



**Comox Valley Schools**

**A Community of Learners**

**INNOVATIVE • INQUISITIVE • INCLUSIVE**

## BOARD POLICY HANDBOOK

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**The Board of Education of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)**

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This Board Policy Handbook has been developed to highlight and support the very important governance function of the board. In addition to clearly defining the role of the board, the role of the superintendent and the delegation of authority from the board to the superintendent, it includes the following as policies:

1. Foundational statements which provide guidance and direction for all activities within the district;
2. Directions for how the board itself is to function and how individual trustees are to conduct themselves; how board committees and representatives are to function;
3. Statements as to how appeals and hearings will be conducted;
4. Non-delegable matters such as policy making and school closures; and
5. Specific matters which the board has chosen not to delegate to the superintendent.

This Board Policy Handbook is intended to be supplemented by an Administrative Procedures Manual; the primary written document by which the superintendent directs staff. The Administrative Procedures Manual must be entirely consistent with this Board Policy Handbook.

The development of two (2) separate and distinct documents is meant to reinforce the distinction in this district between the board's responsibility to govern and the superintendent's executive or administrative duties.

It is to be noted that the electronic versions of both the Board Policy Handbook and the Administrative Procedures Manual as well as any other handbooks/manuals referenced are always the most current documents available.

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## Foundational Statements

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### **Territorial Acknowledgment**

The Board of Education acknowledges that we are on the traditional territories of the K'ómoks First Nation. We are thankful for the privilege of living on their land and the gift of working with their children.

### **The Role of Public Education**

The Board believes that public education is foundational to a free and democratic society. Public education is critical in advancing equity and inclusion and providing all children with the opportunity to thrive. Public education is a shared responsibility with families and communities, who together nurture young people to flourish with dignity, confidence, purpose, and a commitment to contributing to a healthy, inclusive society.

### **Vision, Purpose, and Values**

The Board is guided by a vision of compassionate, connected, and personalized learning for all.

Our purpose is to create safe, equitable learning environments that support each learner in thriving, sharing, and developing their unique gifts.

These values shape every decision and action within our district:

- **Learning:** We center learning in all that we do, encouraging curiosity, growth, and lifelong inquiry.
- **Equity:** We lead with a vision of diversity as a strength and inclusion as a right, ensuring fair opportunities for all.
- **Relationships:** We commit to building connections founded on compassion, respect, and mutual understanding.
- **Safety:** We create learning spaces where everyone feels safe, valued, and has a sense of belonging.
- **Integrity:** We uphold high ethical standards, acting with transparency, honesty, and accountability.

These values are our universal guiding principles, serving as the lens through which the Board assesses each decision and action to ensure alignment with our foundational beliefs.

## Commitment to Reconciliation and Indigenous Worldviews

The Board acknowledges the historical role of Canada's education system in advancing colonial structures that marginalize and harm Indigenous Peoples. We recognize the ongoing impact of these policies on Indigenous communities today and are committed to reconciliation. In alignment with our values and strategic plan, we strive to center Indigenous perspectives and knowledge throughout our practices by:

- **Engaging in Learning and Unlearning:** We commit to learning, unlearning, and relearning about Indigenous histories, worldviews, and ways of knowing as part of our responsibility toward truth and reconciliation. This learning will lead to engaging in processes that are less colonial and more reflective of Indigenous world views and perspectives, such as conducting meetings in circle.
- **Building Relationships and Deepening Understanding:** We seek to foster relationships that are rooted in respect, empathy, and shared responsibility.
- **Aligning with National and International Frameworks:** Our actions are aligned with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the First Peoples Principles of Learning.
- **Supporting Environmental Stewardship:** In recognition of Indigenous teachings on the interconnection with land, we share responsibility for nurturing and protecting our environment, fostering an ethos of stewardship among all learners.

## Accountability and Implementation

The Board of Education affirms that every decision, action, and interaction within the district will reflect this foundational policy. This commitment extends across all roles and responsibilities within the district, ensuring that our work remains aligned with the values outlined here. The life and legacy of the late Honourable Murray Sinclair reminds us of the transformative power of education, guiding our commitment to equity, respect, and reconciliation.

Through continuous engagement, reflection, and learning, we strive to uphold these principles in our service to each student and to the broader community.

### Legal and Policy References:

School Act (RSBC 1996, c. 412) Section 65, 75, 81, 85  
Framework for Enhancing Student Learning - Province of British Columbia  
Statement of Education Policy Order (OIC 1280/89)  
Ministerial Order 217/2024 - Indigenous Education Council Order (IEC Order)  
BC DRIPA: Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (SBC 2019, c. 44)  
UNDRIP: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)  
Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action

|                                 |                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Policy Type                     | Governance             |
| Adopted                         | September 2019         |
| Replaces <i>(if applicable)</i> |                        |
| Amended                         | May 2025               |
| Editorial Change                |                        |
| Next Review Date                | 2028                   |
| Responsible Operational Leader  | The Board of Education |

## **Role of the Board**

### **PREAMBLE**

As the elected community representatives, the Board of Education of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) is the corporate entity established by provincial legislation and is given authority by the BC School Act and attendant Regulations to provide overall strategic direction and governance of the district. It is accountable for the provision of educational programs and services for enrolled students of the district that support student success and achievement within the legislative framework, while reflecting the unique needs and priorities of the district.

The Board is charged with the responsibility for providing a public education system that is organized and operated in the best interests of the students it serves. The School Act provides that the Board is responsible for the improvement of student achievement in the school district. To that end the Board will make continual appraisals of the educational, administrative, and planning processes considering the Board's stated goals and objectives.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Board of Education undertakes its legislated and other legal responsibilities to organize and operate a public educational system that best serves the interests of enrolled students within the school district.

### **OBJECTIVES**

#### **Accountability to the Provincial Government**

- Act in accordance with applicable provincial legislation and regulatory requirements governing public education.
- Fulfil the Board's governance responsibility and functions as established through legislation and Board policy.

#### **Developing and Enhancing a Commitment to Student Learning**

- Approve a District Strategic Plan that identifies student learning results in key areas.
- Working respectfully alongside K'ómoks First Nation Chief and Council, Hereditary leaders, other Indigenous Rights holders, and the Indigenous Education Council.
- Maintain Board agendas that reflect the Board's commitment to improving student outcomes.
- Review the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning (FESL) and the Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreement (IEEA) at least annually, including trends, successes, and areas of improvement.
- Support and approve the allocation of resources for approved initiatives to improve student outcomes are included in the annual operating budget.
- Annually assess the effectiveness of the superintendent's leadership in improving student outcomes.

#### Accountability to and engagement with the community

- Engage students, staff, parents, caregivers, partner groups, rightsholders, and the wider community in developing and supporting the District vision and Strategic Plan.
- Make informed decisions that support the needs of all District students.
- Establish processes and provide opportunities for community input and engagement.
- Report District student learning results at least once annually to the community and Ministry of Education and Child Care.
- Develop procedures for and hear appeals as required by statute and/or Board policy.
- Meet with students, rightsholders, Indigenous Education Council, partners, municipal government representatives, and local provincial representatives as required to achieve desired educational outcomes.
- Model a culture of respect and integrity, openness, and transparency, consistent with the Board's Code of Conduct.

#### Strategic Planning

- Provide overall direction for the District by establishing the purpose, vision, values, and strategic foundational statements in consultation with students, staff, parents, rightsholders, partners, and the wider community.
- Approve the District's Strategic Plan and any adjustments.
- Annually set District priorities and key results as indicated in the District's Strategic Plan to ensure Board direction is actionable.
- Annually evaluate the effectiveness of the District in achieving established priorities and key results.

#### Policy

- Establish and maintain policies and bylaws that are consistent with the strategic direction and desired outcomes of the Board.
- Establish and maintain policies and bylaws that outline how the Board is to function.
- Delegate authority to the Superintendent and define commensurate accountabilities.
- Formulate policies and bylaws in conformity with the BC School Act for the effective and efficient operation of schools in the School District.
- Make the final decision as to the approval of all policy statements.
- Govern the district through Board adopted policies and resolutions.

#### Board / Superintendent Relations

- Select and hire the Superintendent.
- Provide the Superintendent with clear Board direction.
- Delegate, in writing, administrative authority to and identify responsibilities of the Superintendent subject to the provisions and restrictions in provincial legislation and regulations, and board-directed policy.
- Respect the delegated authority of the Superintendent to carry out executive action and support the superintendent's actions which are exercised within the discretionary powers of the position.
- Maintain respectful and professional working relationships with the Superintendent.
- In consultation with the Superintendent, review and adjust the annual Board Work Plan.
- Promote a positive working relationship with the Superintendent.
- Promote the professional growth of the Superintendent in continuing to provide quality district leadership.

- Annually evaluate the Superintendent in accordance with a mutually developed performance appraisal mechanism and review compensation.

#### Advocacy and Influence

- Become or retain membership in the British Columbia School Trustee Association (BCSTA).
- Provide input to the BCSTA and British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) issues.
- Advance Board/District positions and priorities including through local/community and provincial organizations where applicable.
- Act as an advocate for public education and the district through the development and implementation of an annual plan for advocacy including focus, key messages, relationships, and mechanisms.
- Participate in regional, provincial, and/or national school Board associations as deemed appropriate.

#### Board Development

- Annually develop a Board development/work plan aligned with District priorities and Board evaluation outcomes. See Appendix A for the Facilitated Board Self-Evaluation Process.
- Use of a skills matrix within three (3) months of election that identifies and supports Board development in providing effective governance, as well as an assessment of the collective skills that trustees possess, may be utilized.
- Annually evaluate the Board's effectiveness.

#### Fiscal Accountability

- Exercise stewardship of the District's financial resources and long-term sustainability.
- Approve budget process and timelines at the outset of the budget process.
- Provide for adequate budget consultation processes with the rightsholders, Indigenous Education Council, students, partners, and community.
- In collaboration with the superintendent, identify budget assumptions and draft priorities guiding principles and decision-making criteria to be used in the creation of the draft proposed annual operating budget.
- Approve the annual preliminary and amended budgets and allocation of resources to achieve desired results in alignment with the Strategic Plan.
- Annually approve the District's updated Five (5) Year Capital Plan.
- Annually appoint the auditor and approve the terms of engagement.
- Review annually the audit report and management letter and approve those recommendations to be implemented.
- Annually approve the Audited Financial Statements and all interfund transfers.
- Ratify memoranda of agreement with bargaining units.
- Annually review and approve remuneration for excluded staff.
- Approve the acquisition and disposition of district land and buildings.
- Approve the annual spending plan for the Annual Facilities Grant (AFG).
- Receive quarterly financial reports for operating and capital budgets to ensure financial health and stability of the District.
- Approve borrowing for capital expenditures within provincial restrictions.
- Approve transfer of funds to/from restricted and non-restricted surplus funds.
- Approve transportation assistance rates.

- Approve student fee schedules annually.
- Establish standing and ad hoc committees of the Board.
- Approve construction projects in excess of one million dollars (\$1,000,000).
- Approve allocations of one (1) time exceptional funding.
- Establish trustee honoraria compensation and reimbursement amounts.

#### Additional Responsibilities

- Approve the naming or re-naming of schools and other district facilities.
- Approve annual local school and district calendar in accordance with legislation and collective agreements.
- Approve Board Authority Authorized Courses.
- Recognize students, staff, and community members.
- Review the student enrolment and staffing report.
- Hear appeals in alignment with Board policy and legislated requirements.
- Approval and cessation of academies and programs of choice and changes in fees.
- Approve catchment areas for schools and district programs.
- Approve changes in grade configurations.
- Approve the establishment, closure, and/or reopening of a closed school.
- Approve the installation and operation of video surveillance equipment as allowed by legislation.
- Carry out all other duties and responsibilities as outlined in the BC School Act and Regulations.

Legal Reference(s):      British Columbia School Act (S. 65, 74, 74.1, 75, 75.x, 76.1, 76.3, 76.4, 77, 79.2, 82, 82.1, 84, 85, 86, 96, 112, 112.1, 113, 145, 147, and 158.  
                                      Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act  
                                      BC Human Rights Code

Adopted:                September 2019  
 Revised:                August 2026

## **APPENDIX A – Facilitated Board Self-Evaluation Process**

### **Process**

The annual externally facilitated Board self-evaluation process will be completed subsequent to the superintendent evaluation process described in the appendixes to Policy 12 and entitled, *Superintendent/CEO Evaluation Process, Criteria and Timelines*. The two (2) evaluation processes are complementary in nature.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the facilitated Board self-evaluation is to answer the following questions:

1. How well have we fulfilled each of our defined roles as a Board during the evaluation period?
2. How do we perceive our interpersonal working relationships?
3. How well do we receive input and how well do we communicate with those we represent?
4. How would we rate our Board / superintendent relations?
5. How well have we adhered to our governance policies?
6. What have we accomplished this past year to improve student learning? How do we know?  
What else have we accomplished this past year?
7. What actions will the Board take during the next year to become more effective?
8. Determine what Board development has been accessed during the past year and what Board development is planned for the coming year.

The answers to these questions provide the data for the development of a positive path forward.

### **Evaluation Principles**

The following principles form the basis for the Board self-evaluation process.

1. A learning organization is focused on the improvement of student learning.
2. A commitment to continuous improvement is a sign of organizational health.
3. An effective evaluation process provides for growth and accountability.
4. The annual Board evaluation process will model the Board's commitment to principles 1-3.
5. A pre-determined process for evaluation strengthens the governance function, builds credibility for the Board and fosters an excellent Board / superintendent relationship.
6. An evidence-based approach provides objectivity to supplement the subjectivity involved in evaluation processes.

## Policy 3

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### ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

Trustees are elected in accordance with the *Local Government Act*. The British Columbia *School Act* prescribes eligibility requirements for running for the office of school trustee. The Board of Education of School District No. 71 is a corporate body elected by citizens of the Comox Valley.

The role of the trustee is to contribute to the board as it carries out its legislated mandate. The oath of office taken by each trustee when they assume office binds that person to work diligently and faithfully in the cause of public education. A trustee must first and foremost be concerned with the interests of the school board.

The Board of Education is a corporation. The decisions of the board in a properly constituted meeting are those of the corporation. The *School Act* gives no individual authority to trustees. As members of the corporate board, trustees are accountable to the public for the collective decisions of the board, and for the delivery and quality of educational services. A trustee must serve the community as an elected representative, but the trustee's primary task is to act as a member of a corporate board. School board trustees collectively and individually have a public duty to carry out their responsibilities and the work of the board in good faith and with reasonable diligence. Trustees have one (1) overarching responsibility – a shared public duty to advance the work of the school board. A trustee's fiduciary duties are owed to the school board (not to themselves, their family or friends) which is, in turn, accountable to the electorate.

The trustee must balance the governance role with the representative role participating in decision making that benefits the whole district while representing the interest of their community.

A trustee who is given corporate authority to act on behalf of the board may carry out duties individually but only as an agent of the board. In such cases, the actions of the trustee are those of the board, which is then responsible for them. A trustee acting individually has only the authority and status of any other citizen of the district.

#### Trustee Rights

Within the parameters of board policy and bylaws, trustees have a right to:

1. Voice opinions and perspectives in an open and respectful manner, and have such opinions and perspectives respected by fellow trustees and district staff;
2. Represent the interests of their constituents while maintaining a district-wide perspective;
3. Vote on issues free from pressure or lobbying by other trustees and/or district staff;
4. Receive remuneration and expense allowances as determined by the board and in compliance with the *School Act*;
5. Be provided with an orientation session when newly elected;

6. Request and receive information from the superintendent of schools or designate pertinent to district policy and operations; previous, current or pending board or board committee activities; and any other legitimate assistance pertaining to the role of the trustee or the business of the board; and,
7. Attend well-organized and purposeful meetings.

### **Trustee Roles and Responsibilities**

Within the parameters of board policy and bylaws, trustees have a responsibility to:  
Make a prescribed oath of office,

1. Attend meetings of the board; participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the board in order to provide the best solutions possible for the education of children within the district. Those trustees interested will have the opportunity to Chair the open and closed Committee of the Whole meetings on a rotational basis.

