



# Code of Conduct for Employees

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## Message from the Director of Education

Our Code of Conduct was developed by employees as a pathway to guide decisions that meet the highest standards of integrity, professionalism, and ethical behaviour. In addition, the Code of Conduct provides a pathway to nurture the workplace culture necessary to support intent towards our Vision, education in a culture of excellence, and our Mission, to ensuring every student has the opportunity to succeed.

We encourage you to read and understand the Code of Conduct and to be guided by it as you perform your duties and interact with colleagues, students, families and stakeholders on a daily basis. If you have questions about any aspect of the Code, please consult your supervisor, your North East Teachers' Association, Teamsters or CUPE representative or the Human Resources Department.

Sincerely,



Stacy Lair  
Director of Education



## Introduction

This Code of Conduct (Code) establishes the standards that govern the way we deal with each other, our students, stakeholders, outside agencies, government, the media and the public. Complying with the Code is part of the terms and conditions of employment with the North East School Division.

The North East School division is committed to being accountable to the highest standards of ethics, integrity, honesty, fairness and professionalism at all times. While attaining our vision and mission is critical to our success, equally important is how we attain them. All employees are expected to evaluate each decision and action they make using the guiding principles that define our success. Those principles are:

- Commitment to be your best
- Responsibility
- Inclusiveness
- Cooperation
- Ethics

These principles apply to all levels of the organization and this Code is intended to help everyone make decisions that are consistent with the high expectations we set for all employees. By following the ethical practices outlined in this Code and incorporating elements of the guiding principles in our day-to-day activities, we will continue to promote a culture of excellence in the North East School Division.



This Code sets out a common baseline for all employees and it references other North East School Division policies in specific areas. In addition, certain employee groups have supplementary requirements surrounding conduct, operational procedures or regulatory rules to which they must also comply. In situations where we owe responsibilities to professional associations, self-regulatory organizations or regulators, we must also abide by those standards. Within this framework, we are all expected to exercise good judgment and to be accountable for our actions.

All North East School Division employees are expected to review and comply with this Code upon initial employment and at regular intervals throughout their career. Furthermore, we are all obliged to report, in a timely fashion, any violations of the Code we may witness or reasonably suspect.

This Code neither replaces nor amends any collective agreement, legal or regulatory related provisions that may also apply to employees.

This Code sets out the minimum conduct requirements. Operational procedures and individual department directives may have higher expectations than this Code.



## Mission, Vision & Values

The North East School Division mission, vision and values provide a framework to help guide our actions. This framework describes what we aim to achieve when making decisions. They inspire our culture and should guide the behaviours we demonstrate while working.

### Vision Statement

Creating safe, inclusive and academically excellent learning experiences for all.

### Mission Statement

The North East School Division exists to foster growth, achievement, and wellbeing for our students through responsive learning in partnership with families and communities.



### Hopes, Dreams and Values

As an organization, NESD staff will grow and adapt together to belong as engaged citizens in our global community, defining our work and culture through our values.

**Connect** - We are stronger together. We build trust: openly communicating and engaging with each other, our students, and stakeholders.

**Include** - We value diversity. We take purposeful actions to establish a sense of belonging, so everyone is engaged.

**Innovate** - We transform ideas into realities. We continuously learn and adapt as we provide exceptional learning experiences.

**Empower** - We each have voice. We shape safe environments: respecting and supporting one another while embracing accountability.

**Strategic Imperative** (significant measure of success) - Our students and staff have a positive sense of wellbeing and are engaged.

### **The North East School Division commits to provide you with:**

- a safe, healthy, respectful and productive work environment
- fair and equitable treatment
- opportunities for professional development
- protection from harassment
- protection from retaliation after good faith disclosures of improper activities.

