

Policy Statement



Policy No. F-17

SUBJECT: Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers

Approval Date: October 30, 2018

Resolution No: C-18/19-44

Revision Date:

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Origin: Governance and Ethics Committee

1. PREAMBLE

The Western Québec School Board is committed to the high standards of social and community agencies. To this end, all employees and volunteers are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity in their conduct. Our Code of Conduct provides clear standards of behavior for employees and volunteers working in our schools, centres, and board offices. The Code of Conduct provides a framework within which all practices must be conducted, managed, and regulated in accordance with the law and generally accepted ways of doing business ethically and responsibly.

2. OBJECTIVE

The Western Québec School Board is committed to treating all employees and volunteers fairly and consistently, with respect and dignity. In order to honor this commitment, the Western Québec School Board shall take appropriate measures to create and maintain a safe and healthy workplace, both physically and emotionally, to create and maintain a safe and caring learning environment in our schools for all.

3. REFERENCES

Our Code of Conduct is developed in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, notably the:

- Education Act (R.S.Q., c. I-13.3);
- the Act Respecting Access to Documents Held by Public Bodies and the Protection of Personal Information (R.S.Q., A-2.1);
- the Civil Code of Québec (notably sections 321 to 325 and 2088);
- the Act to facilitate the disclosure of wrongdoings relating to public bodies (RLRQ c. D- 11.1);
- the Anti-Corruption Act (RLRQ c. L-6.1.);
- the Act respecting labor standards (RLRQ c. N-1.1.);
- all Collective Agreements; and,
- all Western Québec School Board by-laws, policies, and procedures.

4. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

Our Code of Conduct applies to every person working in the Western Québec School Board, regardless of position or level of responsibility. While no set of guidelines can cover every situation, and since every person must be responsible for their actions, a clear understanding of our Code of Conduct is intended to prevent situations which could arise by making clear expected behavior.

5. PROFESSIONALISM & RESPECT

Employees and volunteers of the Western Québec School Board are expected to foster a positive working climate based on trust and mutual respect where all feel safe, respected, and acknowledged. Employees and volunteers of the Western Québec School Board are expected to:

- 5.1.** Act professionally, honestly, with integrity, and with transparency in interactions with each other, students, parents, and the public in both word and deed.
- 5.2.** Respect differences in people, their ideas, and their opinions without discrimination.
- 5.3.** Make decisions in the course of the exercise of one's functions are made in the best interest of the students.

6. STANDARD OF BEHAVIOUR

Employees and volunteers are expected to exhibit behavior that shows respect for the rights, property, and safety of themselves and others in the course of the exercise of their functions. Employees and volunteers of the Western Québec School Board are prohibited:

- 6.1.** To engage in verbal abuse of any kind and/or use of vulgar language and/or vulgar gestures.
- 6.2.** To transmit, view, generate, print, retrieve, download, or store any communication of that is discriminatory, defamatory, obscene, damaging, threatening or harassing in nature.
- 6.3.** To post or engage in online activities that defames or insults students, parents and/or employees/volunteers.
- 6.4.** To establish personal online relationships with current students.
- 6.5.** To use personal cellular phones, computers and/or other devices for personal matters during assigned duties.
- 6.6.** To consume, provide, or serve alcoholic beverages on board sites or facilities, or at events or activities, except when the event is approved by the Western Québec School Board and its policies.
- 6.7.** To be under the influence of alcohol or unauthorized drugs before and/or during the workday or on the premises of the Western Québec School Board.
Employees and volunteers of the Western Québec School Board are expected:
- 6.8.** To come to work wearing appropriate attire. Safety should be taken into consideration where applicable.
- 6.9.** To respect Western Québec School Board property and respect the property of others.
- 6.10.** To be conscientious managing their personal social media footprint.

7. LOYALTY, IMPARTIALITY & CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 7.1.** Employees and volunteers must refrain from seeking to obtain, while in the exercise of their functions, in any manner whatsoever, gifts, services or advantages for their personal benefit. In addition, they cannot accept any gifts, proof of hospitality or advantages other than those that are common and of minimal value. When in doubt, the employee shall disclose the gift to their immediate supervisor.
- 7.2.** If an employee or volunteer becomes aware of any illegal activity regarding the Western Québec School Board they are encouraged to disclose the wrongdoing based on the By-Law 37 and the PROCEDURE TO FACILITATE THE DISCLOSURE OF WRONGDOINGS. Such disclosures may also be made directly to Québec's Ombudsman (Secure online form: <https://divulgateur.proteccurducitoyen.qc.ca/en>). In all cases, By-Law 37 provides protection against reprisals for disclosers and anyone who cooperates in reviews and investigations.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY & ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Employees and volunteers have access to confidential information about the students, parents, and employees of the Western Québec School Board. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, information that is not generally known to the public and is of such a nature that it is in the legitimate interest of the parties involved to maintain its privacy. Confidentiality of information and documents must be maintained, including after working hours, unless disclosure is authorized for legitimate reasons or is legally permitted. Employees and volunteers of the Western Québec School Board are expected to:

- 8.1.** Respect the right of privacy and confidentiality for all employees, volunteers, students, and parents.
- 8.2.** Refrain from divulging information about students unless for professional reasons.
- 8.3.** Refrain from using confidential information for personal gain.
- 8.4.** Work to protect information about students and employees from being shared according to Western Québec School Board policies and the Act Respecting Access to Documents Held by Public Bodies and the Protection of Personal Information (R.S.Q., A-2.1).
- 8.5.** Read the Western Québec School Board Employee and Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement and Pledge of Discretion Regarding Respecting Personal Information.
- 8.6.** Defer requests for statements representing the Western Québec School Board from media outlets to the Secretary General.

9. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

A breach of our Code of Conduct shall result in appropriate, fair, and relevant disciplinary action in accordance with the Collective Agreements and the Labor Code.