Note: *The School Act* indicates, 52 (2) If a trustee is continuously absent from board meetings for a period of three (3) consecutive months, unless the absence is because of illness or with the leave of the board, the office of the member is deemed to be vacant and the person who held the office is disqualified from holding office as a trustee until the next general school election.

2. Be aware of and knowledgeable about the issues that require board decisions and attend orientation sessions for new trustees conducted by district staff and the B.C. School Trustees' Association (BCSTA).
3. Commit to the importance of the public education system in a democratic society.
4. Adhere to the direction of the chair of the board, and chair of a board committee, while attending meetings.
5. Adhere to confidentiality requirements regarding personnel and property issues as well as other matters discussed and determined at in-camera meetings.
6. Respect that the chair of the board or appropriate district staff communicate on behalf of the board, and when making statements to the media, PACs or employee groups make it clear that these are individual statements only and not necessarily the opinion of the board.
7. Become familiar with district policies, meeting agendas and reports in order to participate in board business.
8. Support a majority vote of the board to advance the work of the board and monitor progress to ensure decisions are implemented.
9. Refer governance queries, issues and problems not covered by board policy to the board for corporate discussion and decision.
10. Refer administrative matters to the superintendent.

11. Trustee contacts with staff shall be through the superintendent.
12. The trustee, upon receiving a complaint or an inquiry from a parent, staff member or community member about operations, will refer the parent, staff member or community member back to the teacher, principal, or district office personnel and will inform the superintendent of this action.
13. Keep the board and the superintendent informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to their attention that might affect the district.
14. Provide the superintendent with counsel and advice, giving the benefit of the trustee's judgment, experience and familiarity with the community.
15. Attend external committee meetings or meetings as a board representative, as assigned, and report to the board in a timely manner.
16. When delegated responsibility, will exercise such authority within the defined terms of reference in a responsible and effective way.
17. Participate in board/trustee development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the district can be enhanced.
18. Strive to develop a positive and respectful learning and working culture both within the board and the district.
19. Continue to carry out duties with integrity and responsibility during an election period.
20. Become familiar with, and adhere to, the Trustee Code of Conduct.

### **Trustee Orientation**

As a result of elections, the board may experience changes in membership. To ensure continuity and facilitate a smooth transition from one board to the next following an election, trustees must be adequately briefed concerning existing board policy and practice, statutory requirements, initiatives and approved plans.

The board believes an orientation program is necessary for effective trusteeship.

1. The district will offer an orientation program for all trustees following an election that provides information on:
  - 1.1 Role of the trustee and the board;
  - 1.2 Organizational structures and procedures of the district;
  - 1.3 Board policy, agendas and minutes;
  - 1.4 Existing district initiatives, annual reports, budgets, financial statements and long-range plans;

- 1.5 District programs and services;
  - 1.6 Board's function as an appeal body;
  - 1.7 Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities with regard to conflict of interest; and
  - 1.8 Trustee remuneration and expenses.
- 2. The district will provide financial support for trustees to attend British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) sponsored orientation seminars.
  - 3. The board chair and superintendent are responsible for ensuring the development and implementation of the district's orientation program for trustees. The superintendent shall ensure each trustee has access to the Board Policy Handbook and Administrative Procedures Manual at the organizational meeting following a general election or at the first regular meeting of the board following a by-election.

Legal Reference: Sections 49, 50, 52, 65, 85 *School Act*  
Local Government Act  
A Guide for School Trustee Candidates 2018 BCSTA

Adopted: September 2019

**SERVICES, MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT  
PROVIDED TO TRUSTEES**

The following shall be made available to trustees upon their election to the board:

**Equipment**

- Ipad
- Cell phone or the option to use their own and receive a monthly phone allowance

**Services**

- Technology support

District equipment shall be considered the property of the district and shall be returned to the district at the conclusion of the term of office. Should the trustee wish to purchase the equipment at the end of their term this may be done at the discounted value.

Adopted: September 2019

# Trustee Code of Conduct

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## Purpose Statement

This policy reflects our shared responsibility to foster compassionate, connected and personalized learning for all, grounded in equity, integrity and respect for Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Our purpose is to create safe, equitable learning environments that lift each learner to thrive, to grow, and to share their unique gifts by ensuring trustees demonstrate ethical leadership, uphold high standards of conduct, and commit to decolonizing and Indigenizing education.

## Introduction

The Trustee Code of Conduct Policy provides a framework to ensure that trustees of the Comox Valley School District act in a manner that promotes the values and vision of the District. Trustees are entrusted to lead with transparency, integrity, and respect, ensuring that all decisions and actions are centered on student learning, equity, and well-being. This policy is grounded in the principles of decolonization and Indigenization and commits to upholding ethical governance that is aligned with our Strategic Plan's vision, values, and goals.

## Guiding Values and Principles

Trustees are guided by the shared values of their Strategic Plan, ensuring that their actions and decisions align with the following principles:

- **Learning: Centering learning in all that we do.**  
Trustees are committed to promoting environments where all students can access high-quality, personalized education that supports their growth, core competencies, and well-being.
- **Equity: Recognizing diversity as a strength and inclusion as a right.**  
Trustees will lead with equity, advocating for fair treatment, opportunities, and outcomes for all students, especially those from historically marginalized communities.
- **Relationships: Connection, compassion and respect in all that we do.**  
Trustees will engage with compassion, respect and connection, prioritizing healthy relationships within the Board, K'ómoks First Nation, Indigenous Communities, Partner

Groups, the broader School Community, and the public. Building strong relationships with local First Nations and respecting Indigenous perspectives and rights are paramount.

- **Safety: Learning communities where all feel safe and belong.**  
Trustees are committed to fostering learning and working communities where all feel safe, respected and valued, ensuring that educational and workspaces support both the physical and emotional well-being of all students and staff.
- **Integrity: High ethical standards through transparency, honesty and accountability.**  
Trustees will uphold high ethical standards, demonstrating transparency, honesty, and accountability in their governance roles. This includes acting in accordance with the *School Act*, the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, the BC Human Rights Code and other relevant legislation.

### **Commitment to Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being**

Trustees recognize the importance of Indigenous ways of knowing and being in shaping educational experiences that are inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive. In partnership with local First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, trustees will:

- Uphold the principles of reconciliation as outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
- Work towards district policies, procedures, curricula and practices that reflect Indigenous histories, perspectives and knowledge.
- Engage in ongoing learning and reflection to better understand the impacts of colonization and actively participate in decolonizing education within the district.

### **Trustee Conduct and Responsibilities**

Trustees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the Board's values as articulated in Policy 1 and, the principles of all policies. Specific expectations include:

- **Confidentiality:** Trustees must maintain the confidentiality of information obtained in closed sessions or designated as confidential and/or information that is reasonably considered confidential, respecting the privacy of students, staff, trustees, and community members; and
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Trustees are responsible for declaring any conflicts of interest in matters before the Board and must abstain from voting on or influencing decisions where such conflicts exist; and

- **Collaboration:** Trustees will work collaboratively with Board colleagues, district staff, Indigenous communities, and the school community to support student success and well-being. Trustees will act with a spirit of harmony and cooperation, recognizing that effective governance requires respectful and productive dialogue; and
- **Communication:** Trustees will communicate with integrity and clarity, both in person and online. This includes using social media responsibly and refraining from engaging in behaviours that could undermine the Board's integrity or relationships within the community.

### **Trustees as members of the corporate Board of Education will:**

#### **Integrity and Dignity of the Office:**

1. Discharge their duties loyally, faithfully, impartially and in a manner, that will inspire public confidence in the abilities and integrity of the Board; and
2. Act as a trustee of this district and work carefully to ensure that it is well maintained, fiscally secure, and operating in the best interest of those served; and
3. Recognize that the expenditure of school board funds is a public trust and endeavour to see that the funds are expended efficiently in the best interests of learners in the district; and
4. Work together with trustee colleagues to communicate to the electorate, accurate information about the district and the schools; and
5. Do their utmost to attend regular Board meetings, committees of the whole and meetings of the Board committees to which they have been appointed, and meetings for which they have been appointed to serve as Board representatives, including communicating non-attendance to such meetings to the Board Chair; and
6. Provide leadership to the community through setting goals and policies for district operations and educational programs and by regularly evaluating to determine if intended results are achieved; and
7. Not use the position of trustee for personal advantage or to the advantage of any other individual apart from the total interest of the district, and resist outside pressure to so use the position.

#### **Compliance with Legislation:**

1. Observe bylaws and rules of order, the policies and procedures of the district, and the laws, rules and regulations governing education in British Columbia, the *BC School Act*, BC Human Rights Code, the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*; and
2. Respect and understand the roles and duties of individual trustees, the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools and the Chair of the Board.

#### Civil Behaviour:

1. Represent the Board of Education responsibly in all Board-related matters and act with decorum at all times. (Decorum: behaviour that is controlled, calm, and polite); and
2. Work with trustee colleagues, the Superintendent of Schools and the district as a whole, in a spirit of respect, openness, harmony and co-operation, encouraging the free exchange of diverse views on any topic at all times and expressing any contrary opinions in a respectful and constructive manner; and
3. Not make disparaging remarks in or outside Board meetings, about other Board members or their opinions, and be respectful of staff, students and the public; and
4. Use social media responsibly, including an acknowledgment that opinions expressed are those of the individual not the Board.

#### Upholding Decisions:

1. Base their decisions on all available facts, data and perspectives of an issue, respect the opinions of others and diligently pursue what they believe to be in the best interest of the students and others of the district; and
2. Accept that authority rests with the Board and that no trustee has individual authority to direct district staff other than that delegated by the Board; and
3. Uphold publicly the majority decisions of the Board of Education and the implementation of any Board resolutions; and
4. Accept that the Chair of the Board is the spokesperson to the public on behalf of the Board, unless otherwise determined by the Board. No other trustee will speak on behalf of the Board unless expressly authorized by the Chair of the Board or Board to do so. When individual trustees express their opinions in public, they must make it clear that they are not speaking on behalf of the Board.

#### Respect for Confidentiality:

1. Keep confidential any information disclosed or discussed at a meeting of the Board or committee of the Board, or part of a meeting of the Board or committee of the Board that was closed (in-camera) to the public, and keep confidential the substance of deliberations of a meeting closed (in-camera) to the public unless required to divulge such information by law or authorized by the Board to do so; and
2. Not use confidential information for personal gain or to the detriment of the Board or district; and
3. Not divulge confidential information, including personal information about an identifiable individual or information subject to lawyer-client privilege that a trustee becomes aware of because of their position, except when required by law or authorized by the Board to do so.

#### **Commitment to Ongoing Learning and Reflection**

Trustees will engage in ongoing professional development and self-reflection to enhance

their governance capabilities and understanding of the design principals of the Strategic Plan. The Board will provide training during onboarding and throughout a trustee's term to support their growth and alignment with the values of this policy. The learning may take many different forms including presentations at Board and Committee of the Whole meetings, working sessions, attendance at various conferences, as well as training provided by Staff.

### **Written Commitment and Affirmation**

To demonstrate the expectation of adherence to the Trustee Code of Conduct, Trustees will sign Policy 4 when taking the Oath of Office and thereafter, annually. Upon assuming office, Trustees will read aloud, "I [insert name], have read, understand and agree to adhere to Policy 4 – Trustee Code of Conduct."

### **Conclusion**

The Trustee Code of Conduct Policy reflects our commitment to ethical governance, decolonization, and the creation of inclusive and equitable learning environments. Trustees pledge to embody the values of learning, equity, relationships, safety, and integrity, ensuring that all actions are aligned with our shared vision of compassionate, connected, and personalized learning for all.

### **Appendix A – Breaches of Trustee Code of Conduct – Procedures**

In the event of a breach of this policy, the Board may take a range of actions. The Board of Education will endeavour to encourage a restorative justice process that prioritizes healing and relationship-building.

The specific procedures related to addressing Breaches of conduct can be found in Appendix A: Breaches of Trustee Code of Conduct – Procedures. This section outlines detailed procedures for addressing breaches of conduct and applying sanctions as per the Trustee Code of Conduct. It includes the specific steps for conciliatory measures, complaint handling, and the sanctions process. For full details, refer to the attached document.

Legal and Policy  
References:

British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) Criteria for Trustee Codes of Conduct  
School Act (RSBC 1996, c. 412)

|                                |                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Policy Type                    | Governance             |
| Adopted                        | September 2019         |
| Replaces (if applicable)       |                        |
| Amended                        | May 2025               |
| Editorial Change               |                        |
| Next Review Date               | 2028                   |
| Responsible Operational Leader | The Board of Education |

## **Appendix A – Trustee Breaches of Conduct**

In alignment with our commitment to ethical governance, cultural respect, and relationship-building, this appendix provides a structured process to address breaches of conduct in a manner that promotes healing, learning, and mutual understanding. The Board's approach is grounded in the principles of restorative justice, Indigenous perspectives, and the values of the Strategic Plan, emphasizing accountability, transparency, and equity.

### **In the Event of a Breach**

In cases where a breach of conduct may have occurred, the Board may take various actions, including but not limited to:

- Encouraging a restorative justice process that centers on healing and relationship-building.
- Creating a reflective and corrective action plan focused on responsibility, personal growth, and reconciliation.
- Engagement in relevant training or coaching to foster development and awareness.
- Passing a motion of censure or removal from committees if allowed under the School Act.

The procedures detailed below are designed to uphold accountability and provide a respectful, culturally attuned approach to resolving breaches.

### **Addressing Breaches of Conduct**

#### **Restorative Practice**

A trustee who believes that a trustee colleague has breached the Code of Conduct is encouraged to seek resolution through restorative, conciliatory measures before lodging an official complaint. This approach aligns with our commitment to dialogue, respect, and building trust within the Board.

1. **Individual Conversation:** The trustee who perceives a breach is encouraged to address the matter privately with the trustee involved. This initial step reflects Indigenous conflict-resolution practices, focusing on respect and understanding.
2. **Conciliatory Engagement:** If the private conversation does not yield a resolution, the

trustees may seek the support of the Board Chair or Vice-Chair to facilitate a constructive dialogue. If the concern involves the Chair, the Vice-Chair will facilitate.

3. **Third-Party or Indigenous Circle Facilitation:** By mutual agreement, a third party may be engaged, or an Indigenous Circle may be held, led by a qualified facilitator to foster a respectful, values-centered dialogue. This reflects our commitment to inclusive and culturally responsive practices.

## **Formal Process for Addressing Breaches**

If the matter cannot be resolved informally, a formal complaint may be filed according to the following steps:

1. **Filing Complaint**  
A trustee wishing to file an official complaint under the Code of Conduct will deliver a written complaint to the Board Chair (or Vice-Chair if the Chair is involved) within 30 days of the alleged breach, outlining the nature of the complaint and the specific sections of the Code alleged to have been breached. The Chair will share the complaint with all trustees within five days of receipt.
2. **Maintaining Confidentiality**  
To protect the integrity of the process, all details of the complaint remain strictly confidential, and public disclosure is a violation of the Code of Conduct. The Board Chair may disclose information only at the Board's direction following a Code of Conduct hearing.
3. **Supporting a Hearing**  
At least one other trustee must support the complaint in writing within three days of receiving it. If no support is provided, the complaint will not proceed, and the Board Chair will inform all trustees in writing that no further action will be taken.
4. **Convening the Hearing**  
When a complaint is supported, the Board Chair will convene a closed (in-camera) meeting to allow the complainant trustee to present their views on the alleged breach. The Board Chair will outline the nature of the alleged breach at the start of the meeting.
5. **Ensuring Fairness and Confidential Deliberation**  
The Chair will ensure that the following sequence is followed for a fair and balanced hearing:
  - **Complainant Presentation:** The complainant trustee presents their case, either in written or oral form.
  - **Respondent Presentation:** The respondent trustee presents their response.
  - **Opportunity for Replies:** Both parties are given opportunities to reply to each other's statements.

