

Policy 4

TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Board commits itself and its members to conduct which meets the highest ethical standards. It is expected that all personal interactions and relationships will be characterized by mutual respect, which acknowledges the dignity and affirms the worth of each person.

Board membership is a significant challenge and responsibility. Decisions made by trustees directly affect the quality of educational services provided for students and the overall direction taken by the Division. The importance of this role underscores the need for trustees to establish and adhere to a code of conduct.

The Board Chair will ensure that new trustees are familiar with the Trustee Code of Conduct as part of the new trustee orientation process.

The Board Chair will be responsible for periodically reviewing the Trustee Code of Conduct with trustees.

1. Trustee Responsibility to the Office

Trustees honour the high responsibility which this membership demands by:

- 1.1. Thinking always in terms of "children first;"
- 1.2. Understanding that the basic function of the trustees is "policy making", and not "administrative", and by accepting the responsibility of learning to discriminate intelligently between these two functions;
- 1.3. Accepting the responsibility along with fellow trustees of seeing that adequate facilities and resources are provided for the proper functioning of the schools;
- 1.4. Representing at all times the entire school community;
- 1.5. Accepting the responsibility of becoming well-informed concerning the duties of trustees and the proper functions of schools.
- 1.6. Recognizing responsibility as a provincial as well as a local official to seek the improvement of education not only in the Division but also throughout the Province of Alberta;
- 1.7. Having the administration present at regular meetings of the Board;
- 1.8. Granting the administration the privilege of discussion at the Board meetings;
- 1.9. Referring complaints to administration and discussing them at the regular meetings if an administrative solution is not achieved;
- 1.10. Carrying out the responsibilities as detailed in Policy 3 – Role of the Trustee with reasonable diligence;

- 1.11. Understanding 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;
- 1.12. Representing the Board responsibly in all Board-related matters with proper decorum and respect for others; and
- 1.13. Disclosing the nature of any pecuniary interest referred to in Part 4 -Division 5 – Conflict of Interest and Disqualification of the Education Act, abstaining and absenting themselves from discussion or voting on the matter in question.

2. Trustee Responsibility to the Community

Trustees meet their responsibility to the community by:

- 2.1. Attempting to appraise fairly both the present and the future educational needs of the community;
- 2.2. Regarding it as a major responsibility of the Board to provide a detailed Assurance Plan annually;
- 2.3. Insisting that all school business transactions be on an open, ethical, and above-board basis;
- 2.4. Vigorously seeking adequate financial support for the schools;
- 2.5. Refusing to use their position on the Board for personal gain; and
- 2.6. Reflecting Board policies and resolutions when communicating with the public.

3. Trustee Relationship with Other Trustees

Trustees respect their relationship with other members of the Board by:

- 3.1. Recognizing that authority rests only with the Board in official meetings and that the individual member has no legal status to bind the Board outside of such meetings;
- 3.2. Recognizing the integrity of their predecessors and associates and the merit of their work;
- 3.3. Refusing to make promises as to how they will vote on any matter which should properly come before the Board as a whole;
- 3.4. Making decisions only after relevant facts bearing on the subject are made known; and
- 3.5. Endeavoring to work with fellow trustees in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinions that may arise during debate.

4. Trustee Relationship with administration and staff

Trustees are to maintain effective relationships with the administration of the Division and their respective staffs by:

- 4.1. Striving to procure, when the vacancies exist, the best professional leaders available for administrative posts;
- 4.2. Giving the administration full administrative authority for properly discharging their professional duties and holding them responsible for results;
- 4.3. Refusing to act on matters relating to the employment or dismissal of staff other than circumstances referred to in Board Policy; and
- 4.4. Respecting the confidentiality of privileged Board business.

Consequences for the failure of individual trustees to adhere to the Trustee Code of Conduct are specified in Policy 4 Appendix – Trustee Code of Conduct Sanctions.

Legal Reference: Section 33, 34, 51, 52, 53, 64, 67, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89 Education Act

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