

## **EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Background**

The Division has as part of its core values, the principles of integrity, respect and care, and expects all of its employees to demonstrate high ethical standards in their work. This administrative procedure is intended to outline general guidelines for conduct and a process for reporting allegations of misconduct, but it cannot provide for every situation or circumstance.

Employees have the right to work in an alcohol-free and drug-free environment, and to work with persons free from the impairing effects of alcohol and other drugs. The Division is committed to promoting a safe and healthy workplace free from the abuse of alcohol and other drugs.

### **Procedures**

#### **1. General**

- 1.1 All staff members shall adhere to the policies and administrative procedures of the School Division, and respect and enforce the terms and conditions provided for in collective agreements between the Division and its unions or staff groups or any other legal agreement between the Division and an outside agency.
- 1.2 Staff members shall conduct their employment responsibilities in an honest, faithful and diligent manner.
- 1.3 Staff members shall disclose to their supervisor or the Secretary-Treasurer any financial, business or commercial interest which may conflict with their duty to the Division or the proper execution of their duties. Where potential conflict is identified by the supervisor, the matter will be forwarded forthwith to the Secretary-Treasurer or Superintendent of Schools for review.
- 1.4 These principles are intended to complement any Code of Ethics that a staff member is required to adhere to because of a professional affiliation i.e., the ATA Code of Professional Conduct, CUPE Equality Statement and Oath of Obligation, or a professional association code of conduct.

#### **2. Employees shall:**

- 2.1 Adhere to the Employee Code of Conduct.
- 2.2 Treat students, parents, community members and other PRSD (Peace River School Division) employees with dignity, respect and consideration.
- 2.3 Adhere to their respective collective agreements or terms and conditions of employment.
- 2.4 Report to work fit to conduct their duties.
- 2.5 Conduct their employment responsibilities in a respectful, honest and diligent manner.

3. Employees shall not:

- 3.1 Engage in discriminatory behaviour.
- 3.2 Engage in behaviour that constitutes personal harassment or sexual harassment.
- 3.3 Engage in bullying behaviour.
- 3.4 Engage in activities that place them in a conflict of interest without complying with board policy and procedure.
- 3.5 Engage in behaviour that may compromise PRSD's image or reputation including activities that may disparage, defame, or embarrass the Division.
- 3.6 Expose or subject any student to sexual contact, activity, behaviour or sexually explicit material. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the teaching of human sexuality in accordance with the Alberta Education Program of Studies and PRSD board policy and procedure is permitted.
- 3.7 Be impaired by any substance, or provide others with alcohol, mood altering substances, prescription drugs (except in accordance with the board policy and procedure respecting the administration of medication), or illegal drugs, while on work premises or performing work related duties.
- 3.8 Engage in retaliatory behaviour against anyone who abides by the policies and administrative procedures of the PRSD.
- 3.9 Use information or materials belonging to the PRSD to gain financial benefit either directly or indirectly.
- 3.10 Enter into a contract with PRSD, either personally or through a third party.
- 3.11 Use their employment to gain personal advantage beyond the benefits provided by their employment contract.
- 3.12 Post offensive material or comments on social media.
- 3.13 Improperly retain, destroy, store, or disclose confidential or personal information obtained in the course of PRSD duties contrary to board policy or administrative procedures.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Superintendent of Schools or designate is responsible for compliance with the Code of Conduct. The Superintendent or designate, reviews any investigative report and accompanying responses, and determines what, if any, action is to be taken.
- 4.2 The Deputy Superintendent, Directors, Principals, supervisors are responsible for ensuring that staff are informed about the Code of Conduct.
- 4.3 The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for process of managing complaints, including providing information to parties and arranging for investigations.

5. Use of Time

- 5.1 Employees are expected to use work time for work purposes.

## 6. Criminal Conduct

- 6.1 Staff members are required to immediately notify their supervisor or the Superintendent of Schools that they are under investigation by police or that they have been charged with a criminal offence.
- 6.2 Any staff member, who fails to fully disclose alleged criminal conduct, even if the criminal charges are abandoned or dismissed, is subject to disciplinary action.
- 6.3 Conviction of any criminal offence may result in termination of employment with the Division.
- 6.4 Applicants for employment with PRSD are required to disclose all pending or ongoing criminal investigations and all criminal convictions.