- Trustee Questions: Trustees may ask questions of both the complainant and respondent.
  - Final Comments: Both parties have a final opportunity to comment.
6. Private Deliberation and Resolution  
After the presentations, all parties except trustees without conflicts of interest will leave the room. The remaining trustees deliberate in private, ensuring cultural sensitivity, transparency, and equity in their decision. If additional clarification is needed, the hearing may be adjourned to collect further information.
  7. Issuing Sanctions  
Depending on the circumstances, the Board may institute any of the following sanctions:
    - Personal Letter of Censure: A confidential letter from the Board Chair to the offending trustee.
    - Public or Private Motion of Censure: Passed by a majority vote.
    - Committee or Appointment Removal: The trustee may be removed from Board committees or appointments by majority vote.
  8. Document Retention and Public Disclosure  
All documentation related to the hearing will be returned to the Secretary Treasurer after the conclusion of the hearing and retained in compliance with legal standards. The Board may, at its discretion, disclose findings to the public to promote transparency and accountability.

### **Breach of Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is essential to the Board's operations. Should a suspected breach occur, the following process is followed:

1. Independent Investigation: The Board Chair will ask the Secretary Treasurer to appoint an independent investigator under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
2. Review and Recommendations: The investigator provides findings to the Board Chair, which are reviewed in a closed (in-camera) meeting where the trustee in question may offer additional information.
3. Board Decision: If a breach is confirmed, the Board may issue a censure or escalate the matter in alignment with our commitment to ethical governance and transparency.

*This updated Appendix A maintains all procedural steps while integrating principles of restorative justice, reconciliation, and respect for Indigenous perspectives, consistent with the Board's Strategic Plan.*

Legal and Policy      Policy 4 – Trustee Code of Conduct  
References:          British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) Criteria for Trustee Codes of Conduct  
School Act (RSBC 1996, c. 412) 49, 50, 55-64, 65, 85, 94, 95

|                                |                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Policy Type                    | Governance             |
| Adopted                        | September 2019         |
| Replaces (if applicable)       |                        |
| Amended                        | May 2025               |
| Editorial Change               |                        |
| Next Review Date               | 2028                   |
| Responsible Operational Leader | The Board of Education |

## Policy 5

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### ROLE OF THE BOARD CHAIR

The Board of Education shall at its inaugural meeting and subsequently at each annual meeting or at anytime determined by the board, *elect* one (1) of its members to serve as board chair, to hold office at the pleasure of the board.

The chair has no authority to either make decisions beyond policy created by the board or to supervise or direct staff.

#### Specific Responsibilities

The board delegates and assigns to the chair the following powers and duties:

1. Prior to each board meeting, meet with the vice-chair, the superintendent and secretary treasurer to determine the items to be included in the agenda, and to become thoroughly familiar with them.
2. To preside over all public board meetings and ensure that such meetings are conducted in accordance with the *School Act*, the bylaws, and policies as established by the board.
3. To perform the following duties during board meetings:
  - 3.1 Maintain the order and proper conduct and decorum of the meeting so that motions may be formally debated;
  - 3.2 Ensure that issues being presented for the board's consideration are clearly articulated and explained.
  - 3.3 Display firmness, courtesy, tact, impartiality and willingness to give everyone an opportunity to speak on the subject under consideration in order that a board decision can be reached
  - 3.4 Direct the discussion by trustees to the topic being considered by the board.
  - 3.5 Decide questions of order and procedure, subject to an appeal to the rest of the board. The board chair may speak to points of order in preference to other members and shall decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to the board by any member duly moved. The chair shall conduct all meetings of the board according to the following rules of order firstly, ensuring compliance with the *School Act*; secondly, compliance with the board's own policies and lastly where the *School Act* or the board's own policies do not address the matter, Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of meetings, where applicable.
  - 3.6 Determine disposition of each motion by a formal show of hands.

- 3.7 Extend hospitality to Trustees, officials of the board, the press and members of the public.
4. To convey directly to the superintendent any concerns or questions as are related to the chair by trustees, parents, students or employees which may significantly affect the administration of the district.
  5. To be in regular contact with the superintendent to maintain a working knowledge of current issues and events within the district.
  6. To bring to the board all matters requiring a corporate decision of the board.
  7. To act as chief spokesperson for the board by stating positions consistent with board decisions and policies (except for those instances where the board has delegated this role to another individual or group).
  8. To act as an ex-officio non-voting member of all committees appointed by the board.
  9. To act as a signing officer for the district.
  10. To represent the board, or arrange alternative representation, at board events, meetings with other levels of government or other organizations or at hearings. When representing the board at official meetings or in an official function, the chair is limited to speaking for positions the board has determined through passing motions. The chair will bring back issues to the board for consideration if the board has not yet adopted motions on the matter or provided direction. The chair will share with the board all information from meetings with other levels of government or external organizations at which the chair attended as the board's representative.
  11. To ensure that the board engages in regular assessments of its effectiveness as a board.
  12. Following consultation with trustees recommend to the board trustee appointments to:
    - 12.1 Standing committees
    - 12.2 School liaison appointments;
    - 12.3 Representative to organization; and
    - 12.4 Other board committees.
  13. Address inappropriate behaviour on the part of a trustee as per policy 4 sanctions.
  14. Assist with the board orientation program for new trustees.
  15. Manage the CEO contract on the board's behalf by bringing any relevant matters to the boards attention in a timely manner. In addition, each month the chair shall sign off on the superintendent's expenses as well as vacation and sick leave, days earned, taken and accumulated.

Legal Reference: Sections 65, 67, 69, 70, 85 *School Act*  
Adopted: September 2019

## Policy 6

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### ROLE OF THE VICE-CHAIR

The Board of Education shall at its inaugural meeting and subsequently at each annual meeting or at anytime determined by the board, *elect* one (1) of its members to serve as vice-chair, to hold office at the pleasure of the board.

#### Specific Responsibilities

1. The vice-chair shall act on behalf of the board chair, in the latter's absence and shall have all the duties and responsibilities of the board chair.
2. The vice-chair shall chair all In-Camera Meetings.
3. The vice-chair shall assist the board chair in ensuring that the board operates in accordance with its own policies and procedures and in providing leadership and guidance to the board.
4. Prior to each board meeting, meet with the chair, the superintendent and secretary treasurer to determine the items to be included in the in-camera agenda, and to become thoroughly familiar with them.
5. The vice-chair shall be an alternate signing officer for the district.

Legal Reference: Sections 65, 67, 85 *School Act*

Adopted: September 2019

### BOARD OPERATIONS

The board's ability to discharge its obligations in an efficient and effective manner is dependent upon the development and implementation of a sound organization design. In order to discharge its responsibilities to the electorate of the district, the board shall hold meetings as often as necessary. A quorum, which is a simple majority of the number of trustees, must be present for every duly constituted meeting.

The board has adopted policies so the business of the board can be conducted in an orderly and efficient manner. All points of procedure not provided for in this Policy Handbook shall be decided in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*.

The board's fundamental obligation is to preserve, if not enhance, the public trust in education, generally, and in the affairs of its operations in particular. Consistent with its objective to encourage the general public to contribute to the educational process, board meetings will be open to the public. Towards this end, the board believes its affairs must be conducted in public to the greatest extent possible.

There are times when BC FOIPPA legislation requires or when the board determines that public interest is best served by private discussion of specific issues in "in-camera" sessions.

In order to carry out its responsibilities effectively, the board will hold periodic meetings of several types. Formal meetings, at which all formal and legal business of the board as a corporate body shall be done, may be designated as Inaugural, regular, or special meetings, or in-camera.

The board has adopted specific policy governing board operation and the conduct of its formal meetings.

#### 1. Board Composition and Elections

- 1.1 The Board of Education for the school district is comprised of a total of seven (7) trustees selected from the following trustee electoral areas:
  - 1.1.1 Two (2) trustees from Trustee Electoral Area 1, being the Corporation of the City of Courtenay;
  - 1.1.2 One (1) trustee from Trustee Electoral Area 2, being the Town of Comox;
  - 1.1.3 One (1) trustee from Trustee Electoral Area 3, being the Corporation of the Village of Cumberland
  - 1.1.4 One (1) trustee from Area 4 – Electoral Area A, being from the Comox Valley Regional District.
  - 1.1.5 One (1) trustee from Area 5 – Electoral Area B, being from the Comox Valley Regional District

- 1.1.6 One (1) trustee from Area 6 – Electoral Area C, being from the Comox Valley Regional District

## 2. Inaugural Meetings

- 2.1 After the general local election of trustees in the school district, the secretary treasurer must convene a first meeting of the board within thirty (30) days from the date that the new board begins its term of office. The first order of business shall be to elect a chairperson and vice-chair of the board.
- 2.2 The chair of the inaugural meeting shall be the secretary treasurer until such time as the board chair has been elected.
- 2.3 The secretary treasurer shall announce the results of trustee elections.
- 2.4 The secretary treasurer shall administer the two (2) oaths of office; the Declaration by Trustee and the Oath of Confidentiality before taking their seats on the board.
- 2.5 The secretary treasurer shall call for nominations for board chair (seconding is not required) and conduct a vote by secret ballot in which that person receiving a clear majority cast shall be elected board chair for the ensuing year. If no person receives a clear majority, further ballots shall be taken until the same is achieved or, if after a third ballot a tie shall occur the Board shall recess and reconvene at a time of its choosing in order to conduct a fourth vote. If a tie still occurs after the fourth vote the decision shall be made by lot.
- 2.6 The chair so elected shall assume the chair for the remainder of the meeting.
- 2.7 The board shall proceed to elect a vice-chair, BC School Trustees Association representative and alternate, and a BC Public School Employers' Association representative and alternate, in the same manner as the election of the chair.
- 2.8 Following the elections, the order of business shall be:
- 2.8.1 Passage of banking resolutions and appointment of signing officers. These appointments may be amended at a regular board meeting as required.

## 3. Annual Election of Officers of the Board

- 3.1 In years when inaugural meetings are not necessary, the board shall meet at a time, place and location as determined by the board to elect the officers of the board. This will normally be done annually; however, the *School Act* allows an election at any time.
- 3.2 The chair of the meeting shall be the secretary treasurer until such time as the board chair has been elected.
- 3.3 The secretary treasurer shall call for nominations for board chair (seconding is not required) and conduct a vote by secret ballot in which that person receiving a clear

majority cast shall be elected board chair for the ensuing year. If no person receives a clear majority, further ballots shall be taken until the same is achieved or, if after a third ballot a tie shall occur the board shall recess and reconvene at a time of its choosing in order to conduct a fourth vote.

3.4 The chair so elected shall assume the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

3.5 The board shall proceed to elect a vice-chair.

#### **4. Regular Public Meetings**

4.1 Prior to the end of each school year, the board shall establish a schedule of regular public meetings of the board for the ensuing school year. A regular meeting shall be held at least once per month. Additional meetings shall be held as the board may decide.

4.2 A quorum of the board for a regular meeting shall be a majority of the trustees holding office at the time of the meeting.

4.3 At the appointed time for commencement of a meeting, the chair shall ascertain that a quorum is present before proceeding to the business of the meeting. If a quorum has not been made within one-half (1/2) hour after the appointed time, the meeting shall stand adjourned until the next regular meeting date or until another meeting shall have been called in accordance with this policy.

4.4 If, prior to the meeting, the chair and/or the secretary treasurer have received information suggesting there will not be a quorum, the meeting may be cancelled, and attempts will be made to contact all trustees.

4.5 Trustees may be allowed to participate in or attend a meeting of the board by telephone or other means of communication if all trustees and other persons participating in or attending the meeting are able to communicate with each other.

4.6 If a trustee participates in or attends a meeting of the board by telephone or other means of communication (as provided above), the trustee is to be counted for the purposes of determining a quorum and voting.

4.7 The agenda will be set by the Agenda Setting Meeting, which consists of the board chair, vice-chair, superintendent and secretary treasurer, no later than the Monday of the week prior to the public meeting. Items for the agenda are to be submitted to the office of the secretary treasurer by 4:00 p.m. on the Tuesday of the week prior to the board meeting.

4.8 Written notice of each meeting, together with the proposed agenda, must be given at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance to each trustee by delivery to the place designated by him or her, or via email. Non-receipt by a trustee shall not void the proceedings.

4.9 The agenda will include the following items:

4.9.1 Minutes of the previous regular meeting

- 4.9.2 Summary of closed/in-camera meetings
  - 4.9.3 Minutes of any special meetings held since the previous Regular meeting;
  - 4.9.4 Board Committee and Committee of the Whole reports;
  - 4.9.5 Briefing notes for any items requiring a decision;
  - 4.9.6 Copies of information items;
  - 4.9.7 Notice or items of new business to be considered;
  - 4.9.6 Copies of board correspondence to be considered.
- 4.10 The Order of Business at all regular board meetings, unless varied by motion, shall be as follows:
- 4.10.1 Call to Order
  - 4.10.2 Welcome and Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory
  - 4.10.3 Agenda – Changes/Additions
  - 4.10.4 Adoption of Agenda
  - 4.10.5 Adoption of Minutes/Reports of Prior Meetings
  - 4.10.6 Report on Closed/In-Camera Meetings
  - 4.10.7 Presentation/Delegation
  - 4.10.8 Announcements
  - 4.10.8.1 Board Chair
  - 4.10.8.2 Superintendent
  - 4.10.9 Standing Committee Reports
  - 4.10.10 Decision items
  - 4.10.11 Information items
  - 4.10.12 Board Business
  - 4.10.13 Correspondence
  - 4.10.14 Public Question Period
  - 4.10.15 Adjournment
- 4.11 A change to the prescribed order of business may be proposed by any trustee and shall require majority consent, without debate.
- 4.12 New business shall not be considered at any regular meeting unless it arises directly out of correspondence, reports, or other matters arising during the regular order of business, provided that the members present at any regular meeting of the board may, by unanimous resolution, waive the giving of notice. New business may only be introduced by a member as provided herein through a *Notice of Motion*.
- 4.13 Referral to a committee of any matter arising during the course of any regular meeting may be made upon resolution of the meeting.
- 4.14 Minutes shall be kept by the Secretary of the board of all proceedings of the board, with the minutes to be concise and to record decisions, but not the contents of speeches.
- 4.15 All meetings shall stand adjourned at 9:00 p.m. or two (2) hours after their commencement, whichever comes first. Meetings may be extended to 9:30 pm or an additional 30 mins by a majority vote by those present in favour of the extension. Meetings may continue past 9:30 pm or the 30 mins extension provided that all the members present at the meeting unanimously resolved continuation. No meeting

shall continue past 11:00 pm.

- 4.16 All regular public meetings of the board shall be open to the public and to the media and no person shall be excluded except for improper conduct.
- 4.17 The presiding officer may expel and exclude from a board meeting, any person whom they consider has been guilty of improper conduct.
- 4.18 If, in the opinion of the board, the public interest so requires, the board may order a meeting or part thereof to be closed (in-camera) to the public to discuss topics pertinent to that meeting and may exclude persons other than trustees and officers.
- 4.19 Fifteen (15) minutes will be set aside on each regular Board Meeting Agenda to give members of the public an opportunity to ask questions to the board.
  - 4.19.1 The primary purpose of the "Public Question Period" is to ask questions about items on the current agenda. The Question Period is not a platform for presentations or personal statements
  - 4.19.2 The chairperson may refer the question to executive officers or fellow trustees. Whenever possible, the questions relating to the current agenda will be answered immediately. All other questions will be referred to staff for a response at a later date.
- 4.20 A review of board operations, procedures and policies will be conducted at a time and place to be determined by the board.

## 5. **Public Participation**

### **Preamble:**

The board welcomes and provides for a variety of forms of public participation by members of the community. Public participation may be through presentations either by individuals or by a group, through formal question/comment periods in regular board meetings or in the form of written communications. Such opportunities shall not be used to address matters which must be dealt with in Closed (in-camera) meetings as noted elsewhere in this policy. For example, individual student matters must not be dealt with in a public setting. In addition, structures have been defined in legislation and collective agreements to deal with labour management issues. The public participation opportunities noted below are not to be used to deal with such matters. The board respects and honors employee groups' contracts and official representatives and will therefore deal with labour management issues through defined legislated and collective agreement processes.

