

TRUSTEE CODE OF **CONDUCT AND ETHICS**

The *School Act* states that the rights, powers, duties, and liabilities of the Board of Education (Board) rest only with the legally constituted Board as a whole, not with committees of the Board or with individual trustees. Members of the Board exercise their powers and responsibilities as a matter of public trust, and only when the Board is officially in session.

However, it is recognized that Board members hold considerable influence as a result of being elected to public office as a trustee. It is also understood that the Board's ability to influence public policy in matters of education is related to the community perception of the Board as an effective corporate entity through its conduct of the public business.

Therefore, it is important that the Board and its individual members conduct themselves in an ethical and business-like manner. This commitment includes proper use of authority, appropriate decorum in individual and group behaviour, and fair and respectful treatment of students, parents, staff, members of the community, and other Board members. Board Policy #1.00 – Foundation Statement shall guide trustees in their deliberations.

POLICY

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE BURNABY SCHOOL DISTRICT, COMPRISED OF ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR THE BURNABY COMMUNITY. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCHOOL ACT, THE BOARD'S DUTY IS TO GOVERN THE DISTRICT AND SCHOOLS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SPECIFIED POWERS IN A FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE AND COST-EFFECTIVE MANNER.

IN ORDER TO FULFILL THE BOARD'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN AN ETHICAL AND BUSINESS-LIKE MANNER, A TRUSTEE CODE OF **CONDUCT AND ETHICS IS CONSIDERED CRITICAL FOR:**

- **ABIDING BY THE SCHOOL ACT, THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE, AND THE OATH OF OFFICE;**
- **GUIDING TRUSTEE BEHAVIOR IN THEIR INTERACTIONS AS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD, AND WITH MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY;**
- **DETERMINING HOW TRUSTEES UNDERTAKE THEIR ROLE AND THE EXPECTATIONS REQUIRED OF THEM;**
- **ADVOCATING FOR LEARNERS IN THE COMMUNITY; AND**
- **INSTILLING THE COMMUNITY'S TRUST IN THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM.**

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION IS COMMITTED TO ETHICAL CONDUCT AND TO THE RESPONSIBILITY OF TRUSTEES TO PROPERLY DISCHARGE THEIR DUTIES AND TO CONDUCT THEMSELVES WITH DECORUM AND PROFESSIONALISM.

REGULATIONS

Therefore, the following is the Trustee Code of **Conduct and** Ethics for the Burnaby Board of Education:

1. Confidentiality

Trustees will deal appropriately with sensitive issues and maintain the confidentiality of discussions that take place during in-camera sessions.

2. Decision Making

Trustees will base decisions upon all available facts in each situation and vote their honest and unbiased conviction in every case, recognizing that their primary duty is to represent the district in the best interests of learners and the Burnaby community. Trustees will respect and abide by the majority decisions made by the Board.

3. Ethical and Respectful Behavior

Trustees will maintain the highest standards of civility and respect accorded to public office and refrain from unwarranted criticism of fellow Board members, or district employees. Trustees will work with their fellow board members in a spirit of harmony and co-operation.

4. Legal Authority

As individuals, Trustees will have no Board authority outside the meetings of the Board unless the Board has so delegated.

5. Integrity

Trustees will do everything possible to maintain the integrity, confidence, and dignity of the office of School Trustee and will not use their position for personal advantage or for the advantage of friends and/or family.

6. Inclusivity

Trustees will welcome and encourage active participation by community residents, organizations, learners, parents, and staff in the district in order to develop and support the best programs, which meet the educational needs of all learners.

7. Responsibility

Each trustee will devote time, thought, and study of the issues in order to provide effective decision-making.

8. Duty of Board

A primary function of the Board is to establish the policies by which the school district is administered. The day-to-day administration of the educational program and conduct of the school operation is the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools and district staff.

9. Board Communication

The Board Chair shall provide official communication on behalf of the Board. Individual Trustees will refrain from speaking on behalf of the Board, but may express their own views in a manner consistent with this Code of Conduct and Ethics. Trustees who are asked a question by the media pertaining to Board decisions shall refer the enquiry to the Board Chair for a response.

10. Delegation of Authority

The Board will establish policies by which the District and schools are administered. Board members recognize that the education program and the conduct of school business will be left to the Superintendent/Chief Executive Officer and Secretary-Treasurer/Corporate Financial Officer as designated by the School Act, Regulations, Ministerial Orders, and Board Policy.

11. Working Relationships

Trustees shall work with fellow board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation and be respectful of differences of opinion. Trustees shall refrain from making discrediting comments about others, engaging in unwarranted criticism, or taking private action that could compromise the integrity or authority of the Board. Trustees shall observe proper decorum and encourage full, open, and courteous discussions in all matters with other Trustees.

12. Social Media

Trustees are individually responsible for the content of their comments, posts and “likes” on social media and must ensure that their use of social media is consistent with the Trustee Code of Conduct and Ethics.

13. Financial Stewardship

Trustees acknowledge that the expenditure of funds is a community trust and will endeavor to see that funds are expended efficiently, economically, and in the best interest of the learners. Trustees shall carry out this function in an open and collaborative manner.

14. Conflict of Interest

Whenever a decision is required on any matter, Trustees are to declare any conflict of interest and will not participate in, vote on, or exert influence on, the decision in which the trustee has a conflict of interest. Trustees shall familiarize and comply with the *School Act* (Part 5 – Conflict of Interest). Other trustees, the Superintendent, and the Secretary-Treasurer, may bring forward to a trustee a concern with respect to a real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. A trustee may request guidance from other trustees, the Superintendent, and the Secretary-Treasurer in regard to conflict-of-interest matters.

15. Superintendent Evaluation

Trustees recognize that only the Board and not individual trustees may assess the Superintendent’s performance.

The board shall review this policy within six months of the Inaugural Board Meeting.

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Date Adopted: 2008-09
Date(s) Revised: 2021-04-27

Cross References:
Statutory: **School Act – Part 5**
Other: