

# Standards of Conduct

## RATIONALE:

These standards are intended to assist employees to understand the District's values and to provide guidance on expected behavior as employees complete their job responsibilities. Every employee with the District has the right to engage and interact in an environment that fosters positive growth, sense of belonging and that maximizes opportunities for students. Every employee is responsible for acting in a manner that contributes to promoting a safe, healthy and positive working environment.

### 1. Responsibility

Every employee is personally responsible to follow the legal, professional and ethical standards that apply to their job role. The District expects employee's to act with integrity, honesty and sincerity as they approach and complete their employment responsibilities with the District. Supervisors have the responsibility to ensure that these standards are followed.

All employees of the District have a responsibility to understand, know and act in accordance with the principles and procedures of these standards. This means complying with these standards, applicable policies, procedures, and laws but also with 'spirit and intent'. Employees who contravene these Standards of Conduct may be subject to corrective action, where appropriate. Employees with doubts, concerns or questions concerning any aspect are encouraged to discuss the matter with their Principal, Manager and/or direct Supervisor.

### 2. Scope

The Standards apply to all employees regardless of employment agreement and/or position with the School District.

### 3. Professional Conduct

Employees are expected to be professional and respectful in all of their interactions with students, parents, colleagues, contractors and the general community. Employees are expected to conduct their employment responsibilities in an honest, trustworthy, impartial, diligent and non-offensive manner. Employees shall adhere to the policies, practices and procedures of the District.

Employees must be open to communication with their colleagues, supervisors and the student/parent community. When issues/concerns arise, employees must attempt to resolve. When concerns are not able to be addressed informally between the parties, employees must seek assistance from their Principal or Manager.

Employees are expected to follow the District's policies to maintain an environment free of harassment and bullying. Bullying, harassment, discriminatory conduct and violence in the workplace are serious employment offenses. Employees must not make comments or engage in conduct which they know or ought to know is intimidating, humiliating, hostile, offensive, discriminatory, or violent. Every employee is responsible for upholding the Board's responsibilities under the *Human Rights Code*. Employees must refrain from any comments or behaviours which are known or ought to be known to discriminate on the basis of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental

disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify or expression, age or unrelated criminal conviction.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be dealt with in accordance with the District's Administrative Procedure 420 Respectful Workplaces.

#### **4. Relationships with Students**

Employees are role models and must exhibit the highest qualities of character, including honesty, integrity, trustworthiness and compassion. Employees must be act in accordance with the privileged position of authority, trust and influence they hold with students. Employees must respect and maintain appropriate boundaries between themselves and our students, acting at all times in a manner consistence with their obligations under any applicable professional code of conduct.

#### **5. Illicit Drug, Alcohol, and Medication Use**

The District, and those who perform services on its behalf, have a shared responsibility to maintain a safe and healthy work environment. Employees are role models for students and their colleagues. An employee being impaired during their work hours or while engaged in district work, can have a serious adverse effect on the health, safety, and productivity of district employees, and may undermine parent and community confidence and compromise the reputation of the District.

For the purposes of this Procedure the term "drugs" includes, but is not limited to, any substance which affects a person's physical or mental capacity or functioning, which causes a marked changed in consciousness, or which has a physiological effect when ingested or otherwise introduced into the body, and includes both legal and illegal forms of such substances, but does not include alcohol or medication taken pursuant to a valid prescription and in accordance with a physician's directions.

Employees must not perform duties for the District while impaired by the effects of alcohol, drugs or medications. To support this requirement, the District prohibits:

- 5.1. The use or consumption of alcohol, drugs, or medication, including cannabis, that may have an impairing effect, at any time when an employee is at work, on or off district premises;
- 5.2. The use or consumption of drugs, including cannabis, that may have an impairing effect during lunch or other breaks; and
- 5.3. The use of consumption of alcohol during lunch or other breaks that undermines parent and community confidence or compromises the reputation of the District; and
- 5.4. The distribution, offering for sale, or sale of alcohol, drugs, or medication, including cannabis, that may have an impairing effect, at any time when an employee is at work on or off district premises"
- 5.5. The possession of drugs, including cannabis, at any time when an employee is at work on or off district premises'.

Employees are responsible for their use or consumption of alcohol, drugs, and medication preceding work and must allow sufficient time for the impairing effects of those substances to have fully resolved prior to the employee's scheduled work time.

If an employee believes that a worker is impaired by alcohol, drugs, or medication, or observes what appears to be an unsafe or harmful condition or act, the employee must take reasonable action to prevent that worker from working and report it to their Principal, Manager and/or direct Supervisor immediately.

When attending or hosting a District sponsored events or events on district property after an employee's regular hours of work, employees are expected to exercise judgement and model the responsible serving and consumption of alcohol and ensure they and others act reasonable and safely in a manner which does not adversely impact the reputation or operation of the District. Cannabis cannot be consumed on district property at any time or while attending or hosting District events off site. This includes but is not limited to compliance with Section 253 of the Criminal Code of Canada, the Motor Vehicle Act of BC (impaired driving laws), as well as the BC Liquor Control and Licensing act and the Liquor Control and Licensing Regulation.