### 5.1 Delegations

The following guidelines will govern groups or individuals wishing to appear or present to the Board of Education.

- 5.1.1 A delegation is a group or individual requesting permission to appear before the board to make a presentation or to speak on a matter relating to the business of the board. Requests to appear as a delegation or to present to the Board must be submitted in writing fourteen (14) calendar days prior to

a scheduled meeting. The request must outline the purpose of the delegation and the nature of the presentation.

- 5.1.2 After receiving a written request to appear before the Board, the Board Chair, in consultation with the Superintendent, and the Secretary Treasurer shall determine whether the request will be granted.
- 5.1.3 After permission to appear and or present to the Board has been granted, the Board chair in consultation with the Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer will determine the best venue for the presentation (Committee of the Whole, Public Board meeting or Special Board Meeting). The Individual or delegation will be notified of the decision 7 days prior to the scheduled date.
- 5.1.4 Normally, a delegation representing a group previously heard on a topic will not be heard a second time unless the delegation presents, in advance, material or information not previously considered that is germane to any decision. A motion of the board to hear the delegation a second time must be passed by having a majority of all its members cast an affirmative vote.
- 5.1.5 Speakers and or presentations shall be allotted fifteen (15) minutes. An additional 5 minutes may be allotted for a brief Trustee question period.
- 5.1.6 Any written material to be provided to trustees in conjunction with a Delegation or presentation must be made available to the school board office by the five (5) calendar days preceding the meeting. Fifteen (15) copies are required. If the material provided must be returned following the meeting, this must be specified at the time it is provided.
- 5.1.7 Decisions or responses on any requests made by a delegation or through a presentation are not normally made at the meeting at which the individual(s) is/are heard. However, if the board believes the matter is of an urgent nature, it may consider the matter during the new business portion of the meeting and provide a response at that time.

## **6. Special Meetings**

- 1.1 A special meeting of the board may be called by the chair, or upon written request by a majority of the trustees, shall be called by the secretary treasurer. No business other than that for which the meeting was called shall be conducted at the meeting.
- 1.2 Written notice of a special meeting and an agenda shall be given to each trustee at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting. Delivery of a written notice and the agenda may be waived by resolution, provided all reasonable steps have been taken to notify all trustees of the meeting.

## **2. Closed (In-Camera) Meetings**

- 7.1 The board may convene a meeting without the public, or without the public and staff present, at which matters of a confidential nature shall be discussed. No trustee shall disclose to the public, the proceedings of a closed (in-camera) meeting unless a resolution has been passed at the closed meeting to allow disclosure.

- 7.2 Closed (In-Camera) meetings can occur in both a regular meeting and committee of the whole format
- 7.3 Minutes of a closed (in-camera) meeting shall be kept in the same manner as a regular meeting but shall be approved only by the board in a closed (in-camera) meeting and shall not be filed with the minutes of the regular meetings.
- 7.4 A general summary of matters discussed, and the nature of decisions made at in-camera meetings shall be prepared following each meeting and, after approval of the in-camera meeting minutes, this statement will be attached to the agenda of the regular meeting immediately following.
- 7.5 Unless otherwise determined by the board, the following matters shall be considered in a closed (in-camera) meeting:
  - 7.5.1 Student disciplinary cases;
  - 7.5.2 Information regarding appointment, employment or dismissal of an employee;
  - 7.5.3 Matters of collective negotiations with employees;
  - 7.5.4 Matters related to the purchase or sale of land;
  - 7.5.5 Matters of a personal nature that are subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;
  - 7.5.6 Such other matters where the board decides that the public interest so requires.

Notwithstanding any rule limiting reconsiderations of the agenda, a trustee may make a motion to move a matter from the agenda of a closed (in-camera) meeting or session to the agenda of the open meeting, or the reverse. The motion requires a seconder, is debatable, and requires a simple majority in order for the matter to be considered in a closed (in-camera) meeting.

## **8. Presiding Officers**

- 8.1 If the chair is absent, or unable to act, the vice-chair shall preside at meetings of the board. If the vice-chair is absent or unable to act, the members shall elect one (1) of their number to preside at the meeting.
- 8.2 The chair may vacate the chair in order to enter debate or propose or second a motion, in which case the vice-chair, if present or another member appointed by the chair shall preside until the issue is disposed of (which seldom should be done).
- 8.3 In the event that neither the chairperson nor the vice-chairperson are able or willing to take the chair, the presiding officer shall be such person as the board may elect for that meeting.

- 8.4 The chair shall rule on all points of order and shall state their reasons and the authority for ruling when making a ruling. The chair's ruling shall be subject to appeal to the board. An appeal may only be requested immediately after a ruling and before resumption of business.
- 8.5 In discussing matters with a delegation, the chair of the board shall act as spokesperson.

## 9. Rules of Order

- 9.1 The current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern points of order and procedures not provided for in the *School Act* or in this Policy Handbook. Where there is an inconsistency between the *School Act* and this Policy Handbook, the *School Act* shall apply.
- 9.2 The board may adopt a procedural rule for one (1) meeting by resolution approved by majority vote of the trustees present at the meeting.
- 9.3 A rule other than the requirement for notice of meetings may be suspended for one (1) meeting by unanimous consent of the trustees' present.
- 9.4 This policy may be amended by resolution of at least majority vote of the entire board approving the amendment. Notice of intention to propose the amendment must be given at the previous meeting and Trustees must be given at least forty-eight (48) hours' notice.
- 9.5 The presiding officer's ruling on a point of order shall be based on rules of order as stated in s9.1.
- 9.6 An appeal of a ruling of the presiding officer shall be decided without debate by a majority vote of trustees' present. The challenger and the presiding officer have the right to state briefly the reason for their positions. When an appeal is successful it does not necessarily set a precedent.
- 9.7 A copy of the Board Policy Handbook shall be available for inspection at all reasonable times by any person.

## 10.0 Bylaw

- 10.1 The board shall not give a bylaw more than two (2) readings at anyone (1) meeting unless the members of the board who are present at the meeting unanimously agree to give the bylaw three (3) readings at that meeting. The follow matters shall be dealt with only by bylaw:
  - 10.1.1 Adoption of the budget;
  - 10.1.2 A capital bylaw;
  - 10.1.3 The acquisition or disposal of property;
  - 10.1.4 Amendments to bylaws;
  - 10.1.5 Where required by the *School Act*.

- 10.2 Written notice of intention to propose a bylaw shall be given in the notice of the meeting where the bylaw is to be proposed.
- 10.3 Every bylaw shall be dealt with in the following stages:
  - 10.3.1 First reading – no debate or amendment;
  - 10.3.2 Second reading - discussion of the principle of the bylaw;
  - 10.3.3 Third reading – consideration of amendments and final decision.
- 10.4 The secretary treasurer shall certify on a copy of each bylaw, the readings and the times thereof and the context of any amendment passed.
- 10.5 A proposed bylaw or amendment may be withdrawn at any stage with unanimous consent of the board.

## **6. Motions**

- 11.1 Unless expressly required to be exercised by bylaw, all powers of the board shall be exercised by resolution (motion).
- 11.2 A motion, when introduced, brings business before the meeting for possible action. A motion shall be worded in a concise, unambiguous and complete form and, if lengthy or complex, shall be submitted in writing.
- 11.3 The presiding officer may divide a motion containing more than one (1) subject and it shall be voted on in the form in which it is divided.
- 11.4 All motions shall be seconded.
- 11.5 All motions are debatable except the following:
  - 11.5.1 Motion to call the question;
  - 11.5.2 Motion for adjournment of debate or for adjournment of a meeting unless such a motion contains a time for recommencement of debate or for a new meeting;
  - 11.5.3 Motion to fix time for adjournment of a meeting;
  - 11.5.4 Motion to proceed to the next business;
  - 11.5.5 Motion to go into closed (in-camera) session.
- 11.6 An amendment is a motion to modify the wording of a pending motion. An amendment must be germane, i.e. closely related to or having a bearing on the subject of the motion to be amended. A motion can be amended more than once; however, there can only be one (1) amendment on the floor at a time and it shall be dealt with before another amendment is presented, or the motion is decided. An amendment to an amendment must be germane to the first amendment and cannot be amended.

11.7 All motions shall be subject to amendment except the following:

11.7.1 Motion that the question be now put;

11.7.2 Motion for adjournment of debate or adjournment of a meeting;

11.7.3 Motion to table unless such a motion contains a date for further consideration of the matter tabled;

11.7.4 Motion to refer to committee;

11.7.5 Motion to proceed to next business.

## 12. **Reconsideration and Rescind**

12.1 A motion that has been defeated at a previous meeting can be moved again at a subsequent meeting only if the mover had previously voted on the prevailing side.

12.2 Motions to rescind a motion previously adopted can be considered only if notice has been given at a previous meeting or in the call for the present meeting and if no action has been taken which it is too late to undo. Such motions are debatable. There is no time limit for these motions, and they can be moved by any member. A majority vote is required for approval.

## 7. **Debate**

13.1 Debate shall be strictly relevant to the motion before the meeting and no trustee shall speak for more than five (5) minutes at one time. The presiding officer shall warn speakers who violate this rule or who persist in tedious or repetitious debate.

13.2 Speakers shall be recognized by the chair and shall address all remarks to the chair.

13.3 Each trustee has the right to speak twice on the same question on the same day but cannot make a second speech if any trustee who has not spoken on that question desired to speak.

13.4 A point of privilege (a matter dealing with the rights or interests of the board as a whole or of a trustee personally), may be raised at any time and shall be dealt with forthwith before resumption of business.

13.5 No trustee shall interrupt another trustee who has the floor except to raise a point of order, a point of privilege, or to disclose a conflict of interest.

## 14. **Voting**

1.1 All trustees present at a meeting must vote on each issue unless they are in a conflict of interest or abstain.

1.2 If a trustee has a conflict of interest, they must abstain from voting and the quorum will not be affected.

- 1.3 Any declared conflicts of interest shall be recorded.
- 1.4 Voting shall be by show of hands unless otherwise provided in board policy.
- 1.5 All questions shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the trustees present and voting, save as otherwise provided for in Board Policy Handbook or the *School Act*.

## 2. Minutes

The board shall maintain and preserve by means of minutes a record of its proceedings and resolutions.

### 15.1 The minutes shall record:

- 2.1.1 Date, time and place of meeting;
- 2.1.2 Type of meeting (inaugural, regular or special);
- 2.1.3 Name of presiding officer;
- 2.1.4 Names of those trustees and administration in attendance;
- 2.1.5 Approval of preceding minutes;
- 2.1.6 Only motions will be recorded in the minutes. Preamble, rationale, or discussions will not be recorded in the minutes, unless directed by the board through resolution;
- 2.1.7 Points of order;
- 2.1.8 Appointments;
- 2.1.9 Recommended motions proposed by committees; and,
- 2.1.10 Trustee declaration pursuant to Section 56, 57 or 58 of the School Act.

### 2.2 The minutes shall:

- 2.2.1 Be prepared as directed by the superintendent;
- 2.2.2 Be considered an unofficial record of proceedings until such time as adopted by a resolution of the; and
- 2.2.3 Upon adoption by the board, be deemed to be the official and sole record of the board's business.

### 2.3 The superintendent shall ensure that, upon acceptance by the board, appropriate initials are appended to each page of the minutes, and that appropriate signatures and the corporate seal of the district are affixed to the concluding page of the minutes.

### 2.4 As part of its ongoing effort to keep staff and the public fully informed concerning its affairs and actions, the board directs the superintendent to institute and maintain effective and appropriate procedures for the prompt dissemination of information about decisions made at all board meetings.

### 2.5 The approved minutes of a regular or special meeting shall be posted to the website as soon as possible following approval. The superintendent is responsible to post the approved minutes.

- 2.6 Upon adoption by the board, the minutes of meetings other than Closed (in-camera) meetings shall be open to public scrutiny.

### **3. Correspondence**

- 1.1 Correspondence is at times sent to the board and at other times to individual trustees. Even when correspondence is addressed to an individual trustee the contents may be more appropriately addressed by the corporate board. Where correspondence is addressed to the board or its contents are more appropriately addressed by the corporate board the following processes shall be adhered to. The intended outcomes of these processes are: to ensure board correspondence is acknowledged in a timely fashion, the corporate board is aware of the public input provided and where required, a corporate response is provided in a timely manner.
- 1.1.1 Where non-routine correspondence is received that appears to require a formal board response, that correspondence shall be placed on the agenda of the next regular board meeting.
- 1.1.2 Where non-routine correspondence is received that does not appear to require a formal board response, that correspondence, together with any response issued by the superintendent, shall be circulated to the trustees.
- 1.1.3 Where an individual trustee receives correspondence that in the trustee's judgement is more appropriately a corporate board matter, the correspondence will be directed to the chair who will acknowledge the correspondence, and act in accordance with 16.1.1 or 16.1.2 above.

### **2. Audio/Video Recording Devices**

- 2.1 The board requires that anyone wanting to use recording devices at a public board meeting must obtain prior approval of the board chair. This shall be communicated by the board chair at the beginning of the Regular or Special Meeting.

### **3. Trustee Participation in Meetings through Electronic Means**

A Trustee may participate in a meeting of the board by electronic means or other communication facilities if the electronic means or other communication facilities enable the Trustees participating in the meeting and members of the public attending the meeting to hear each other.

- 3.1 Trustees participating in a meeting of the board by electronic means or other communication facilities are deemed to be present at the meeting.
- 3.2 The chair of the board may refuse to allow a Trustee to participate in a meeting by electronic means or other communication facilities where the required electronic equipment is not available or where Special meetings are held in private and or for the purpose of hearing appeals or conducting hearings related to employee matters, or any board matters which attract the principles of natural justice.

- 3.3 Notwithstanding the requirements of these procedures, a Trustee cannot attend more than three (3) consecutive Regular meetings of the board electronically without being authorized by resolution of the board to do so.
- 3.4 Trustees who connect to a meeting of the board by video conference, teleconference or other means of electronic transmission will be considered in attendance at the meeting and form part of the quorum.

#### 4. **Trustee Remuneration**

##### 4.1 *Recommendation*

4.1.1 Effective July 1, 2023, the following Trustee Remunerations will be in effect:

- a) Chair \$24,749
- b) Vice-Chair \$22,861
- c) \$21,523

4.1.2 Annual adjustments of trustee remuneration shall be made July 1 of each year, based on the BC Consumer Price Index (All Items) for the May-to-May comparison.

#### 5. **Trustee Expense Reimbursement**

Trustees shall use the prescribed trustee expense form when submitting expenses. This to be submitted to the secretary treasurer, board chair/vice chair for approval.

- 5.1 Reimbursement of expense rates for trustees shall be the same as provided to staff. Such expense rates shall be reviewed and if necessary, adjusted annually as part of the budget setting process.
- 5.2 Expense reimbursements for trustees representing the board on official business shall be handled as follows:

##### 5.2.1 Transportation

5.2.1.1 The board will pay the following:

- (a) **Fares:** All out-of-pocket transportation costs, with air fare being "economy class" where available.
- (b) **Taxis or bus:** Out-of-pocket expenses for taxis or bus to/from airport, hotel, train, etc.

- (c) **Kilometrage:** The maximum amount claimable at current provincial government rates, plus parking costs necessarily incurred.
- (d) **Ferries:** Car and passenger fares at cost.

Although it is practical to travel by air, trustees or approved employee out of district travel may travel by personal vehicle, provided vehicle kilometrage and incidentally related costs do not exceed economy air fare and associated ground transportation expenses.

#### 5.2.2 Meals

5.2.2.1 Each trustee will be reimbursed a per diem pursuant to the provincial government policy for Group 3 employees (refer to section 7 below).

5.2.2.2 This per diem includes gratuities and all other expenses such as dry cleaning, portage, and personal telephone calls.

