



PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE SCHOOL DIVISION

“Dedicated to the Pursuit of Excellence”

BOARD POLICY #8 Code of Conduct

The Board has established a code of conduct for trustees in accordance with the provisions of *The Public Schools Act* (PSA) sections 35.1(1) and 35.1(2).

This code of conduct is an agreement between the organization and individual board trustees that identifies the standards of behaviour and accountability expected of trustees.

Trustee Responsibilities

Act with Integrity and Dignity of Office

- Recognize that they have a responsibility to the students, parents and guardians in the school system, employees and the communities that they serve.
- Discharge their duties loyally, faithfully, impartially and in a manner that inspires public confidence in the abilities and integrity of the Board.
- Commit themselves to dignified, ethical, professional and lawful conduct.
- Recognize that the expenditure of School Division funds is a public trust and ensure that the funds are expended effectively and efficiently, in the best interests of the students.

Comply with Regulatory and School Division Requirements

- Adhere to the provisions of all federal, provincial and local legislation including, but not limited to, those identified in the Introduction to the Board Policy Manual as well as to all Board Policies, Operating Procedures and Bylaws.

Comply with Authorities

- Recognize that the Board’s authority rests with the corporate body, not with individual trustees.
- Accept the Chair as the spokesperson to the public on behalf of the Board, unless otherwise determined by the Board.
- Accept that no other trustee speaks on behalf of the Board unless expressly authorized to do so by the Board Chair.

Uphold Decisions

- Uphold Board Motions.
- Be prepared to explain the rationale for a motion passed by the Board.
- Recognize that a motion passed by the Board may be reversed by Board motion.

Respect Confidentiality

- Understand that trustees may be privy to confidential information about individuals including students or staff, or financial or other sensitive matters, and must keep any such information confidential unless authorized by law or by the Board.



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Actively Participate and Make Informed Decisions

- Prioritize and accept responsibility to attend all regular and special meetings of the Board and those committees on which they serve, and if unable to do so, advise the Secretary-Treasurer and Board Chair by email or phone of their pending absence at least two hours prior to the start of the meeting.
- Recognize that unexcused absences from regular and special meetings may result in removal from office, as stipulated in the PSA, or in the loss of a portion of the trustee’s annual indemnity, as stipulated by the Board.

Full Participation Requirements

- Virtual attendance: Adhere to expectations for conduct, attire, and engagement in virtual board meetings the same as in-person meetings. Utilize participation strategies including leaving the camera on throughout the meeting (if bandwidth permits) and actively participating in discussion. Trustees must ensure that the environment they are joining from is suitable for confidentiality and upholds the decorum of the board.
- Safeguard the confidentiality of all documents and email activities that are recorded automatically by the School Division’s domain, including the opening and editing of documents.
- All Meetings: Review meeting agendas and other relevant information prior to board and committee meetings and be prepared to contribute to an open and honest discussion of matters before the Board or committee.
- Listen respectfully and with an open mind to the full range of opinions on each matter before the Board, and make decisions based on the merits of evidence presented.
- Make decisions based on the available facts and independent judgment.
- Keep informed about current education issues by individual study and through participation in continuing education programs.

Behave Respectfully

- Engage in conduct that demonstrates the integrity of the Board at all times.
- Treat trustee colleagues, divisional and school staff, students and community members in a respectful and courteous manner, and refrain from using abusive or denigrating language in any dealings with them.
- Refrain from expressing opinions and/or sharing information through social media that would discredit, undermine or compromise the integrity of the Board.
- Refrain from initiating or participating in discussions of board business with other trustees (whether in person or via electronic means) when such discussions should rightly take place at an official school board meeting.



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Relationship Bias

The Board supports the rights of trustees to be involved in community projects and activities as citizens of the community. Trustees:

- will work in the best interest of the School Division and set aside opposing interests of the other organizations or agencies of which they are a part;
- do not represent the Board in any official capacity unless requested by the Board to do so;
- shall not discuss confidential Board or School Division business outside of Board meetings including with family members, dependents and close associates who work for or attend classes in the school division;
- shall avoid relationship bias, whether real, potential or perceived, as outlined in Policy #7 Conflict of Interest;
- shall refrain from accepting a gift from any person or entity that has dealings with the Board if it could be perceived that the gift could influence the trustee when performing their duties to the Board; and
- shall respectfully acknowledge that exchanges of gifts and tokens are permitted in association with cultural ceremonies and customary traditions.

Use of School Division Property

- School Division property, including vehicles, equipment and material, are used primarily for carrying out School Division business.
- The Superintendent or Secretary-Treasurer may authorize the use of supplies or equipment if they feel that such use will assist trustees in their assigned work for the School Division. It may be required that some staff and trustees regularly retain district-owned supplies or equipment in their possession.
- A written record of the authorization of the use of supplies or equipment is maintained indicating the time of release, the signature of the user, and the date on which the item is returned
- Trustees are responsible for exercising all reasonable care to prevent abuse to, excessive wear of, or loss of district-owned equipment or material entrusted to their care.

While actively campaigning for election, the following activities are prohibited and are considered a conflict of interest under the provisions of Policy #7.

- Division-owned resources may not be used other than to carry out School Division related business.
- Use of School Division trademarks and logos are not permitted in campaign material.
- Use of trustee divisional email accounts are not permitted in campaign correspondence or advertising.

Date Approved:
10/24/23

Date Reviewed:

Date Revised:

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Involvement with External Organizations

Trustees must be cognizant of the potential conflict that exists when serving as members of any organization (whether school or community based) that may from time to time make a request of the Board. This includes Parent Advisory Councils (PACs), Recreation Commissions, MB Rural Learning Consortia, sports leagues, clubs, or other organizations with potential connections to the Division.

If a trustee is a member, officiant, or otherwise involved with any other organization that may have like interests to those of the School Division they:

- may not appear as part of the organization’s delegation or take part in any formal presentation the organization may make to the Board;
- are recused from any discussion or vote on the matter involving that organization and shall immediately leave the room; and
- may not remain in the meeting as an observer.

Breaches of the Code

Prescribed procedures for dealing with perceived or actual breaches of the Code are found in **Board Operating Procedures and Bylaw**.