### **The North East School Division expects you to:**

- act with integrity at all times
- be present and productive during working hours
- operate within the law
- follow the Code of Conduct, organizational policies and practices
- take personal accountability for your workplace actions
- demonstrate a sense of respect, loyalty, good faith and responsibility toward one another and the school division
- keep organization information confidential
- exercise sound judgment in decision making
- report violations of the Code of Conduct and other policies and practices



## Applying the Code

Most of the time, it is relatively easy for us to know how we should perform our jobs while adhering to the school division mission, vision and values. However, from time to time we may be confronted with unusual situations that require us to stop and think about the best behaviour to adopt or the best decisions to make for the school division.



This Code provides a clear guide in such situations. Of course, it is impossible for this Code to list every action that should be avoided or action that should be favoured. Instead, it provides guidelines regarding a number of common situations that may be encountered.

When you face a dilemma, we recommend using the following process to making these types of decisions (see below):

**Step 1: When we recognize that we are faced with a challenging decision, we should:**

- Collect the necessary information, and
- Consider what is right, legal and fair, without rationalizing

**Step 2: We should consider the available options and:**

- Weigh the ethical pros and cons
- Consider the impact of the options on North East School Division stakeholders
- Think about the long-term impact of the decision

**Step 3: We should develop a preliminary decision and test it by asking ourselves:**

- Does it strike the right balance?
- Do I think I would be able to explain the decision to those affected by it?
- Might this decision harm the North East School Divisions' or my reputation?
- Should I get help from my supervisor or others to make the decision?

**Step 4: We should make the decision and be transparent**

- We should acknowledge difficult ethical decisions that make us uncomfortable and may require us to choose between two imperfect outcomes
- We should feel free to review them with our supervisor
- The Board and Executive Council are expecting us to make decisions that are legal, compliant and we believe are in the best interest of students.

If, after careful thought, you still have concerns, we urge you to consult your supervisor, the North East School Division operational procedure manual or other related documents that may be applicable to your specific situation.

Any questions regarding the application of the Code may be submitted to the Superintendent of Human Resources or any member of the Code of Conduct Committee.



## Our Legal Requirements

Concern for what is right should be our first consideration in all of our decisions and actions. That includes compliance with the law. Therefore we need to be familiar with and observe all laws and regulations relating to the North East School Division in the departments for which we work. We must avoid performing any task that could reasonably be considered legally suspect, even if it might have been common practice in the past. Adhering to the requirements in this Code and other North East School Division policies and procedures that relate to our job functions will help us fulfill these requirements.

### As an NESD employee you should not:

- knowingly assist or allow employees to take actions which would violate the law
- knowingly induce an employee of another organization to breach that organization's code of conduct or the law.



If a question regarding the above arises, you should seek advice from your direct supervisor or a human resources representative.

## Respect and Ethical Responsibility in the Workplace

It is every employee's responsibility to fulfill the terms and conditions of their contract of employment and it is also each person's responsibility to work with colleagues and students in mutually supportive ways to develop effective professional relationships with members of the educational community.

### As an NESD employee you should:

- Promote an atmosphere of respect for all employees, students and stakeholders
- Conduct relationships with all employees, students and stakeholders in ways that are consistent with principles of equity, fairness and respect for others.
- Respond unselfishly to colleagues seeking professional assistance.
- Respect the various roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in the educational community. This includes the legitimate authority provided to the leadership of the school division
- Not criticize the competence or professional reputation of another employee (unless legally mandated) until after the other person has been informed of the criticism.
- To not take any steps to secure the discipline or dismissal of another staff member because of animosity or for personal advantage.
- Foster and maintain open and honest communication.
- Appropriately and constructively express your opinions and suggestions regarding the administration of the school division and its employees using proper channels.



## Personal Integrity

As outlined in the operational policy and procedural manual (Module 5 – Human Resources), you must inform the Director of Education or designate (the Superintendent of Human Resources) when you are charged with a criminal offence, and again if you are found guilty of, or plead guilty or no contest to, a criminal offence. There may be employment consequences if an employee is charged with or found guilty of an offence, or pleads guilty or no contest to an offence. Many motor vehicle-related offences of a less serious type (e.g., minor traffic violations, speeding) are not criminal offences, and do not have to be reported.



If you are not sure whether a charge or guilty finding should be reported, please feel free to confidentially discuss the situation with the Superintendent of Human Resources.

