through determining and enforcing norms of acceptable behaviour.
2. A code of conduct policy contributes to confidence in public education and respect for the integrity of Trustees in the community. It deals with acceptable and respectful behaviours.
3. [A Board may wish to insert their Mission, Vision and/or Values statements.]

## APPLICATION

4. This Code of Conduct and the Enforcement Procedures apply to all Trustees of the Board, including the Chair of the Board and student trustees.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

### Integrity and Dignity of Office

5. Trustees of the Board shall discharge their duties loyally, faithfully, impartially and in a manner that will inspire public confidence in the abilities and integrity of the Board.
6. **When acting or holding themselves out as Trustees of the Board, a Trustee shall conduct themselves in a manner that would not discredit or compromise the integrity of the Board.**

7. **When acting or holding themselves out as a Trustee, the Trustee shall treat persons equally without discrimination based on a person's race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status or disability.**
8. Trustees of the Board shall recognize that the expenditure of school board funds is a public trust and endeavour to see that the funds are expended efficiently, in the best interests of the students.
9. Trustees, as leaders of the Board, must uphold the dignity of the office and conduct themselves in a professional manner, especially when attending Board events, or while on Board property.
10. Trustees shall ensure that their comments are issue-based and not personal, demeaning or disparaging with regard to Board staff or fellow Board members.
11. Trustees shall endeavour to participate in trustee development opportunities to enhance their ability to fulfill their obligations.

### **Avoidance of Personal Advantage and Conflict of Interest**

12. **No Trustee shall accept a gift from any person, group or entity that has dealings with the Board if a reasonable person might conclude that the gift could influence the Trustee when performing their duties to the Board, unless**
  - (a) **the gift is of nominal value,**
  - (b) **the gift is given as an expression of courtesy or hospitality, and**
  - (c) **accepting the gift is reasonable in the circumstances.** [If a Board has a policy regarding Trustees receiving gifts, it should be referred to here and that policy cannot conflict with the requirements above as mandated by Regulation 312/24 *Members of School Board – Code of Conduct*]
13. A Trustee shall not use his or her office to advance the Trustee's interests or the interests of any family member or person or organization with whom or with which the Trustee is related or associated.
14. No Trustee shall use his or her office to obtain employment with the Board for the Trustee or a family member.
15. **No Trustee shall use or permit the use of board resources for any purposes other than the business of the Board.**

## Compliance with Legislation

16. A Trustee of the Board shall discharge his or her duties in accordance with the *Education Act* and any regulations, directives or guidelines thereunder and comply with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and any other relevant legislation.

17. **Every Trustee of the Board shall comply with this Code of Conduct** and uphold the spirit of the Code.

18. Every Trustee shall respect and understand the roles and duties of the individual Trustees, Board of Trustees, the Director of Education and the Chair of the Board.

## Civil Behaviour

19. A Trustee of the Board shall not advance allegations of misconduct and/or a breach of this Code of Conduct that are trivial, frivolous, vexatious, made in bad faith or vindictive in nature against another Trustee of the Board.

20. When expressing individual views, Trustees shall respect the differing points of view of other Trustees on the Board, staff, students and the public.

21. Trustees shall at all times act with decorum and shall be respectful of other Trustees of the Board, staff, students and the public.

22. All Trustees of the Board shall endeavour to work with other Trustees of the Board and staff of the Board in a spirit of respect, openness, courtesy, and co-operation.

## Respect for Confidentiality

23. **No Trustee shall disclose confidential information obtained or made available to them in their role as a Trustee except as authorized by law or the Board.** Confidential information includes personal information about an identifiable individual or information subject to solicitor-client privilege.

24. Every Trustee shall keep confidential any information disclosed or discussed at a meeting of the Board or committee of the Board, or part of a meeting of the Board or committee of the Board, that was closed to the public, and keep confidential the substance of deliberations of a meeting closed to the public, unless required to divulge such information by law or authorized by the Board to do so.

25. **No Trustee shall use confidential information, including confidential information obtained by them or made available to them in their role as a Trustee for the purpose of personal gain or for the gain of the Trustee's parent, spouse or child and shall not use such confidential information in a manner that would be detrimental to the interests of the Board. [Parent, spouse and child have the same meaning as in Section 1 of the *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*.]**

## Upholding Decisions

26. All Trustees of the Board shall accept that authority rests with the Board, and that a Trustee has no individual authority other than that delegated by the Board.

27. Each Trustee shall uphold the implementation of any Board resolution after it is passed by the Board. A proper motion for reconsideration or rescission, if permitted by the Board's Rules of Order, can be brought by a Trustee.

28. A Trustee should be able to explain the rationale for a resolution passed by the Board. A Trustee may respectfully state his or her position on a resolution provided it does not in any way undermine the implementation of the resolution.

29. **Each Trustee shall comply with Board policies, procedures, by-laws,** and rules of order.

30. The Chair of the Board is the spokesperson to the public on behalf of the Board, unless otherwise determined by the Board. **No other Trustee shall act as spokesperson to the public on behalf of the Board unless authorized by the Board.** When individual Trustees express their opinions in public, they must make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the Board.