#### 5.2.3 Accommodation

5.2.3.1 The board will reimburse each trustee for the actual cost of reasonable hotel accommodation. Where private accommodation is used, the current provincial rate in lieu of commercial accommodation amount \$25.00 per day may be claimed.

#### 5.2.4 Registration

5.2.4.1 The board will pay the travelling trustee any associated registration fees.

#### 5.2.5 Additional Allowances

5.2.5.1 In any case not provided for in this regulation, the board may approve by resolution the payment of a special allowance for a special cause.

#### 5.2.6 Form of Claim

5.2.6.1 Claims for reimbursement of expenses shall be made on the approved Travel & Expense Warrant—Trustees (Form 653), with receipts attached for other than kilometrage, per diem, and private accommodation.

#### 5.2.7 BC Provincial Government Travel Allowance

5.2.7.1 <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/all-employees/pay-and->

## 6. **Trustee Development Form**

Trustees shall use the prescribed trustee development form, to be submitted to the secretary treasurer and or board chair/vice-chair for approval.

Legal References: 50, 56, 57, 58, 59, 66-71, 71(1), 72 *School Act*  
Financial Disclosure Act  
Income Tax Act

Adopted: September 2019  
Updated: October 2021  
Updated: March 2023  
Updated: October 2023  
Updated: June 2026

## Board Committees

### PREAMBLE

The Board of Education is committed to effective governance, informed decision-making, and the efficient conduct of Board business. To support these objectives, the Board may establish committees to review matters within their mandate and provide recommendations for Board consideration.

Pursuant to the *British Columbia School Act*, section 65(1.2)(a), “may establish committees and specify the functions and duties of those committees”.

### POLICY STATEMENT

The primary purpose of all committees of the Board will be to act in an advisory capacity to the Board.

The Board will establish standing, ad hoc, and subcommittees, that will serve as the primary structure to conduct the work of the Board regarding education, policy, support services and audit in addition to other matters and issues within the Board’s area of responsibility.

The Board will hold its committee meetings in a separate, stand-alone format. Committees of the Board will not interfere with delegation of authority from Board to Superintendent. The Board will delegate authority and duties to committees subject to the restrictions on delegation in the School Act.

### DEFINITIONS

#### Standing Committee

A committee established by the Board on an ongoing basis to support the Board's governance responsibilities within a defined area of responsibility. Standing Committees continue from year to year until amended or dissolved by the Board. Examples: Education & Policy Committee, Audit Committee, and the Support Services Committee.

#### Ad Hoc Committee (non-standing)

A committee established by the Board for a specific purpose, project, issue, or task. Ad Hoc Committees cease to exist upon completion of their assigned mandate or by Board resolution. Ad Hoc Committees report directly to the Board. Subcommittees report to the committee that established them and do not normally report directly to the Board. Examples: Gender- based Violence Committee and Strategic Planning Committee.

#### Subcommittee

A committee established by and reporting to a Standing Committee or Ad Hoc Committee for the purpose of undertaking specific work within the committee's mandate. Subcommittees report to the parent committee and do not report directly to the Board unless directed otherwise. Example: Calendar Committee

## **OBJECTIVES**

The Board will:

- Establish committees to support effective governance, informed decision-making, and the efficient conduct of Board business.
- Provide for the establishment of committees with clearly defined purposes, responsibilities, membership, and reporting relationships.
- Support the Board through the review, discussion, and consideration of matters within the Board's mandate.
- Require committees to operate in an advisory capacity and provide recommendations for Board consideration.
- Maintain accountability by ensuring that authority for decision-making remains with the Board and that committee recommendations are subject to Board approval.
- Promote transparent and effective reporting of committee recommendations and activities to the Board.

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

- The Chair of the Board will recommend, and the Board will appoint committee Chairs and trustees as members of the committee.
- The Chair of the Board and Superintendent will be ex-officio members of all Board committees.

## **COMMITTEE PROCESS**

- The committee Chair may cancel regularly scheduled meetings for good and sufficient reason in consultation with the Board Chair.
- Staff will be assigned to each committee by the Superintendent or designate and will prepare the agenda in consultation with the committee Chair, distribute materials, and keep notes of each committee meeting.
- Committees will provide written reports to the Board on any matters discussed by the committee. Reports from committees will be prepared for the subsequent regular meeting of the Board of Education.
- The committee Chair will report the proceedings of the committee meeting back to the Board of Education.
- Committees will make recommendations to the Board in writing, with final wording agreed upon at the committee meeting. No recommendation of any committee will be binding on the Board until the action is formally approved by the Board.
- No committee will make recommendations when fewer than two appointed Trustee committee members are present.

## **STANDING COMMITTEES**

- The Board will approve the Standing Committee schedule on an annual basis and written notice will be provided at least three days prior for any unscheduled meetings.
- Standing Committees will have up to three representative trustees, as approved by the Board of Education.
- Any Trustee not assigned as a Standing Committee member may attend any Standing Committee meeting as a guest in order to participate in discussion or debate; however, only Trustee Standing Committee members will make recommendations to the Board.
- The following groups will be invited to appoint two representatives to participate in Standing Committee discussions: K'omoks First Nation, Indigenous Education Council (IEC); Comox District Teachers' Association (CDTA); CUPE Local 439; Comox Principals and Vice-Principals Association (CPVPA); Comox Valley District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC), and student representatives (where appropriate).
- All Standing Committee members and attendees are able to participate fully in discussion, however, only Trustees appointed to the Standing Committee will make recommendations to the Board.
- A trustee appointed to a Standing Committee that is unable to attend a Standing Committee meeting will discuss with the Standing Committee Chair an alternate trustee replacement to attend on their behalf.
- Individual Trustees may advance an item to a Board Standing Committee through formal motion to the Board, or, alternatively, may request that the Standing Committee Chair in discussion with the Superintendent or Secretary-Treasurer consider the item for the agenda.
- District staff may bring items forward to Standing Committee meetings for consideration and recommendation to the Board of Education.
- Standing Committee agendas and accompanying material will be distributed at least 48 hours before any meeting to all members of the Board, rightsholder and partner representatives.

### **Board Standing Committees**

#### *Education and Policy Committee*

The Education and Policy Committee will assist the Board in fulfilling its governance and oversight responsibilities and may consider matters pertaining to student achievement through:

- The provision of educational programs for students, including curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Student learning, including student support services and learning resources.
- Research on teaching and learning.
- Showcasing district programs and effective teaching practices.
- Periodically and systematically review Board policies and district administrative procedures related to district administration, educational programs, students, and community connections, with the intent of ensuring that policies and procedures remain useful, current and understandable.

- Recommendations for new and revised policy and administrative procedures related to district administration, educational programs, students, and community connections for Board approval.
- Other matters referred by the Board.

Staff Contact: Associate Superintendent

The committee will normally meet on the first Tuesday of every month from September to June.

### *Support Services Committee*

The Support Services Committee will assist the Board in fulfilling its governance and oversight responsibilities and may consider matters pertaining to student achievement through:

- Long-range facilities planning, capital planning, and school naming and closures.
- Enrollment projections, boundary reviews, transportation planning, and other operational matters requiring public consultation.
- Operating, special purpose, and capital budget development, review, and recommendations.
- Financial stewardship, including financial policies, risk management, compliance, financial reporting, and allocation of financial resources to support student learning, district priorities, and long-term sustainability.
- Business operations, financial services, information technology, facilities management, transportation, custodial services, and related support functions.
- At the request of the Board, review of Board policies and district administrative procedures related to support services and human resources with the intent of ensuring that policies and procedures remain useful, current, and understandable.
- Human resources issues excluding labor relations and other confidential personnel matters.
- Recommendations for new and revised policy and administrative procedures related to support services, and human resources for Board approval.
- Other matters referred by the Board.

Staff Contact: Secretary-Treasurer

The committee will normally meet on the second Tuesday of every month from September to June.

### *Audit Committee*

The Audit Committee will assist the Board in fulfilling its governance and oversight responsibilities and may consider matters pertaining to:

- Oversight of the District's system of internal controls, reporting processes, risk management practices, and integrity of financial accountability processes.

- Oversight of external audit activities, including the appointment, independence, performance, and recommendations of the external auditor.
- Review of the annual audited financial statements and related financial disclosures prior to Board approval.
- Oversight of any internal audit activities authorized by the Board.
- Monitoring compliance with applicable financial legislation, regulations, and Board policies.
- Reporting findings and recommendations to the Board.
- Review of auditor performance.
- Other specific audit responsibilities referred by the Board.

Staff Contact: Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

The committee will normally meet on a quarterly basis as determined by the committee Chair.

### **AD HOC COMMITTEES OR SUBCOMMITTEES (non-standing)**

The Board may establish non-standing committees to study, investigate, or report on specific matters.

- The Board will approve the purpose and terms of reference of non-standing committees before members of the committee are named, except when the Board asks the committee to recommend its own terms of reference for Board approval.
- The Board will determine a period within which these committees will present a report to the Board.
- The Board may appoint staff and community members whose knowledge, experience, or expertise may assist the committee in its work.
- Meeting dates, times, and locations may be established by the committee as required. To support committee work, the third Tuesday of each month from September through June has been reserved for this purpose.

Legal Reference: Sections 65, 85 School Act

Policy Reference: Board Procedural Bylaw  
Board Operations  
Role of the Board Chair  
Role of the Vice-Chair  
Role of the Trustee

Adopted: September 2019

Revised: June 2023

Revised: June 2026

### BOARD REPRESENTATIVES

In response to requests from external organizations or agencies, the board will give consideration to naming representatives to various external committees, agencies and organizations. Such representation is established at the discretion of the board to facilitate the exchange of information on matters of mutual concern and/or to discuss possible agreements between the district and other organizations.

The board will determine the terms of reference for each representative. The board shall be guided by the following principles when naming representatives to other organizations:

1. The board's decision-making role can be exercised only by the board as a whole at regular board meetings, not by an individual trustee, committee of the whole or other committees;
2. The board's function is governance, rather than administration;
3. Responsibilities placed on trustees are to be closely related to the board's central role as per Policy 2.

The superintendent may appoint resource personnel to work with the representative and shall determine the roles, responsibilities and reporting requirements of resource personnel.

The following organizations/committees will have board representation as identified normally at the annual Inaugural Meeting or alternatively at a subsequent meeting of the board.

#### External Committees

##### 1. **British Columbia School Trustees Association (BCSTA) Provincial Council**

###### 1.1 *Purpose of the Provincial Council*

- 1.1.1 Act as a forum for discussion of relevant, timely and emerging issues identified from individual Boards, BCSTA Board of Directors, Ministry of Education and other sources.
- 1.1.2 Discuss, and/or develop, policy issues for submission at the Annual General Meeting.
- 1.1.3 Establish interim policies of the Association between general meetings.
- 1.1.4 Address matters as outlined in BCSTA bylaws, including Association budget approval.
- 1.1.5 Act on action requests from BCSTA Board of Directors.

## 1.2 *Powers and Duties of the Board Representative*

- 1.2.1 Attend Provincial Council meetings.
- 1.2.2 Represent the board's positions and interests at the provincial level.
- 1.2.3 Communicate to the board the work of the Provincial Council.
- 1.2.4 Bring recommendations to the board as and when necessary.
- 1.2.5 Build positive relationships.

## 1.3 *Membership*

- 1.3.1 One (1) trustee; one (1) alternate.

## 1.4 *Meetings*

- 1.4.1 As called by Provincial Council. (Usually 3-4 per year, one (1) at the AGM)

# 2. **British Columbia Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA)**

## 2.1 *Purpose of the BCPSEA*

- 2.1.1 Act as the accredited bargaining agent for the BCSTA's members.
- 2.1.2 Assist in carrying out any objectives and strategic directions established by the Public Sector Employers' Council.
- 2.1.3 Coordinate collective bargaining objectives, benefit administration, human resource practices and out-of-scope compensation matters amongst members.

## 2.2 *Powers and Duties of the Board Representative*

- 2.2.1 Attend the BCPSEA meetings as required.
- 2.2.2 Represent the board's positions and interests at BCPSEA meetings.
- 2.2.3 Communicate to the board the work of BCPSEA.
- 2.2.4 Bring recommendations to the board as and when necessary.
- 2.2.5 Build positive relationships.

## 2.3 *Membership*

- 2.3.1 One (1) trustee; one (1) alternate.

## 2.4 *Meetings*

- 2.4.1 As called by BCPSEA.

# 3. **BCSTA Vancouver Island Branch**

## 3.1 *Purpose of the BCSTA Vancouver Island Branch*

- 3.1.1 Receive reports from the BCSTA Board of Directors.

- 3.1.2 Discuss and/or develop policy issues for submission at the Annual General Meeting.
- 3.1.3 Act as a forum for discussion of Vancouver Island Branch issues.
- 3.1.4 To provide trustee learning and development.

### 3.2 *Powers and Duties of the Board Representatives*

- 3.2.1 Attend BCSTA Vancouver Island Branch Committee Meeting; Branch Chairs Committee Meeting, Indigenous Education Representatives Meeting, Resolutions Committee Meeting, and Professional Learning Committee Meeting.
- 3.2.2 Represent the board's positions and interests at BCSTA Vancouver Island Branch meetings.
- 3.2.3 Communicate to the board the work of the BCSTA Vancouver Island Branch.
- 3.2.4 Bring recommendations to the board as and when necessary.
- 3.2.5 Build positive working relationships with other boards.

### 3.3 *Membership*

- 3.3.1 Any trustees may attend the Branch Meeting.

### 3.4 *Meetings*

- 3.4.1 Four (4) meetings per year or as called by VISTA as scheduled.

## 4. **Other Local Representation**

### 4.1 *Appointments:*

- 4.1.1 From time to time the board is invited to appoint representative(s) to committees or other entities external to the school district. Currently these include:
  - Indigenous Education Council
  - District Parent Advisory Council
  - Professional Development Committee
  - Teacher Mentorship / Peer Support Committee
  - District Calendar Committee
  - Indigenous Parent Club (IPAC)
  - Tribune Bay Outdoor Education Society
  - CVRD Comox Valley Sports Centre Commission
  - CVRD Integrated Regional Transportation Select Committee
  - Comox Valley Social Planning Society

### 4.2 *Purpose:*

- 4.2.1 The purpose of sending representatives to represent the board on such external committees or entities is to strengthen communication and understanding with the external organization

4.3 *Powers and duties of the representative is to:*

- 4.3.1 Represent the board's positions and interests. If no board position has been determined the representative will refrain from expressing a personal opinion and will seek a board position.
- 4.3.2 Communicate to the board the work of the external entity and any opportunities which may exist for mutual benefit involving the board and the entity.
- 4.3.3 Build positive relations between the entity and the board corporate

4.4 *Representatives:*

- 4.4.1 Normally one (1) representative

4.5 *Meetings:*

- 4.5.1 As determined by the external committee or entity

- 4.6 The board shall review annually the efficacy of continued board representation on such committees or entities.

**5. School Liaison Trustee Role**

The chair shall after consultation with individual trustees recommend School Liaison assignments and these shall be ratified by the board.

School liaison responsibilities shall not:

- 5.1 Inhibit or circumvent administrative authority or responsibility
- 5.2 Include any decision-making authority

Parent Advisory Councils as per section 8 of the *School Act* may advise the board and the principal and staff of a school. At the invitation of the PAC the school trustee liaison may attend the PAC meetings. If the Parent Advisory Council wishes to advise the board corporate, that advice is to be sent to the board.

The role of liaison trustee is to provide visual support for school activities including but not limited to athletic competitions, fine arts performances and displays, school celebrations, and recognition events. The role allows trustees to become knowledgeable of public school events while keeping manageable the time demands should there not be some limiting of expectations for board or trustee attendance at such public events.

Adopted: September 2019

### POLICY MAKING AND REVIEW

Policy development is a key responsibility of the board. Policies constitute the will of the board in determining how the district will be operated and communicate the board's values, beliefs and expectations. Policies provide direction and guidelines for the action of the board, superintendent, staff, students, electors and other agencies. Policies also serve as sources of information and guidelines to all who may be interested in or connected with the operation of the district. Adoption of new board policies or revision of existing policies is solely the responsibility of the board.

The board shall be guided in its approach to policy making by ensuring adherence to the requirements necessary to provide public education and compliance with the *School Act* and provincial as well as federal legislation.

Board policies shall provide an appropriate balance between the responsibility of the board to develop the broad guidelines to guide the district and the opportunity for the superintendent to exercise professional judgment in the administration of the district.

The board may choose to utilize the Policy Committee in the closed Committee of the Whole in carrying out its policy role.

The board believes in the establishment and review of policy which reflects its values and perspectives.

The board shall adhere to the following stages in its approach to policy making:

- 1. Planning**

The board, in cooperation with the superintendent, shall assess the need for a policy, as a result of its own monitoring activities or on the suggestion of others, and identify the critical attributes of each policy to be developed.

- 2. Development**

The board may develop the policy itself or delegate the responsibility for its development to the superintendent.

- 3. Implementation**

The board is responsible for the implementation of policies governing its own processes. The board and superintendent share the responsibility for implementation of policies relating to the board / superintendent relationship. The superintendent is responsible for the implementation of the other policies.

- 4. Evaluation**

The board, in cooperation with the superintendent, shall evaluate each policy in a timely manner in order to determine if it is meeting its intended purpose. The board shall review its policies following a schedule that results in all policies in the Board Policy Handbook being reviewed at least once in a board term of office.

### **Specifically**

1. Any trustee, employee, parent, student or other community member may make suggestions regarding the possible development of a policy or the need for policy revisions on any matter by presenting a proposal for a policy or revisions, in writing, to the superintendent. The proposal shall contain a brief statement of purpose or rationale.
2. The superintendent will inform the board of the request for policy development/revision. The board will determine the action to be taken including the option of referring the matter to the Policy Committee agenda of the Committee of the Whole.
3. When appropriate, the superintendent shall seek legal advice on any policy matter.
4. Policy drafts shall be brought by the Committee of the Whole to the board for consideration and possible approval.
5. The board will determine whether further information or consultation is required.
6. If further consultation is required, comments and suggestions on the policy draft will be reviewed by the superintendent and the board.
7. Once comments have been considered and any information needs satisfied (if so determined), the policy will be recommended to the board for approval.
8. Only those policies which are adopted and recorded in the minutes constitute the official policies of the board.
9. In the absence of existing policy, the board may make decisions, by resolution, on matters affecting the administration, management and operation of the district. Such decisions carry the weight of policy until such time as specific written policy is developed.
10. If the board adopts a motion which has continuing applicability the board shall seek means to include the direction of such motion as part of an existing policy or to develop a free-standing policy to reflect the direction contained in the motion.
11. The board may request the superintendent to change an administrative procedure to a draft board policy and will in such an instance provide the rationale for same.
12. The superintendent shall develop administrative procedures as specified in Policy 11 – Board Delegation of Authority and may develop such other procedures as deemed necessary for the effective operation of the district.
13. The board may also delete a policy and subsequently delegate the superintendent authority over this area. The superintendent may choose to then develop an administrative procedure relative to this matter.

14. The superintendent must inform the board of any substantive changes to administrative procedures as an information item in a board agenda.
15. The superintendent shall arrange for all board policies and administrative procedures and subsequent revisions to be posted on the district's website, in a timely manner, for staff and public access.
16. The board shall review and revise its policies on a rotational basis which provides for all policies being reviewed at least once per term of office.

Legal Reference      Sections 65, 74, 85 *School Act*

Adopted: September 2019

## Delegation of Board Authority

### PREAMBLE

The BC *School Act* requires Boards of Education to appoint a Superintendent of Schools and CEO for the school district. The Board delegates the operational responsibilities and authority to the Superintendent to oversee and coordinate the effective administration and educational programs of the District.

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to do any act or thing or to exercise any power that the Board may do, or is required to do, or may exercise, except those matters which, in accordance with provincial legislation, cannot be delegated.

Notwithstanding the above, the Board reserves to itself the authority to make decisions on specific matters requiring Board approval. This reserved authority of the Board is set out in Board policies, as amended from time to time.

Further, the Board requires that any significant new provincial, regional or local initiatives must be initially brought to the Board for discussion and determination of decision-making authority.

### OBJECTIVES

- Clarify the authority delegated by the Board to the Superintendent.
- Support effective, efficient, and legally compliant district administration.
- Distinguish between matters delegated to the Superintendent and matters reserved for Board decision.
- Ensure significant new initiatives are brought to the Board for discussion and determination of decision-making authority.
- Confirm the Superintendent's authority to establish Administrative Procedures and sub-delegate responsibilities as required.

### DELEGATED AUTHORITIES

The Board expressly delegates to the Superintendent, the authority to discipline, suspend or dismiss an employee, subject to the limitations of legislation, collective or contractual agreements and Board policy. Any suspensions or dismissals will be reported to the Board as soon as practicable.

The Superintendent is directed to develop administrative procedures to fulfill Board obligations created by any federal or provincial legislation and in keeping with board-developed policy.

Delegation includes the ability to “sub-delegate” this authority and responsibility as required.

Legal Reference(s):      School Act (S. 22, 65(2)c, 74, and 85)

Adopted:                  September 2019  
August 2026

## Role of the Superintendent

### PREAMBLE

The Board of Education recognizes the need for one (1) person to oversee the management of the District to provide coordinated leadership and designates the Superintendent of Schools as the CEO of the District. All Board authority delegated to the staff of the District is delegated through the Superintendent. The Superintendent reports directly to the Board of Education and is accountable to the Board for the conduct and operation of the District.

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Education designates the Superintendent responsible for overall effective administration and educational programs of the District.

The Superintendent ensures that leadership in the District is consistent with the vision, purpose, values, and strategic direction of the Board and all Board authority delegated to staff in the District is delegated through the Superintendent.

### OBJECTIVES

#### Educational Leadership

- Provides leadership in all matters relating to education in the District.
- Implement education policies, curriculum, instruction, and assessment established by the Minister and the Board of Education.
- Ensure that students in the District have the opportunity to meet or exceed the standards of education set by the Minister.
- Ensures that learning environments contribute to the development of skills and habits necessary for the world of work, post-secondary studies, life-long learning, and positive citizenship.
- Report annually on student results achieved.

#### Student Well-Being

- Ensure that students are provided with a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment that is free from discrimination (of any kind) and that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviour.
- Ensures that learning environments contribute to the development of skills, knowledge, and habits necessary for the world of work, post-secondary studies, life-long learning, and meaningful engagement in civic and community life.
- Ensures the safety and welfare of students while participating in school programs or while being transported to or from school programs on transportation provided by the District.
- Ensures the facilities adequately accommodate District students.

#### Fiscal Responsibility

- Ensures the fiscal management of the District by the Secretary-Treasurer is in accordance with the terms or conditions of any funding received by the Board under the School Act or any other Act or regulation.

- Ensures the District operates in a fiscally responsible manner, including adherence to recognized accounting procedures.
- Oversees the work of the Secretary-Treasurer in preparing and presenting a budget which reflects the Board's strategic plan priorities.
- Ensures the Board has timely, accurate, and relevant financial information.

#### Personnel Management

- Has overall authority and responsibility for all personnel-related matters, except the mandates for collective bargaining and those personnel matters precluded by legislation, collective agreements, or Board policy.
- Promotes at all times a high standard of collaborative professional leadership, effective human relationships and a spirit of educational innovation and advancement throughout the District.
- Provides leadership in the supervision and evaluation of principals/vice-principals, teachers, and other staff, with the intent of improving performance.
- Establishes organizational roles for staff and arranges the employment of staff necessary to conduct the affairs of the District.

#### Policy/Administrative Procedures

- Provides support to the Board regarding the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of Board policies.
- Develops, maintains, and communicates Administrative Procedures that are consistent with Board and provincial policies, regulations, and procedures.

#### Superintendent/Board Relations

- Establishes and maintains positive, professional working relations with the Board.
- Respects and honors the Board's role and responsibilities and facilitates the implementation of that role as defined in Board policy.
- Provides the information and counsel which the Board requires to perform its role.
- Attends all Board meetings and makes recommendations on matters requiring Board action by providing accurate information and reports as needed to ensure the making of informed decisions.

#### Strategic Planning and Reporting

- Leads the development and implementation of the strategic planning process.
- Involves the Board appropriately and collaboratively in the development of the Board's Strategic Plan (Board identification of priorities and key results, and final Board approval of the plan).
- Develop metrics to assess progress on the Strategic Plan and report annually on results.

#### Organizational Management

- Demonstrates effective organization skills resulting in District compliance with all legal, Ministerial, and Board mandates and timelines.
- Builds an organizational structure and promotes a District culture which facilitates positive results, effectively manages emergencies and crisis situations in a team-oriented, collaborative, and cohesive manner.

#### Communications and Community Connections

- Takes action to ensure open, transparent, positive internal and external communications are developed and maintained.
- Ensures that parents and students have a high level of satisfaction with the services provided and responsiveness of the District.
- Maintains effective relationships within the District and community served by the District, including Indigenous communities and Rights Holders.
- Acts as, or designates, the head of the organization for purposes of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- In consultation with the Board Chair, serves as a spokesperson for the District for the media and public to ensure consistent and accurate District messages.

#### Leadership Practices

- Practices Leadership in a manner that is viewed positively and has the support of those with whom the Superintendent works most directly in carrying out the directives of the Board and the Minister.
- Develops and maintains positive and effective relationships with provincial and municipal governments, external agencies, and provincial organizations.

Legal Reference(s):      British Columbia School Act (S.22, 85)

Adopted:                  September 2019

Revised:                  December 2020

Revised:                  August 2026

### PERMANENT SCHOOL CLOSURE

A school may be identified for potential closure when an analysis indicates that the closure is worth considering from a demographic, fiscal, or educational perspective. When a school will potentially be closed, the Board of Education will provide a minimum of 60-days for the consultation process relating to the specific schools proposed for closure.

#### Public Board Meeting

Any proposed closure of a school will first be raised at a regular open meeting of the board. If a school is identified for closure, the closure process shall be guided by a Consolidation Working Committee which shall be formed at least 60-days prior to a final decision on school closure. The superintendent of schools will form a committee that will develop timelines for consultation.

The superintendent will invite participation from:

1. the secretary treasurer (or designate);
2. trustees;
3. the principal of the school being considered for closure;
4. another school principal;
5. district staff members as appropriate;
6. two (2) representatives from the school staff;
7. three (3) members of the school PAC;
8. one (1) representative from each of the CDTA, CUPE, and DPAC;
9. one (1) representative from the Indigenous Educational Council;
10. one (1) representative from each affected municipality; and
11. others as appropriate.

The committee's terms of reference shall include:

1. An analysis of demographic trends, facility status, and other relevant data related to the school being considered for closure;
2. Analysis of information presented at public meetings and a summary of information gathered and presented through community and municipal input;
3. Analysis of educational and fiscal implications of the proposed closure/consolidation; and
4. The preparation of a final report to the superintendent that includes recommendations. The recommendations shall include items for the superintendent to consider if the closure proceeds as considered.

#### Public Consultation

Public consultation will be undertaken by the board prior to making a final decision on any proposed closure of a school. The board will take the following steps to ensure that an open and meaningful public consultation has taken place:

1. Make available, in writing, a full disclosure of all facts and information considered by the board with respect to any proposed school closure, including but not limited to:  
detailed reasons for the proposed school closure;
  - 1.1 which specific school(s) are being considered for closure;
  - 1.2 the proposed new catchment areas for all schools proposed to be affected;
  - 1.3 the number of students who would be affected, at the school(s) being considered for closure as well as surrounding school(s);
  - 1.4 the effect of proposed closures on board-provided student transportation;
  - 1.5 educational program/course implications for the affected students;
  - 1.6 the proposed effective date of the closure(s);
  - 1.7 financial considerations, and
  - 1.8 impact on the board's five (5) year capital plan.
2. Provide an adequate opportunity for affected persons to submit a written response to any proposed school closure as well as providing information and directions on how to submit a written response to the board. The information and directions shall advise potential correspondents that their written response may be referred to at subsequent public forums respecting the closure, unless the correspondent specifically states in their written response that the correspondent wishes his or her name and address to remain confidential.
3. Hold at least one (1) public meeting to discuss the proposed closure, summarize written submissions, and provide a process for the community to outline their concerns and proposed options.

The public consultation process must include:

- 3.1 A fair consideration of the community's input and adequate opportunity for the community to respond to a board's proposal to close the school permanently;
- 3.2 Consideration of future enrolment growth in the district of persons of school age, persons of less than school age and adults; and
- 3.3 Consideration of possible alternative community use for all or part of the school.

## **Public Meeting**

The time and place of the public meeting shall be appropriately advertised to ensure adequate advance notification to affected persons in the community. Generally, this will mean a letter to students and parents of students currently attending the school, and a clearly visible notice in a local newspaper and notification on the district and school web page.

The board shall also specifically notify, in writing, any potentially affected local governments and First Nations of the time and place of the public meeting.

### **Meeting Format**

The meeting will be organized to have attendees seated at tables of ten to twelve (10-12) participants. Each table will have a facilitator to discuss and overview the following:

1. implications of the closure
2. implementation plans, including timing of the closure
3. options that the board considered as alternatives to closure;
4. possible future community growth in the area of the school; and
5. contents of written submissions presented to the board by members of the community.

At the conclusion of the group discussions facilitators will report back the information collected from the discussion group to all those in attendance. Information collected from the group discussions will form part of the meeting minutes.

The board shall keep minutes of the public meeting that include a record of options suggested or concerns expressed about the proposal.

Following the public meeting, the board shall give fair consideration to all public input prior to making its final decision with respect to any proposed school closures.

### **Final Decision**

At the conclusion of the consultation process and after receiving the reports from each of the working committees of the schools considered for closure, the superintendent will provide a report to the board on the consultation process and the schools considered for closure.

The report to the board will identify the issues to be considered and will include recommendation(s) on whether or not to proceed with the closures as proposed. The report shall also include items for the board to consider regardless of the final decision on closures.

The board will make its final decision regarding the proposed school closure at an advertised public board meeting following the consultation process and receipt of the superintendent's report.

Legal Reference: Sections 73, 168(2)(p), 85, *School Act*  
School Opening and Closure Order M320-02  
Disposal of Land or Improvement Order M233/07

Adopted: September 2019

### **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF PERSONNEL**

The board believes strong leadership and administration at the district and school levels are essential to the effective and efficient operation of the school system.

#### **Specifically**

1. Any changes to the organizational structure shall be approved by the board prior to the commencement of recruitment and selection processes commence.

#### **Superintendent**

2. The board, in the case of the superintendent, or the superintendent, in all other instances, shall have sole responsibility for initiating the advertising process and shall make reasonable effort to ensure that all current district employees are made aware of staff vacancies.
3. The board has the sole authority to recruit and select an individual for the position of superintendent and anyone who is expected to act in the place of the superintendent for a period in excess of one hundred and eighty (180) days.
4. In order to protect the board from sudden loss of the superintendent's services, the superintendent shall ensure that staff are designated to perform the services of the superintendent in the case of a short-term or prolonged absence, and that the chair is advised of the delegation.

#### **Non-School Based Positions**

5. The following process shall be followed for the following senior district management positions Assistant superintendent and secretary treasurer positions:
  - 5.1 The superintendent is delegated full authority to recruit and select senior staff and district management positions within the limitations of legislation, budget allocations and collective agreements.
  - 5.2 The superintendent shall engage in a consultative process in order to assist in the development of an ideal candidate profile.
  - 5.3 These positions shall have a written role description and the person occupying each of the positions shall have a written contract of employment consistent with the board approved template contract.
  - 5.4 Compensation will be determined based on BCPSEA compensation guidelines.