## Harassment

Every North East School Division employee has the right to a workplace free from harassment.

Harassment is any objectionable behaviour which may include actions, language, gestures, and/or written material, and which the harasser knows or ought reasonably to know is abusive and unwelcome. This includes harassment based on a person's race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or pardoned conviction. All of these forms of harassment are illegal under the Saskatchewan Human Rights Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

### Harassment includes:

- threats or bullying
- unwanted or unnecessary physical contact
- demands for sexual favours in exchange for favourable treatment
- excessively offensive remarks, such as unwelcome, graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's body, appearance or dress
- obscene jokes or other inappropriate, sexually explicit or offensive language
- displaying pornographic or sexually suggestive material or pictures in the workplace
- using demeaning terms to refer to a person's national or ethnic origin or race

The North East School Division considers it the obligation of all employees to report any incidents of harassment they may witness or of which they become aware to their supervisor or superintendent.

### As an NESD employee you should:

- treat others the way you would like to be treated, with respect, courtesy and sensitivity
- not initiate or take part in any form of harassment
- exercise authority with care, and in a way that isn't considered or seen as harassment
- not be afraid to speak up if you feel you are being harassed.





For additional information, consult the Harassment Policy in Module 5 of the NESD Operational Policies and Procedures, your local collective agreement or contact a member of the Human Resources Department.

## Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest occurs when your personal interests interfere with, or might be seen by others to interfere with, the interests of the North East School Division. The NESD expects its employees to act in a way that preserves and enhances its reputation. The honesty and impartiality of NESD employees should never be in doubt.

### As an North East School Division employee you should:

- disclose significant private or financial interests in organizations under contract to the NESD, including those of your spouse and dependents.
- get approval from your supervisor before using work time & resources for non-work activities
- not take part in activities or businesses outside of work that may damage the reputation of the NESD.
- during and after your employment with NESD not disclose confidential, privileged or proprietary information, or use this information to advance your own interests
- not place yourself in a position where you might benefit (or seem to benefit) from the use of the facilities, equipment, time or materials
- not use your position to advance your interests or those of your family or friends;
- transfer employment to ensure you do not have family members directly reporting to you
- not participate in political activities during working hours or use facilities and resources for such activities
- do not accept gifts from parents, community members, stakeholders, contractors or suppliers that could obligate you or the NESD in any way;
  - gifts of nominal value that do not obligate you or the organization in any way are permitted

If you feel you may be in a conflict of interest, please inform your supervisor in a timely fashion.

## Health and Safety in the Workplace

The North East School Division makes every effort to work with employees and bargaining agents to make our workplaces as safe and healthy as possible. The integration of safety and health considerations in all work-related activities, processes and practices is a key means to reducing the risk of injury and illness.

The NESD provides training and our Employee Assistance Programs to foster healthy lifestyles, assist employees and family members who may be experiencing difficulties in their personal or work lives, and help to safely re-integrate disabled or injured employees into the workforce.



We do this by respecting obligations outlined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Human Rights Act and working with our local union to fulfill the obligations that have been included in the local collective agreement. We take health and safety into account when we:

- plan and design facilities and equipment, jobs, work methods and materials
- provide first aid supplies and training for first aid attendants
- consider all aspects of the NESD's day-to-day operations.
- accommodate disabled employees in suitable jobs

**As an NESD employee you should:**

- follow all safety rules related to your job
- not endanger or put at risk the health and safety or well-being of others
- use and wear safety equipment, clothing and devices identified for your job
- not be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while working
- never resort to violent behavior
- report injuries, accidents and unsafe conditions to your supervisor as soon as possible
- take responsibility for your personal health, safety and well-being, through resources available both within the NESD and in your community
- co-operate in the accommodation process whether you are disabled and need job accommodation, or whether you have co-workers who are being accommodated
- get immediate help for an injured or ill co-worker from a first aid attendant or supervisor, or for yourself if you are injured or ill
- reach out for help if you are having personal or work life difficulties. Use the available Employee Assistance Program or a resource in your community
- when appropriate, encourage co-workers to seek help for personal or work life difficulties.