Administrative Procedure 740 Alcohol on School Property outlines additional procedures that govern when alcohol may be consumed on district property.

#### Disclosure and Accommodation

Where an employee is required to use medication (including but not limited to medical cannabis) during their hours of work or at a time that could cause the employee to be impaired during their hours of work, whether on or off of district premises, and pursuant to a valid prescription in accordance with a physician's directions, they are required to adhere to the following:

- a. The employee must notify their Principal or Manager prior to using medication during their hours of work or a time that could cause the employee to be impaired during their hours of work, and prior to attending work impaired; and
- b. The employee must provide medical confirmation (diagnosis not required) that they are authorized to use the medication. Any medical license or prescription relied on for the use of medical cannabis must be issued in accordance with the applicable statutory requirements.

The District recognizes and understands that certain individuals may develop an addiction or substance use disorder related to their use or consumption of drugs, alcohol or medication, and that this may be defined as a disability. Employees with addictions or substance use disorders are encouraged to obtain treatment before their use of drugs, alcohol, or medication affects safety of their work. Where an employee has or suspects they may have an addiction or substance abuse disorder, they are required to notify their Principal/Manager or the Director of Human Resources to their use of drugs, alcohol, or medication during their hours of work, whether on or off district premises, and prior to attending work impaired. Where an employee discloses their use of medication that could cause them to be impaired during working hours, or discloses an addiction or substance use disorder in accordance with these Standards, the District will work with the employee to determine what, if any, accommodation could reasonably be provided to that individual. No employee who discloses use of medication or an addiction or a substance use disorder prior to breaching these Standards will be disciplined solely because of the disclosure or their involvement in a rehabilitation effort.

If an employee uses drugs, alcohol, or medication in breach of these Standards they may be subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

## **6. Professional Attire**

Employees are expected to arrive at work wearing appropriate and professional attire. Employees should exercise good judgement when selecting work attire and ensure that it is appropriate for the intended work, educational or business activity and in accordance with WorkSafe BC and other safety considerations.

UEmployees are expected to attend work on a regular and consistent basis. The District will support programs and practices that promote employee wellness, assist employees in returning to work from an absence and promote early intervention strategies to assist employees in improving their attendance.

Employees are expected to report their absence through the District reporting procedures.

## **7. Appropriate Use of District Property**

Employees are responsible for exercising all reasonable care to prevent abuse to, excessive wear, loss or damage to district owned equipment or materials entrusted in their care.

Board assets, whether in physical or intangible form, are intended to help employees achieve business goals. Board assets are primarily to be used for legitimate business purposes. Employees may occasionally use company resources such as photocopier machine, telephone or email for personal use if there are no measurable increased costs, and other employees or students are not distracted or inconvenienced by the use of those resources. Any use must be consistent with any applicable Board policies (e.g. Administrative Procedure 620 Network Acceptable Use).

## **8. Appropriate Use of Confidential Information and Technology**

All non-public district data and information is confidential and the property of the District. Employees must practice care and discretion when dealing with confidential information, including but not limited to, information relating to district business, employees, and students. Confidential information must not be deliberately or inadvertently disclosed, released or transmitted.

When working with confidential information and systems, employees must always follow relevant district protocols and take appropriate safeguards to ensure it is stored securely and protected against unauthorized access. Compliance is required in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. If employees are aware of any inappropriate disclosure of confidential, sensitive or non-public information, they must notify their Principal, Manager and/or direct Supervisor.

## **9. Professional Qualifications**

Employees must hold and retain any qualifications and licenses as required by the job description and profession (as confirmed by their Principal or Manager). This includes keeping required qualifications and licenses current and valid. Employees who are members of a recognized profession which is required for the position and supported by the District, are expected to:

- 10.1 Keep abreast of professional developments in the relevant field;

10.2 Perform their duties in accordance with the recognized standards of that profession, and;

10.3 Abide by any code or standards of conduct adopted by the relevant professional association.

If an employee's professional obligations or standards are in conflict with these Standards of Conduct or with the District's directions to the employee, the employee must promptly notify and seek guidance from their Principal, Manager and/or direct Supervisor.

## **10. Criminal Conduct**

Employees must immediately notify the Director of Human Resources or the Superintendent if they are charged with a criminal offence which may be relevant to their employment, including but not limited to, a relevant or specified offence under the *Criminal Records Review Act*. Employees who are not sure whether to disclose a particular charge should err on the side of caution and seek advice from Human Resources, or a union representative.

## **11. Compliance with Law**

Employees must fully comply at all times with both the letter and the spirit of all laws applicable to their job. Employees must never commit or condone an illegal act or counsel another employee to do so. If an employee is aware of an action or practice which they think may be in violation of the law, they must raise this concern with a responsible Principal, Manager or Director without delay.

