

BOARD MEMBER CODE OF ETHICS

(1) **Preamble**

Trusteeship is a significant responsibility. Decisions made by trustees directly affect the quality of educational services provided for students and the overall direction of the division. Therefore, the River East Transcona School Division Board of Trustees expects its members to adhere to the highest ethical standards.

The board chair shall be responsible for initiating a review of the board member code of ethics with the board of trustees, at the start of each term. The superintendent shall ensure that new trustees are familiar with the board member code of ethics as part of the new board member orientation process (Policy BIA).

(2) **Code of Ethics**

The importance of the role of trustee underscores the need for each trustee to embrace and to adhere to this code of ethics.

Each trustee shall:

- (a) uphold the public trust by governing the school division effectively and efficiently in the best interest of the students.
- (b) devote time, thought, and study to the duties and responsibilities of office so that he/she may render effective, knowledgeable and credible service.
- (c) work in a spirit of harmony and cooperation, despite any differences between/among trustees and others; observe proper decorum and behaviour; act with courtesy, respect and consideration; encourage full and open discussions in all matters; encourage the free exchange of diverse views and; not withhold or conceal any information needed to make responsible decisions.
- (d) remember that as an individual, a trustee has no legal authority outside the meeting of the board, and shall conduct his/her relationships with the division staff, the community and all communication media on the basis of this fact.
- (e) act with integrity, and do everything possible to maintain the confidence in and dignity of the office.
- (f) abstain from discussing the confidential business of the board outside of a board meeting or a committee meeting.

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- (g) endeavour to participate in opportunities to enhance his/her abilities and to fulfill his/her responsibilities as a trustee, through participation in educational conferences, workshops and training sessions.
- (h) respect the decisions reached by the board to which he/she is legally bound. In so doing, once a decision is reached, an individual trustee is expected to explain its rationale, monitor its implementation and support the authority of the collective board.
- (i) remember that a major function of the board is to establish the policies by which the division is administered. It is not to carry out those policies. The daily administration of the educational program and conduct of school business is the responsibility of the superintendent and divisional staff.
- (j) abstain from using the schools or any part of the school program for his/her own personal advantage or for the advantage of any family or friend. A trustee shall resist every temptation and outside pressure to use his/her position as a trustee to benefit either himself/herself or any other individual or agency.
- (k) be responsible for declaring himself/herself to be in conflict of interest, as per the guidelines pertaining to conflict of interest outlined in the Public Schools Act.
- (l) recognize the integrity of his/her predecessors and associates and the merit of their work.
- (m) recognize that, if questioned about a matter on which the board has no established policy, an individual trustee has no authority to commit himself/herself or the board to any position or guarantee other than that of discussing the matter with the chair of the board or superintendent for the possible consideration of the board.
- (n) if approached with verbal or written requests or complaints directly or indirectly relating to personnel, instruction or services, a trustee is to follow Policy KE – Concern Protocol.
- (o) be encouraged to visit schools and worksites in the division, after having made an appointment, in order to familiarize himself/herself with the programs, operations and personnel of the division.

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(3) **Resolution of Concerns**

Any trustee perceiving one or more other trustees to be in possible breach of the code of ethics shall raise the concern with that/those member(s) with the intent to resolve the concern.

If the concern is not resolved, either/any of the trustees has the option of presenting the concern to the full board for consideration at an in camera session.

(4) **Enforcement**

The board of trustees will determine the appropriate action for violations to the code of ethics in accordance with the provisions of the Public Schools Act, Sections 35.1 to 35.5.

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Legal/Cross Reference: