



Policy 5 – Trustee Code of Conduct

Background

Trustees acknowledge the public trust invested in the Board of Education of School District No. 36 (Surrey) (the “Board”) by the electorate and are dedicated to governing the affairs and business of the Surrey School District No. 36 (the “District”) in a fair, respectful and professional manner consistent with the highest standards of ethical conduct.

Any violation of this Code will be addressed through the process outlined by the Code of Conduct Sanctions.

Procedures

1. Expectations

a. Trustees shall:

- i. Serve the interests of the District as a whole while being accountable to the public at large. Trustees shall not act as representatives or advocates for particular individuals, communities, or special interest groups, but shall exercise their authority collectively in the best interests of all students and the District.
- ii. Model and contribute to a positive and receptive learning and working culture both within the Board and District.
- iii. Exercise their duties of governance, understanding the importance of mutual respect, transparency, and impartiality.
- iv. Ensure the proper use of authority, appropriate decorum, and fair and respectful treatment of students, parents, staff, community members, and fellow Board members.
- v. Be committed to ethical practice and principles, trustees shall act with integrity and be accountable for their actions and decisions.
- vi. Attend all scheduled meetings of the Board; in the event of an unavoidable absence, trustees shall inform the Board Chairperson.
- vii. Abide by the policies of the Board, all applicable legislation and regulations, and particularly the *School Act*.

2. Conflict of Interest

- a. Trustees shall adhere to the *School Act* and applicable legislation regarding conflicts of interest. Trustees are expected to avoid any perceived or potential and actual

conflicts of interest, and to be alert to situations that have the appearance of a conflict of interest.

- b. A trustee is expected to avoid conflict or potential conflict of interest in the exercise of their fiduciary responsibility. They will not:
 - i. Disclose or use confidential information acquired during the performance of official duties as a means to advance their personal financial interests or the interests of their family or friends; or
 - ii. Accept, directly or indirectly, any compensation, gratuity gift or reward in connection with any contract which would improperly influence a reasonable person.
- c. If a trustee has a personal or private interest in any matter before the Board, the trustee will:
 - i. Not attempt before, during and after the Board has dealt with the issue, to influence the decisions of the Board members;
 - ii. At an In-camera meeting, declare the nature and extent of the conflict of interest and remove themselves from the room for the duration of the item, or abstain from deliberating or voting on the item giving rise to the conflict; and
 - iii. At a Regular meeting, declare the nature and extent of the conflict and abstain from deliberating or voting on the item giving rise to the conflict.

3. Decision Making

- a. Trustees shall consider information received from all sources, base their decisions upon all available facts, and vote impartially in every situation.
- b. To facilitate effective decision making, trustees must be knowledgeable about the *School Act*; statutory requirements; existing Board policy and practices, initiatives, and long-range plans; and current educational issues, both local and provincial.
- c. It is expected trustees shall be diligent in familiarizing themselves with supporting documents, in advance of meetings, in order to make informed and credible decisions.

4. Confidentiality

- a. Trustees shall preserve the confidentiality of information discussed at in-camera school 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.

5. Working Relationships

- a. Trustees shall work with fellow Board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation and be respectful of differences of opinion.
- b. 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.

- c. Trustees shall observe proper decorum and encourage full, open, and courteous discussions in all matters with other trustees. Information that may be of potential concern should not be concealed or withheld.

6. Public Relations

- a. Trustees welcome constructive engagement and participation from the broad school community in establishing and interpreting policy on school operations, goals, and directions.
- b. Trustees will endeavor to share and incorporate the opinions and views of others in the deliberations and decisions of the Board.
- c. Timely reporting out of information will be provided to those who are impacted by Board decisions.

7. Legal Authority of Individual Trustees

- a. Trustees recognize that, as a Corporate Board, the authority to make decisions must only be made within an official meeting of the Board. Individual trustees or committees of trustees may not exercise the rights, duties, and powers of the Board.
- b. The chairperson is the official spokesperson for the Board; other trustees shall not speak on behalf of the Board unless authorized to act in such a capacity.
- c. In addition to being elected representatives who hold the public trust, trustees are participants in a democratic society. Trustees are free to engage in, support, or comment on community issues, but must not use their formal District titles in their communications.

8. Support for Board Decisions

- a. Trustees shall present their views through the process of Board debate.
- b. Trustees recognize that it is their responsibility to ensure decisions are made in the best interests of the District as a whole.
- c. Regardless of holding a minority position in debate or casting an opposition vote, trustees shall accept and endorse the majority decisions of the Board and be supportive of any proposed action or implementation that will ensure decisions have the intended outcome.
- d. Trustees also recognize and uphold the integrity and merits of their predecessors' work and achievements.

9. Social Media

- a. The Board is committed to responsible digital citizenship and to minimizing the risks associated with the use of electronic communications systems and access to social media.

10. Trustee Professional Conduct

- a. Trustees will endeavor to take advantage of educational conferences, workshops, and training sessions made available by local or provincial affiliations. Through participating in professional development opportunities, trustees can enhance their

knowledge of trustee roles and responsibilities and become acquainted with current educational topics and trends.

11. Scope of Delegated Responsibility

- a. Trustees shall respect the authority vested in the role of the Superintendent and their senior staff. Trustees shall give the responsibility to manage and operationalize policies and directions that have been established and evaluated by the Board, to their executive officers.

References

School Act, R.S.B.C., 1996, c. 412.

Approved: June 10, 2026