## **12. Conflict of Interest**

Employees have the right to pursue private (personal) social, political and financial affairs. However, the right to pursue private activities must be balanced against the employee's primary duty to the District. All employees have a fiduciary duty and duty of fidelity and loyalty to their Employer and must conduct themselves and arrange their affairs in such a manner as to prevent a conflict of interest between their role as private citizens and their responsibilities as employees in the District.

Employees have a responsibility to uphold a standard of conduct that preserves and enhances confidence in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of the activities of the District. A conflict of interest involves situations in which the personal or private interests of the employee (or the employee's family or close business associates) conflicts with the interest of the District, or when there is a reasonable basis for the perception of such conflict. A conflict of interest may arise in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:

- 13.1 When an employee's private activities or financial interests are, or appear to be in conflict with his/her responsibilities and duties towards the District;
- 13.2 When an employee's private interests, assertions, actions, or activities hinder his/her ability to act in the best interest of the District or is perceived as such;
- 13.3 When an employee gains an advantage in their private activities or finance interests as a result of knowledge, or involvement in the business of the District;

- 13.4 When an employee gains a benefit directly or indirectly from the District's business relationship with contractors or other individuals;
- 13.5 When an employee's assertions or actions compromise, or undermine the trust which the public places in the District, or disparages, defames, embarrasses, or damages the reputation of the District; or
- 13.6 When an employee engages in any unauthorized activity or speaks publicly on a matter where this could be perceived as an official act or representation of the District.

### Political Participation

Employees may participate in the democratic process at any level, including being a member of a political party, supporting a candidate for elected office, campaigning in elections and running for or holding public office. However, this must be done on their own time, and with care to ensure separation between their private activities and their association with the District.

Employees may be able to run for office if their duties with the District and their duties of public office would not give any rise to any actual or apparent conflict of interest. Employees must not use school district facilities, equipment, or resources in support of these activities.

### Personal Relationships at Work

Personal relationships at work, such as close friendships, relatives, or intimate relationships, have the potential to lead to a conflict of interest. Typically, where these relationships exist, there must not be a direct reporting relationship, and neither employee should have influence over a hiring decision, job evaluation, promotion, or other decision affecting the employee with whom they have a relationship. When relationships develop that could give rise to a conflict of interest, these relationships are to be reported to the Director of Human Resources. Disclosure will allow the District to attempt to mitigate the possibility of a conflict. The District reserves the right to make changes to eliminate possible conflict of interest as required.

### External Employment

Employees may engage in remunerative employment with another employer, carry on a business, and receive remuneration from public funds for activities outside their position provided that:

- 13.7 It does not interfere, influence or affect the performance of their duties or their obligation to the District;
- 13.8 It does not represent a conflict of interest or the reasonable perception of a conflict of interest;
- 13.9 The work is not performed in such a manner that it appears to be an official act or to represent an opinion of the District;
- 13.10 It does not negatively affect the operation or reputation of the District;
- 13.11 They do not realize an advantage from their employment with the District ;
- 13.12 It does not involve the use of the District premises, services, equipment or supplies to which employees have access to in the course of their employment
- 13.13 They are not on leave from the District.

### Gifts and Payments

District employees shall not accept or provide a gift, payment, favour or service from or to any individual or organization in the course of the performance of their assigned duties if that gift, payment, favour, or service:

- 13.14 Is an item(s) other than that of minimal value and of a nature one could or would reciprocate;
- 13.15 Is other than a normal exchange of hospitality between people doing business;
- 13.16 Affects the fair and unbiased perception or the evaluation of the materials or services offered for use by the District; or
- 13.17 May create the appearance of undue influence.

Employees must exercise tact and good judgement when accepting or providing gifts, payments, favors, or service. When in doubt, contact your Principal and/or direct Supervisor for clarification.

### Post-Employment Obligations

When employees leave the District, they have ongoing responsibilities to the District, including:

- 13.18 Protection of confidential information – the confidentiality of sensitive and/or personal information, as realized through their employment with the District, must be maintained. Confidential information must not be disclosed. It must not be used for personal gain or shared with future employers.
- 13.19 **Return of District Property** – Any property, materials, documents, must be returned on or before one's last working day, including but not limited to, confidential information, files, records, keys, electronic equipment or mobile devices.

### Duty to Report

Employees have an ongoing duty to recognize and make a full written disclosure to his or her Principal, Manager and/or direct Supervisor of any actions that have been taken contrary to these Standards and any potential, perceived or real conflicts of interest in advance of taking the action that gives rise to the conflict of interest. If the conflict could not be foreseen disclosure must occur immediately upon becoming aware of the potential conflict of interest. Employees have an ongoing duty to report to his or her Principal, Manager and/or direct Supervisor any circumstances affecting another employee covered by the above.

If a Principal, Manager and/or direct Supervisor receives a disclosure they must review it to determine if they believe the employee has acted contrary to this Procedure. The Principal, Manager and/or direct Supervisor may consult with their Supervisor. A decision will be made as to whether a breach has taken place.