

## POLICY 4: TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT

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### TRUSTEE CODE OF CONDUCT

#### Purpose and Application

1. Section 33 of the *Education Act* requires every board of trustees in Alberta to adopt a code of conduct that applies to trustees of the Board. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide standards for the conduct of members of the Board of Trustees of the Canadian Rockies School Division. ("the Board"), relating to their roles and obligations and a procedure for the investigation and enforcement of those standards. This Code of Conduct applies to all trustees of the Board, including the Chair.
2. This Code of Conduct is one aspect of accountability and transparency both internally among Trustees, and between the Board and Administration, as well as externally, with Division students, parents, staff, the public at large, and other orders of government and the media.
3. 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.
4. It is expected that all interactions related to the operations of the Board, and its relationships will be characterized by mutual respect, which acknowledges the dignity and affirms the worth of each person.
5. Consequences for the failure of individual trustees to adhere to this Code of Conduct are specified below under the section Trustee Code of Conduct Sanctions.

#### Framework and Interpretation

6. That legally, the authority of the Board is derived from the province, through the *Constitution Act*, which ultimately controls the organization and operation of the Division and which determines the degree of discretionary power left with the Board and the people of the community for the exercise of local autonomy.
7. That fellow citizens have entrusted them, through the electoral process, with the educational development of the children and youth of the community.
8. That trustees are the children's advocates and their first and greatest concern is the best interest of each and every one of these children without discrimination as to who they are or what their background may be.
9. That trustees are educational leaders who realize that the future welfare of the community, of the province and of Canada depends in the largest measure upon the quality of education provided in schools to fit the needs of every learner.
10. This Code of Conduct provides a framework to guide ethical conduct in a way that upholds the integrity of the Board and the high standards of professional conduct the public expects of its elected representatives. This Code of Conduct is intended to supplement other legal duties imposed on Trustees by Board Policy and applicable legislation, including but not limited to:

10.1.1. the *Alberta Human Rights Act* 1.1.1. *The Alberta Human Rights Act*;

- 10.1.2. the Criminal Code (Canada);
- 10.1.3. the Board Procedures and Regulations;
- 10.1.4. the Education Act;
- 10.1.5. the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;
- 10.1.6. the Local Authorities Election Act; and
- 10.1.7. the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

- 11. This Code of Conduct is to be given a broad and liberal interpretation in accordance with applicable legislation. It is not possible to write a Code of Conduct that covers every scenario and, accordingly, Trustees are to be guided by and conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the spirit and intent of this Code. The Board commits itself and its members to conduct which meets the highest ethical standards.

### **Specifically**

- 11.1. Trustees shall carry out their responsibilities as detailed in Policy 3 – Role of the Trustee with reasonable diligence.
- 11.2. Trustees shall endeavour to work with fellow Board members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during debate.
- 11.3. Trustees shall act in good faith and shall commit themselves to dignified, ethical, professional and lawful conduct.
- 11.4. Devote time, thought and study to the duties of a trustee so that they may render effective and credible service.
- 11.5. Trustees shall exercise honesty in all written and interpersonal interaction, never intentionally misleading, surprising or misinforming each other.
- 11.6. Trustees shall reflect the Board's policies and resolutions when communicating with the public.
- 11.7. Consider information received from all sources and base personal decisions upon all available facts in every case; unswayed by partisan bias of any kind, and thereafter, abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the Board.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 11.8. Trustees shall comply with provincial and school system requirements relating to all matters of confidentiality. In the course of their duties, Trustees may become privy to confidential information received outside of "in-camera" meetings.
- 11.9. Trustees shall keep confidential any personal, privileged or confidential information obtained in their capacity as a Trustee and not disclose the information except when authorized by law or by the Board to do so.
- 11.10. Trustees must not access or attempt to gain access to confidential information in the custody or control of the school division unless it is necessary for the performance of the Trustee's duties and is not otherwise prohibited by the Board, and only then if the

information is acquired through appropriate channels in accordance with applicable Board Policies and Administrative Procedures

- 11.11. Trustees must not use confidential information to the detriment of a school division employee or for personal benefit or for the benefit of any other individual or organization.
- 11.12. If a trustee receives unsolicited confidential or proprietary information from any source, it must be brought to the attention of the Superintendent immediately.
12. While elected from specific wards, Trustees shall represent the best interests of the entire Division and make every reasonable effort to protect the integrity and promote the positive image of the organization and one another.
13. Trustees shall honour the fiduciary responsibility to the Board and be loyal to the interests of the Division as a whole context of education. This loyalty supersedes loyalty to:
  - 13.1. Any advocacy or special interest groups; and
  - 13.2. The personal interest of any trustee.
14. Trustees shall disclose any conflict of interest between their personal life and the position of the board, and abstain and absent themselves from discussion or voting on the matter in question.
15. Board members will serve the interests of the people of the community (stakeholders). Members recognize this responsibility to the whole to be greater than but not limited to, the following:
  - 15.1. any loyalty a member may have to any other advocacy, interest or political groups;
  - 15.2. loyalty based upon membership on other boards or staffs;
  - 15.3. the personal interest of any Board member who is also a parent or guardian of a student in the organization; and
  - 15.4. being a family relative of an employee of the organization.
16. Maintain the confidentiality of privileged information, including statements made during in-camera sessions of the Board.
17. Remember at all times that individual trustees have no legal authority outside the meeting of the Board, and therefore relationships with school staff, the community, and all media of communication is to be conducted on the basis of this fact.
18. Trustees shall disclose the nature of any conflict of interest, and abstain and absent themselves from discussion or voting on the matter in question.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

19. Trustee behaviour and conduct requirements are the same when using technology as when not using technology. Each Trustee must recognize that his or her online activity and social media accounts can dramatically affect the general public's perception of the Trustee, the Board, District employees, and schools within the District. Each Trustee's online activity and social media accounts must comply with the Education Act, regulations under the Act, and all

Board Policies, including in particular, this Board Policy 4.

20. Trustees will be deemed present at a Regular or Special Board meeting when participating by electronic means or other communication facilities provided that the communication allows all participants including the public to hear each other.

**Legal Reference:**

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

**History**

Prepared:	March 2020
Amended:	June 2021
Amended:	February 2024
Amended:	March 2025