## 7. Reporting of Allegations of Misconduct

- 7.1 Any staff member who has reasonable grounds for believing that another staff member has engaged in conduct that violates an administrative procedure or is dishonest, illegal, abusive or detrimental to the interests or reputation of the Division shall report the conduct immediately to that staff member's immediate supervisor or to the Superintendent of Schools, as soon as possible.
- 7.2 Teachers making such an allegation against another teacher may choose to seek advice on how to address the situation from a staff officer in Member Services, Alberta Teachers' Association, to ensure they are in compliance with the ATA Code of Professional Conduct. Similarly, CUPE members may choose to contact their union representatives to ensure compliance with the CUPE Equality Statement and Membership Oath of Obligation. Exempt staff members may wish to contact their professional organizations for assistance; advice is also available through the Public Interest Commissioner.
- 7.3 Any person that has made a report in good faith shall not be subject to disciplinary action.
- 7.4 No person will suffer any retaliation or repercussion as a result of having reported, in good faith, an allegation of misconduct.

## 8. Use of PRSD Property

- 8.1 Principals, directors or managers may authorize the use of PRSD equipment by a PRSD employee located off PRSD premises provided the required documentation is completed, tracked and retained by the direct supervisor.
- 8.2 PRSD property, including vehicles, equipment and material shall not be used for personal benefit, gain or non-PRSD use without supervisor approval and documentation.
- 8.3 Employees are responsible for exercising all reasonable care to prevent abuse to, excessive wear, loss or damage to PRSD-owned equipment or material entrusted to their care.

## 9. Conflict of Interest

Employees of the PRSD shall be deemed to be in conflict of interest if they:

- 9.1 Are party to a subsisting contract with PRSD other than a contract of employment under which money of PRSD is payable or may become payable, unless approved by the Board before entering into the agreement as required by section 229 of the Education Act;
- 9.2 Use information gained through their positions as employees of the PRSD to gain benefit either directly or indirectly;
- 9.3 Are in a familial, cohabitation or an intimate relationship with a person while at the same time are in a direct supervisory role or are exercising financial responsibility or oversight on behalf of PRSD;
- 9.4 Disclose information gained through their positions as employees of the PRSD for the benefit of themselves or others; or
- 9.5 Are party to a contract with the PRSD for the lease or purchase of real estate property or holdings.

## 10. Discipline

- 10.1 PRSD reserves the right to discipline employees for poor conduct, unsatisfactory job performance, breaches of this Code of Conduct, breaches of PRSD's administrative procedures or policies, or any other misconduct.
- 10.2 In determining the appropriate course of discipline, PRSD will consider the following:
  - 10.2.1 Nature of the misconduct, including off-duty activity/behaviour;
  - 10.2.2 The disciplinary history of the employee;
  - 10.2.3 Length of service of the employee; and
  - 10.2.4 The impact, or potential impact, of the misconduct on PRSD's reputation or operations.
- 10.3 PRSD will, as soon as practical, act on an allegation of misconduct. Prior to any disciplinary action being made, the employee in question will be provided with the opportunity to answer the allegation, provide an explanation or apologize for the wrongdoing. Where the circumstances warrant, an employee may be suspended pending the outcome of an investigation into the allegations.
- 10.4 PRSD generally follows a system of progressive discipline; however, this does not prevent PRSD from foregoing any step in the chain of progressive discipline as may be warranted by the circumstances. Following the outcome of the investigation, a determination will be made as to the appropriate course of action in the particular circumstances and may include any of the following:
  - 10.4.1 Verbal warning (documented);
  - 10.4.2 Written warning letter of discipline;
  - 10.4.3 Suspension; and
  - 10.4.4 Termination for just cause.

- 10.5 Subject to the terms of any collective agreement, all written warnings will form part of the employee's personnel file. Employees receiving discipline will be provided with a copy of the discipline and be requested to acknowledge receipt of the same. Written discipline will not be removed from an employee's personnel file unless required by the provisions of a collective agreement. However, should an employee show marked improvement, be without any other disciplinary issues for a period of at least 24 months following a letter of discipline, the employee can make a request to have the letter of discipline removed from the personnel file.

Adopted/Revised: OCT 2018/SEP 2019/NOV 2019

Reference: Section 229 Education Act