## Confidentiality and Privacy

The North East School Division protects the privacy of employees, stakeholders and students who share information with the organization. We recognize and accept our responsibility to safeguard the privacy, confidentiality and security of all personal information, in compliance with *the Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

The NESD maintains the private information we hold, and manages how this information is used, by whom, and for what legitimate purpose. We also assess all new initiatives for privacy impact and ensure that all privacy concerns are addressed.



**As an NESD employee you are required to:**

- not share the private information of any person except for the purpose for which the information was originally collected and only with those authorized to receive it
- ensure that the personal information the corporation maintains about you is updated, exact and complete

Please contact the Superintendent of Human Resources if you have any concerns about how your personal information or anyone else's personal information is managed.



## Alcohol and Substance Use or Abuse

The North East School Division is committed to providing a work environment that is free of alcohol and drug use or abuse.

### As an NESD employee you should not:

- consume alcoholic beverages during working hours;
- consume, provide or serve alcoholic beverages in school division facilities, except when approved by the Director of Education or their designate
- provide or serve alcoholic beverages at events to individuals (including employees) who are under the legal drinking age or who are impaired
- consume, possess, sell or distribute illegal substances at any school division function, or at any time when you may be identified as an NESD employee.

When alcoholic beverages are served and consumed at school division facilities or school division sanctioned events, the most senior employee on site is responsible for the site and for ensuring procedures are in place to comply with this section. In addition, all employees are encouraged to take reasonable steps to prevent other employees or guests from driving while impaired or to report any situation to a responsible member of management.

## Environment

The North East School Division believes that protecting the environment is essential to the well-being of its employees and the communities it serves. The school division is committed to comply with all environmental laws and regulations, and to go beyond them whenever it makes economic sense.

### As an NESD employee you should:

- read and follow any signs, labels, instructions and work rules related to the proper handling, storage and disposal of toxic substances and hazardous waste
- scrupulously avoid disposing of toxic substances and hazardous waste in the garbage or down the sink or toilet
- use all available recovery, recycling or waste disposal arrangements, including a designated local hazardous waste contractor
- immediately report leaks, spills, inadequate cleanup or improper disposal of any toxic substances or hazardous waste to your supervisor
- adopt environmentally friendly practices and products where feasible
- recycle waste such as paper, cardboard, glass, Styrofoam and metal where possible.



## Intellectual Property

North East School Division employees create significant and valuable written works, technology and data compilations. They also identify problems and develop solutions by making improvements to equipment, tools and processes. These creations and solutions developed and owned by the school division constitute intellectual property.

In general, you should treat our intellectual property as confidential information. If you are unsure whether certain information you create, access, or use in your work is considered to be intellectual property, please contact your supervisor for assistance.

### As an NESD employee you should:

- understand the different types of intellectual property, and find out what kind of intellectual property you might create, work with or come into contact with in your job
- ensure that intellectual property is addressed in contracts with third parties
- talk to your supervisor if you think something you have created in the course of your work duties should have intellectual property protection.

## Use of the Internet, Email and Electronic and Social Media



Computers, networks, the internet, software and wireless devices are high-performance tools that are vital to the school division operations. Our communications should be respectful, responsible and professional in tone. For example, we must not knowingly transmit, view, generate, print, retrieve, download or store any communication of a discriminatory, defamatory, obscene, damaging (such as viruses), threatening or harassing in nature, or any material that is inappropriate for the work environment.

When using NESD computer systems and accessing information, all employees must be properly identified at all times which means access to passwords must be strictly controlled. This applies to access given to third parties through NESD systems.

All computer hardware, software, email, voicemail and internet accounts provided to employees are the property of NESD and may be monitored, recorded and accessed by authorized NESD representatives in accordance with the NESD acceptable use policy and applicable law. In addition, all information stored, processed or transmitted on any NESD system or network is considered the property of NESD. Therefore, communication conducted over any network generally is not considered private.