- 5.5 The superintendent shall invite trustees to sit on the interview panel for these positions. The authority to select the successful candidate, however is that of the superintendent alone.
6. The superintendent is delegated full authority to recruit and select staff for all other non-school based positions within the limitations of legislation, budget allocations, contracts and collective agreements.

### **Principal and Vice-Principal Positions**

7. At the discretion of the superintendent and within the constraints of this policy, principal or vice-principal vacancies shall be filled through either: Principal and Vice-Principal mobility, selection from the Vice-principal hiring pool; or through competition for a posted vacancy.
8. *Principal and Vice-Principal Mobility*
  - 8.1 The Board of Education believes that changes in Principal and Vice-Principal assignments can be positive for professional growth and the strengthening of system leadership.
  - 8.2 The superintendent is delegated authority for determining such changes in assignment.
  - 8.3 Consideration for transfer may be initiated at the request of either the principal or the superintendent. Normally, such consideration shall be given after the principal has held an appointment for a reasonable period of time, and there is value to be gained by a transfer.
  - 8.4 Once mobility transfers have been completed the superintendent shall inform the board of these new assignments.
9. *Vice Principal Hiring Pool*
  - 9.1 The district shall maintain a Vice-Principal. (District Eligible Administrator Pool (DEAP).
  - 9.2 Internal applicants may remain in the pool for two (2) years. External applicants remain in the pool for one (1) year. After one (1) year, the external applicants are reviewed and their references checked. Positive references may allow external applicants to remain in the eligibility pool for a second year.
10. *Competition for a Posted Vacancy for Principal of Vice-Principal Positions*
  - 10.1 The superintendent is delegated full authority for all aspects of the selection processes for the positions of Principal and Vice-Principal except as otherwise provided for in this policy. This delegated authority includes but is not restricted to: establishing and carrying out a consultation process, recruitment, advertising, reviewing applications, short-listing, developing interview processes, communications with candidates, chairing the interview process including directing the questions to the candidates and facilitating the panel's review of short-listed

candidates, determining the preferred candidate, making the appointment, and ensuring appropriate contractual arrangements.

### **All Other School-Based Positions**

11. The superintendent is delegated full authority to recruit, select, assign and reassign staff for all school-based positions, within the limitations of legislation, budget allocations, contracts and collective agreements.
12. The superintendent is delegated full authority to recruit and select staff for all other staff positions, within the limitations of legislation, budget allocations and collective agreements.
13. All offers of employment shall be conditional on the successful applicant providing a criminal records check acceptable to the superintendent or one provided through the Criminal Records Review Program (Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General).

Legal Reference: Sections 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 65, 85 *School Act*

Adopted: September 2019

### INDEMNIFICATION BYLAW

It is in the interest of a responsive and efficient public service that trustees, officers and employees be protected against a claim of damages arising out of the performance of their duties. None of these individuals shall be placed in a position of personal liability for the performance of responsibilities vested in them by the *School Act* or assigned to them by the board.

#### By-Law:

1. **The board will indemnify a trustee, an officer or an employee of the board**
  - 1.1 Against a claim for damages against the trustee, officer or employee arising out of performance of their duties; or
  - 1.2 Where an inquiry under Part 2 of the *Inquiry Act* or other proceeding involves the administration and conduct of the business of the School District and, in addition, the board may pay legal costs incurred in proceedings arising out of the claim, inquiry or other proceeding.
2. The board may, by affirmative vote of a majority of its members, pay:
  - 2.1 Any sum required to indemnify a trustee, an officer or an employee of the board where a prosecution arises out of the performance of their duties with the board; and
  - 2.2 Costs necessarily incurred;

But the board shall not pay a fine imposed on a trustee, an officer or an employee as a result of their conviction.
3. The board shall not seek indemnity against a trustee, an officer or an employee of the board in respect of any action by the trustee, officer or employee that results in a claim for damages against the board except
  - 3.1 Where the claim for damages arises out of the gross negligence of the trustee, officer or employee; or
  - 3.2 Where, in relation to the action that gave rise to a claim for damages against an officer or employee, the officer or employee willfully acted contrary to:
    - 3.2.1 The terms of their employment, or
    - 3.2.2 An order of a superior.

4. The board's obligation to indemnify a trustee, an officer or an employee in respect of matters occurring during their term of office or employment shall continue, notwithstanding that the term of office or employment, as the case may be, has ended.
5. Where the board decides to pay legal costs incurred in proceedings out of a claim, inquiry under Part II of the *Inquiry Act* or other proceedings, the board has the right to conduct the defense of the matter and, in its discretion, to compromise and/or settle the claim.
6. The board shall not indemnify a trustee, officer or employee against:
  - 6.1 Liability and legal fees incurred as a result of an action or other proceeding taken by the board against the trustee, officer or employee, or as a result of an action or proceeding taken by the trustee, officer or employee against the board;
  - 6.2 Liability to pay a fine, penalty or order imposed as a result of the conviction for an offence;
  - 6.3 Legal fees incurred as a result of a prosecution where the trustee, officer or employee is convicted of an offence or obtains a conditional discharge;
  - 6.4 Legal fees incurred in an appeal of any conviction, sentence, judgment or order, unless the board, by an affirmative vote of a majority of its members, so agrees;
  - 6.5 Liability and legal fees incurred by a trustee where the Court determines that the trustee knowingly contravened the *School Act*;
  - 6.6 Liability incurred by a trustee, officer or employee where the Court determined that the trustee, officer or employee knowingly permitted or authorized an expenditure not authorized by an enactment;
  - 6.7 Liability incurred by a trustee as a result of any restitution ordered pursuant to Section 62 of the *School Act*; and
  - 6.8 Those matters for which the board may seek indemnity from an employee pursuant to its authority under Section 95 of the *School Act*.
7. The board may enter into individual indemnity agreements with its officers and employees not inconsistent with provisions of the *School Act*.

Legal Reference: Section 95, *School Act*

Adopted: September 2019

### **SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY (SOGI)**

The Board of Education recognizes and values the diversity found within its school communities and believes that each individual contributes to the strength of the district's culture. The board recognizes that each member of the school and district community must share the responsibility for supporting all students and employees in addressing and facing challenges and that the district is responsible for providing an educational system that is safe, welcoming, inclusive and affirming for all.

All members of the school district have the right to expect that its policies, procedures, and communications are inclusive and respectful, taking into consideration visible and invisible diversities including but not limited to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, religion, ability, culture and socioeconomic status.

The Board of Education will strive to promote safe environments, free from fear, harassment and discrimination by adhering to a code of conduct that is educative, preventative and restorative in practice and response; will foster school cultures that are responsive to the diverse needs of individuals and groups; will recognize the injustices of marginalization, advocate for social justice and promote human rights as defined in the B.C. Human Rights Code and Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and will participate in the ongoing development of practices that promote fair and equitable treatment for all, cultivating mutual respect, civility and sense of belonging.

The board will not permit, encourage, nor tolerate any behaviours contrary to these beliefs whether by commission or by failing to act to bring such behaviours to an end and by providing support and assistance to those who may be intended or unintended targets of such behaviours.

#### **Statement of Intent**

The Board of Education will promote a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination, and pro-active strategies and guidelines to ensure that lesbian, gay, transgender, two spirit, bisexual, queer and questioning (2SLGBTQ+) students, employees and families are welcome, included, and affirmed in all aspects of education and school life and treated with respect and dignity. This includes acknowledging individual preferences around privacy and individual ownership of process. This policy will ensure that all programs, activities and interactions are free from discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define appropriate language, behaviours and actions in order to create an environment free from discrimination and harassment;
- develop, promote and implement respectful, proactive strategies and guidelines to ensure that 2SLGBTQ+ members of the education community and their families are

welcome in, and included in all aspects of education and school life and are treated with respect and dignity; and to

- ensure that complaints about homophobia and transphobia are taken seriously and dealt with expeditiously and effectively through collaboration with the impacted person and in line with policy and procedures.

## **General Guidelines**

When considering aspects of this document, it is important to keep in mind that gender is fluid and not binary. It is important to create an environment in which individuals have the knowledge, freedom, safety and support to make the right choices for themselves at the right time for themselves.

The school district has an obligation to ensure that members of the school community who are 2SLGBTQ+, and members of diverse family structures are respected, included and safe in the school communities and related activities.

## **Safety**

1. Homophobic and transphobic comments, discrimination, and bullying are demeaning to all students, students' parents or guardians, and employees regardless of their actual and perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. These forms of harassment and discrimination are prohibited under the B.C. Human Rights Code.
2. Any language or behaviour that deliberately degrades, denigrates, incites hatred, prejudice, discrimination, or harassment towards students or employees on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation or perceived gender identification will not be tolerated. Schools shall include the prohibition of such language and behaviour in their student codes of conduct.
3. All employees have an obligation to intervene in any interaction involving the use of homophobic or transphobic epithets and slurs, and behaviours regardless of the speaker's intentions, and to convey that such comments are against Board policy and will not be tolerated in the educational community.

## **Belief Statements**

School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) accepts the responsibility to create safe and caring environments and believes that:

1. the district is responsible for ensuring that school cultures are safe, welcoming, inclusive, and affirming for 2SLGBTQ+ people;
2. the role of educators in the district is critical in creating positive societal change to address the difficulties that 2SLGBTQ+ people often face;
3. 2SLGBTQ+ students and same-gender parented families have a right to be recognized and affirmed by school personnel and have equal access to services as do opposite-

gender parented families;

4. 2SLGBTQ+ students, staff and same gender-parented families have the right to:
  - be free from harassment, discrimination and violence;
  - be treated fairly, equitably and with dignity;
  - self-identification and freedom of expression;
  - be included and to be represented and affirmed in a positive and respectful manner;
  - have avenues of recourse (without fear of reprisal) available to them when they are impacted by harassment, discrimination, and violence; and
  - have their families and communities valued and affirmed.
5. a role of education is to prepare young people to work and live in open, pluralistic and democratic societies, free of discrimination or violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression;
6. equity through education will foster principles of inclusion and will support 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and families through eliminating homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism and cisgenderism as they operate in the school system and school culture; and that
7. the initiation of comprehensive anti-homophobia and anti-transphobia initiatives support equity for 2SLGBTQ+ students and educate our staff and community about homophobic and transphobic language and bullying.

## **Leadership**

As leaders of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley), the Board of Education and senior management shall jointly ensure that all staff know it is their individual and collective responsibility to identify individual discriminatory attitudes and behaviours, as well as work to eliminate the systemic inequities and barriers to learning for students who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and demonstrate accountability for the removal of these inequities and barriers so that all students and employees are treated with fairness and respect.

All administrators, teachers, counsellors, and staff and student leaders will model respect for 2SLGBTQ+ employees, students and families and recognize that transition is not an event but a process that belongs to the individual that is transitioning. This recognition includes the understanding that no person shall be “outed”. Communication about an individual’s identity, transition or sexual orientation shall only be personal initiative.

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

All persons have the right to privacy. This includes the right to have one’s gender identity and sex assigned at birth, and sexual orientation private at school and worksites. Disclosing this information to students, parents, or other third parties violates privacy laws, such as the *Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA) and the B.C. Human Rights Code. The district will ensure that all information relating to an individual’s sexual orientation and gender identity will be kept confidential in accordance with applicable district, municipal, provincial and federal policies and privacy laws, unless legally required to do so, or the

student/parent or guardian has authorized such disclosure through the use of the district's release of information form.

All persons have the right to discuss and express their gender identity and expression openly and to decide when and how much private information to share and with whom. Those decisions need to be respected by school personnel. An individual shall determine the name and pronouns used to refer to themselves in all communications including when school personnel contact parents or guardians.

Schools must balance the parents' or guardians' need to be informed about their child's school experiences with individual's right to live freely in their self-identified gender and sexual orientation. This can be complicated when there is a responsibility to communicate with the parent or guardian about any situation at school directly related to an individual's gender identity and sexual orientation. In general, the older the student, the more ownership they should have in this process. School personnel should err on the side of using the individual's preferred name and pronoun to protect the individual's privacy and human rights.

Situations arising at school may make it difficult or impossible for the school to keep an individual's status from parents or guardians. Schools can, in consultation with the individual, work with trained support providers to formally reveal the individual's gender identity to the parent or guardian in the relatively safe confines of the school. It is important to address all the potential consequences of this approach by consulting with and/or working with trained personnel familiar with such situations, while respecting that the process is owned by the individual. Ensure that support services can be accessed if it becomes evident that the individual is no longer safe to return home after the meeting. Privacy concerns are not a reason to prevent an individual from living as their self-identified gender. Issues of confidentiality vs open, respectful discussion must be handled on an individual basis. Individuals who choose to be open about their gender identity, will be addressed by their chosen names and pronouns. Denying this is a violation of their rights to free expression and equal protection under the law.

### **Self-Identification**

Every individual has the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun of their choice. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required, and the individual does not need to change their official records. When an individual has communicated their choices, it is the obligation of school personnel to use the chosen name and pronouns.

Schools are required, by law, to maintain a mandatory permanent record card which includes each students' legal name and legal sex, yet have a great deal of latitude in how they handle student records in the day-to-day operations of the school. MyEd BC includes the ability for the identification of "preferred name" and "preferred gender", and in turn using the preferred name to populate any internally generated records such as:

- class;
- Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) or photographer's lists;
- attendance sheets;
- report cards;
- diplomas;
- sibling records;
- student identification; and

- parent notifications.

For situations where a student's legal name must be used, such as provincial assessments, schools have utilized "hand coding" to help preserve a student's desired identification.

## **Official Records**

Schools will maintain a mandatory permanent student record that includes a student's legal name and legal sex. The school will change a student's official record to reflect a change in legal name or sex upon receipt of documentation to which such change has been made by court order, or through amendment of provincial or federally issued identification. In situations where school staff or administrators are required by law to use or to report a transgender student's legal name or legal sex, such as for the purposes of standardized testing, school staff and administrators will adopt practices to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of such confidential information.

## **Washrooms, Locker and Change Rooms**

All individuals have the right to safe and private washroom and changing facilities. They have the right to access washrooms, locker rooms and changing facilities that correspond to their gender identity. The individual's self-identification is the sole measure of the individual's gender. Schools may maintain separate washrooms, locker rooms or changing facilities for males and females, provided that individuals can access them based on their gender identity. Schools will designate gender-neutral facilities designed for use by one person at a time, accessible to all individuals, and to incorporate such single-use facilities into new construction or renovation. Any individuals who is uncomfortable using a shared facility while attending an off-site school-sponsored activity will be provided with a safe and private alternative. Individuals will not be required to use facilities that are inconsistent with their gender identity or personal needs.

## **Physical Education Classes, Curricular and Extra Curricular Activities**

All students have the right to participate in physical education classes, curricular and extra-curricular sports/activities in a manner that respects and embraces their gender identity. Student's will be given the option to decide which activities they feel more comfortable doing. A request may come directly from the student or from a parent or guardian. It is the school administrator's responsibility to make the requested arrangements for these students to participate in school and extra-curricular activities and physical education. All requests/meetings/ decisions must be documented and maintained in a confidential file.

## **Other Gender-Based Activities, Rules and Practices**

School personnel are required to evaluate all gender-based procedures, routines, activities, rules, and ceremonies to ensure inclusive language and purpose. Language used should be as gender neutral as possible in all cases. Newly written guidelines must be communicated to all staff, parents and students. Individuals have the right to expect that all policies, procedures, programs, and communications are appropriate, competent and respectful of gender diversity. Students will be permitted to participate in any activities consistent with their gender identity.

## **Billeting and Overnight Field Trips**

Plans for billeting for sports teams and/or overnight school-based activities must provide accommodation for each student in a room where they will feel safe and accepted. The student can decide where they would feel most comfortable if they are staying in shared accommodations with other students and/or families. The school administrator or teacher in charge of the event will make any needed adjustments to support the student. When staying with a billet family discuss with the student or their parent or guardian whether the student requires the billet family to be informed of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Wherever possible, in a billet situation, a member of staff should be billeted along with the student to further ensure their feelings of safety.