### As an NESD employee you are required to:

- comply with the NESD technology acceptable use policy
- do everything in their power to ensure these tools and the data they process are protected against loss, damage or corruption
- be properly identified at all times
- take the necessary steps to protect our login id, password, digital signature or other means we use to identify ourselves to the NESD computer network



## Appropriate Work Attire

The North East School Division encourages its employees to dress comfortably. However, it is critical that all employees maintain a professional appearance while in the workplace, or while attending company-sanctioned events. As such, appropriate attire should be worn at all times, in keeping with recognized standards, in order to project a positive North East School Division culture. This includes being neat, clean and having regard for personal hygiene and grooming.

Respecting the specific responsibilities of each employee role along with adherence to workplace safety, there are variations in what may or may not be appropriate work attire.

Typical examples of inappropriate dress are listed below to provide guidelines for employees use when choosing their work attire:

- Jogging suits, sweat suits, leotards, tights, spandex, or sweat pants.
- Casual Shorts, leggings or bike shorts.
- tank tops or muscle shirts.
- See-through, sheer or mesh garments
- Mini-skirts
- Any clothing that is worn, torn, frayed, or has visible patches or holes.
- Bare feet.
- Bathing suits.
- Any clothing that exposes the midriff
- Halter tops or bra tops.
- Any undergarments worn as outer garments.
- Any clothing with low neck lines



***This is not an exhaustive list and in some circumstances, the examples listed above are considered appropriate. Please discuss what acceptable dress expectations are for you with your supervisor.***

## Reporting Violations of the Code

### **Our Responsibility:**

Safeguarding the reputation of the North East School Division and complying with this Code, is the responsibility of every employee, in every location, every job, at every level, and at all times.

If possible, an employee may attempt to deal directly with the person alleged to have engaged in behaviour contrary to the Code, by asking him/her to stop such behaviour. If that is not possible, or if it does not resolve the problem, a member may bring forward a complaint as per the Policies of the NESD.

### **Reporting Violations:**

If you become aware of or suspect any violation of the Code (or related policies) by any employee that cannot be handled directly, we all have a responsibility to report it immediately. Generally we should report violations to our supervisor. However, if you are uncomfortable in reporting to your supervisor, it should be reported through some other means available to us, such as the Human Resources Department. In addition, if you are aware of or suspect any violation by a member of executive council or a trustee, it should be reported to the Director of Education for further follow up.



### **Failure to Report Violations:**

If you are aware of a violation of the employee code of conduct it is your obligation to report it. Failure to report may also hold consequences to you as well as the person who violated the code. The NESD is committed to protecting any employee, student or stakeholder who, in good faith, reports a possible violation of the Code, from any form of retaliation or reprisal. Any employee who attempts (directly or indirectly) to intimidate or retaliate against anyone who makes such a report may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. As such, if an employee within the NESD suspects a violation of the Code, they are expected to report the situation to their supervisor or designate, regardless of where they work or how they know of a violation.

### **Keeping the Code of Conduct Relevant**

This Code of Conduct for NESD employees was developed through collaborative efforts of employees working in the school divisions' various sectors. Their input allowed us to draft a document that accurately reflects our workplace culture. In this same spirit and to ensure that the Code remains a relevant reference tool, it will be periodically updated and expanded to take into account our experiences in using it and the discussions or comments it may generate. Our Code of Conduct must remain 'evergreen' and evolve in tandem with our needs. The North East School Division is committed to providing our employees with the means necessary to attain this objective.



### **Other References**

For More information on:

Harassment or Violence in the Workplace

Acceptable Use of Technology

Confidentiality

Health & Safety

Ethics in the Workplace

Please access:

The Manual of Administrative Policies  
Section 505  
CUPE 4875 local agreement

The Technology AUP Administrative Policy

The Job Description for your position

The Occupational Health and Safety Act,  
Your facility OH & S committee  
CUPE 4875 local agreement  
Teamsters No 395 local agreement

The Ethics of Excellence book  
The STF code of ethics  
The CUPE code of ethics  
Other applicable codes of ethics