## **Media and Community Communication**

When the school district is communicating to the media or community about issues related to sexual orientation or gender identity, the school or district will designate a single spokesperson as the key contact person. All other district and school staff will direct community members and the media to the designated spokesperson. Protecting the privacy of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals is the top priority. All medical information is kept strictly confidential. Any violation of confidentiality of this information contravenes this administrative procedure and the privacy law *Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA).

## **Student Counselling and Support**

School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) is committed to maintaining a safe learning and working environment which actively provides counselling and support to individuals who self-identify on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. School Counsellors and Youth and Family Support Workers are often the first point of contact for students seeking emotional support and will be specifically trained in culturally safe responses to 2SLGBTQ+ issues. School administrators have the primary responsibility for ensuring that all school staff, Parent Advisory Committees (PAC) and students are familiar with and understand the content of the Inclusion Policy and these procedures. The Board of Education is responsible for ensuring that employees who represent the district in other areas are equally as informed. Students can report incidents of harassment, bullying, intimidation and discrimination through the ERASE Bullying Website. Information regarding the website is available through the school administration. The district encourages and will facilitate in the formation of Gay-Straight Alliance and Gender-Sexuality Alliance clubs (GSAs) where students or staff have come forward requesting this opportunity. Schools are encouraged to appoint a minimum of two (2) members of staff to be safe contacts for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. School administrators will inform students and other staff about the location and availability of these contact person.

## **Staff Development and Education**

Education is the primary purpose of the district. Educational programs will include curricular topics and learning resources that promote the inclusion of all members of our community regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. In addition, staff will have resources and training available to help teach and promote the safe, caring and inclusive values of the district. Schools will conduct annual staff training for all staff members on their responsibilities under applicable laws, policies and administrative procedures. This will include teachers, educational assistants, administrators, counsellors and youth and family workers, and other staff as deemed necessary. Information regarding this administrative procedure shall be incorporated into information sessions for new school employees. All staff share the collective responsibility of

creating safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environments for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and their families.

Educators, Administrators, and school support staff will be expected to:

- be familiar with and know where to access the SOGI policy and prevention procedures;
- have a general understanding of definitions regarding sexual orientation and gender identity;
- develop appropriate communication strategies to interact with 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and their families;
- fully understand the concepts of protection of privacy for individuals and their families;
- be aware of strategies and procedures for intervening with issues, such as bullying, harassment and intimidation and/or discrimination, and have access to appropriate trained personnel;
- model and teach inclusive practices that honour and promote human rights;
- create inclusive and safe environments for 2SLGBTQ+ people and their allies.

Employees have an important role to play in teaching and modelling respect for gender diversity. It is expected that teachers will create classrooms and administrators will create schools where students can see a commitment to creating a safe, caring and discrimination free environment. Students need to see that adults are striving to promote an understanding of gender diversity beyond the binary of only two genders.

- addressing the class in non-gender ways (using inclusive language);
- seating and lining up students in non-gender groupings;
- creating mixed gender groups/teams;
- displaying signs, posters, safe place stickers, and books that depict a range of gender presentations;
- celebrating national and international days and events that raise awareness about gender identity;
- teaching students how to be allies for each other;
- avoiding making assumptions during health and career education instruction regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.

The board will establish a joint committee which includes both adult and student representatives from the 2SLGBTQ+ community to act in an advisory capacity in the implementation of staff development, in-service, and professional development.

The advisory committee will consider the following recommendations/beliefs.

The goals of ongoing staff development will be to support 2SLGBTQ+ people and families in the school district and to promote anti-homophobia and anti-cisheterosexism, and anti-transphobia initiatives.

- trustees, management and staff must model respect and affirmation of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and families;
- in-service workshops and training on 2SLGBTQ+ issues will be provided for the benefit of trustees, management, and staff annually;
- trustees, management, and staff have the responsibility for addressing of homophobia, transphobia and cisheterosexism in the working and learning environment;
- teachers must be supported when they include positive images and accurate information about history and culture which reflects the accomplishments and contributions of 2SLGBTQ+ people;
- trustees, management and staff must facilitate safer school environments for people of all gender identities and expression and sexual orientations.
  - acknowledging that an acceptance of diversity is the starting point of respect;
  - treating everyone with respect;
  - using language that affirms all sexuality orientations and gender identities and expressions;
  - not using disparaging remarks or language that demeans 2SLGBTQ+ identities and families;
  - challenging staff, students and parents who behave in prejudicial ways towards 2SLGBTQ+ people;
  - encouraging teachers to sponsor and support 2SLGBTQ+ positive initiatives such as GSA's or Diversity Clubs;
  - supporting the right of 2SLGBTQ+ students to counselling that is supportive, affirming and free from efforts on the part of counsellors to try to change their sexual orientation and/or identity through the use of or the referral to aversion, reparative, or conversion therapies.

## **Employment Equity**

1. The board believes in equitable treatment for all individuals regardless of race, colour, ancestry, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical or mental ability, or political beliefs. The letter and spirit of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *B.C. Human Rights Acts* and the

Board's *Collective Agreements* shall be carefully observed, enforced, and supported, so that all members of the educational school community may work together in an atmosphere of respect and acceptance of individual differences.

2. The board will ensure the confidentiality of employees who are 2SLGBTQ+ and will give them the support they require to do their work in a safe and respectful environment.

### **School Community Involvement**

The board is committed to ongoing, constructive, and open dialogue with 2SLGBTQ+ people and others who self-identify on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

The board will support community partnerships that would enhance the board's commitment to 2SLGBTQ+ students, staff, teachers, and parents.

The board will encourage parent advisory councils to acknowledge and support the diversity of our school community. The board will acknowledge through the communication to students, staff and the community that 2SLGBTQ+ parents and family members need to be positively recognized and included as such.

### **Appropriate Intervention / Responding to Incident**

All members of the SD #71 community have the right to expect a respectful and culturally safe environment free of discrimination, harassment, and bullying. In 2007, the Ministry of Education mandated that school districts establish procedures that align with the *Ministerial Order M2276/07*. Each school must, in consultation with staff, parents and students establish their own Code of Conduct based on the ministerial order and guidelines. Appropriate interventions are included in the Code of Conduct administrative procedures. School district personnel may also refer to the SD #71 Bullying and *Harassment Prevention Policy 3-8* as a guide in making intervention decisions.

### **Complaint Process**

In the event that an incident occurs at a school site, refer the complaint, in writing, to the school administrator.

If a complaint is against the administrator, refer in writing to the Director of Instruction, Health and Safety.

A thorough investigation will be conducted.

The complaint process shall be communicated to all schools, partner groups, and contracted services and district administration is responsible to ensure that employees and contract providers are aware of the process.

### **Appeal Process**

The Board of Education recognizes and respects the fact that students and/or parents or guardians may disagree with decisions made by employers. The *School Act* of British Columbia gives parents or guardians and students (with parental consent) the right to express concerns or appeal certain decisions. The right of appeal applies to decisions that significantly affect the health, education or welfare of students. Information regarding the board's appeal procedure

and the formal appeal bylaw can be accessed on the District's website. (Management Relationship 2-5 Parent/Guardian/ Student Request for Review of Employee Decision). Prior to an appeal, it is expected that school administration, students and parents or guardians will try to resolve concerns at the school level.

Employees shall contact their respective unions for support and advice regarding appeals.

Legal Reference: Section 65, *School Act*

Adopted: September 2019

### RESOURCES AND DEFINITIONS

#### **SOGI 1 2 3**

SOGI 1 2 3 shares proven SOGI-inclusive tools and resources in the areas of policy and procedures, inclusive environments and curriculum resources: [www.sogieducation.org](http://www.sogieducation.org)

#### **BC Teachers Federation**

The BCTF offers a variety of free workshops to teachers that aim to develop skills to interrupt, address, and challenge homophobia and transphobia within our classrooms and school communities.

<https://bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=17988>

#### **Education Resource Acquisition Consortium (ERAC)**

ERAC provides a range of services including evaluation, licensing and acquisition of print, software, and digital learning resources. ERAC offers a curated catalogue of SOGI resources (see LGBTQ collection).

<http://www.bcerac.ca/index.aspx>

#### **Out in Schools**

Out in Schools presentations and Learning Hub provide youth with opportunities not only to learn, but to do. The presentations offer a chance to build participation in and creation of Queer Straight Alliances across the province. The Rise Against Homophobia Video Contest offers youth the chance to make media as a vehicle not only for personal expression, but to shape more inclusive school communities.

<http://outinschools.com/about/>

#### **QMUNITY – BC’s Queer Resource Centre**

QMUNITY is a non-profit organization based in Vancouver, B.C. that works to improve queer and trans lives. They provide a safer space for LGBTQ+/2S people and their allies to fully self-express while feeling welcome and included.

<http://qmunity.ca/>

#### **Egale Canada Human Rights Trust**

Founded in 1995, Egale Canada Human Rights Trust is Canada’s only national charity promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans (LGBT) human rights through research, education and community engagement.

<https://egale.ca/>

#### **MyGSA**

MyGSA.ca is Canada’s website for safer and inclusive schools for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) community.

<http://mygsa.ca>

### **Trans Care BC**

The Trans Care BC program aims to enhance to coordination of trans health services and supports across the province, bringing gender-affirming care closer to home wherever possible. <http://www.phsa.ca/our-services/programs-service/trans-care-bc>

### **Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)**

The leading national US-based education organization focused on ensuring safe and affirming schools for LGBTQ students: <http://www.glsen.org/>

### **Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)**

PFLAG Canada is a national charitable organization, founded by parents who wished to help themselves and their family members understand and accept their non-heterosexual children. <http://pflagcanada.ca/>

### **Pride Education Network**

The Pride Education Network of teachers, administrators, support staff, youth and parents strive to make the B.C. school system more welcoming and equitable for LGBTQ students and staff, and queer families: <http://pridenet.ca/>

## **Definitions**

### **Bisexual:**

People who have a bisexual orientation can experience sexual, emotional, and affectional attraction to both their own sex and the opposite sex. It also refers to an individual's sense of personal and social identify based on those attractions and the behaviours expressing them. It is one (1) of the three (3) main classifications of sexual orientation, along with a heterosexual and a homosexual orientation.

### **Discrimination:**

The subordination of groups or individuals resulting from a distinction, preference or exclusion based on the grounds of race, religion, colour, ethnicity, place of origin, language, age, disability, socio-economic status, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, sex, or any other difference. It includes harassment, any negative or adverse conduct, comment, gesture or contact, and systemic barriers based on the above grounds. This conduct is harmful and can create a working or learning environment that is known, or reasonably should be known, to be offensive.

### **Educational Community:**

Includes all those who work, learn, or attend any School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) schools, alternative educational settings and facilities, worksites, or any district facility, and includes ancillary sites such as school buses, district meeting settings, etc.

### **Gay:**

A person who is emotionally/romantically and physically attracted to persons of the same sex. Gay usually refers to males, but it is also used to include females. Gay can be used

interchangeably with homosexual. Gay is most often the term preferred by the LGBTQ communities when referring to homosexual males.

**Gender Identity:**

Characteristics linked to an individual's intrinsic sense of self as a man or as a woman, which may not be the same identity as one's biological sex.

**Homophobia:**

The fear, and/or hatred, and/or repulsion of homosexuality and gender variance in oneself or in others, often exhibited by self-hatred, prejudice, discrimination, bullying or acts of violence. Homophobia is typically directed towards those who are openly LGBTQ or are perceived as such through gender cues that are not in accordance with societal norms about masculinity and femininity.

**Gender Expansive:**

Refers to a person who does not confirm to society's expectations of their gender role or gender expression. It is a broad term that includes boys who behave, dress and interact in feminine ways; girls who behave, dress and interact in masculine ways, in addition to trans students.

**Gender Expression:**

Refers to a way a person expresses one's gender, through dress, grooming habits, choice of name and pronoun, mannerism, activities, etc.

**Heterosexism:**

The assumption that everyone is or should be heterosexual and that heterosexuality is superior. Heterosexism can exist on a personal, interpersonal, institutional or cultural level.

**Intersex:**

Individuals who are born as "hermaphrodites", now an outdated term. Intersex is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. Though intersex is referred to as an inborn condition, intersex anatomy doesn't always show up at birth. Sometimes a person isn't found to have intersex anatomy until they reach the age of puberty, or finds themselves an infertile adult, or dies of old age and is autopsied. Some people live and die with intersex anatomy without anyone (including themselves) every knowing. A significant issue is the practice of some parents and physicians decided which sex is desired and then making a decision in favour of "normalizing" surgery at or near birth.

**Lesbian:**

A female who is emotionally/romantically and physically attracted to other females. Lesbian is usually the term preferred by the LGBTQ communities when referring to homosexual females.

**LGBTTTIQQ or LGBT, LGBTQ, LGBTTQ, LGBTQQ – and other variations:**

Acronym used to refer inclusively to a wide group of individuals and incorporates lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex, queer, or questioning persons. For ease of reference in this policy the acronym LGBTQ has been adopted, but it is intended to be widely inclusive.

**Queer:**

A term used derisively to humiliate and demean LGBTQ individuals and groups. It is generally not viewed as an appropriate term for use outside, or in a manner directed towards the LGBTQ

community because of the potential of its use in a contemptuous manner or with such intent, despite the fact that some students may identify themselves as “queer” in a positive way.

**Questioning:**

Adults and youth who are not personally certain about their own sexual identity or orientation and may be exploring, publicly or privately, their feelings in this area.

**Sexual Orientation:**

The emotional/romantic and physical attraction felt by an individual towards members of the same sex, the other sex or either sex. Actual sexuality is a private affair; however, expressions of sexuality (such as holding hands with one’s romantic partner and putting a picture of her or him on one’s desk) are public displays of sexual orientation. The public realm overwhelmingly privileges straight couples but lesbian or gay ones are often the target of stares, verbal violence, and sometimes physical violence.

**Sexual Orientation Identities:**

Lesbian, Gay, Straight, Bisexual and Questioning are ways that people identify themselves insofar as their romantic partnerships and family diversities are concerned.

**Transgender:**

A person whose gender identity (feeling of being either boy or man, girl or woman) does not match their physical/anatomical sex (male or female) and the gender roles assigned by mainstream society. Some describe it as being born into the wrong body. Increasingly, many transgender people refer to themselves as “trans.”

**Transsexual:**

An individual who presents himself/herself and lives in the gender “opposite” to his/her genetic/physical gender at birth. A transsexual is someone who feels psychologically like the other sex and has somehow been trapped in the wrong body. Transsexuals may be heterosexual, bisexual or homosexual in their sexual orientation. Some transsexuals may undergo operations and hormone therapy in order to make their body fit what they feel is their true gender. These individuals are sometimes known as female-to-male, FTM, transmen or male-to-female, MTF, transwomen.

**Two-Spirit:**

This is a term that is used by some indigenous people to describe themselves in a way that reflects their cultural construct of sex/gender/sexuality. Many of the languages of indigenous nations of North America include specific terms for gender and sexual diversity; some indigenous people may use both the general term Two-Spirit and the culturally specific term from their own language to describe themselves.

Adopted: September 2019

### **ACCUMULATED OPERATING SURPLUS AND INTERNALLY RESTRICTED FUNDS**

The Board of Education is responsible for ensuring the district is protected financially from extraordinary circumstances which would negatively impact school district operations and the education of students. A key strategy in the Board's fiduciary duty is maintaining an accumulated operating surplus which shall be used to mitigate any negative impact on students. The appropriate management of operating surplus provides the school district with the ability to effectively plan and sustain services to students for a period longer than a single budget year resulting in an improvement of the overall financial health of the district.

#### **Specifically**

An accumulated operating surplus is achieved by spending less than the revenue the school districts receives in a given year, surpluses can accumulate year over year. The Board of Education is required by legislation to approve a balanced preliminary and amended annual budget, which may include the use of accumulated surplus funds from previous years. Estimated spending in the budgeting process must not exceed estimated revenue plus accumulated operating surplus.

Appropriation of internal restrictions on surplus funds and any inter-fund transfers each year in which they occur will require a motion to be made by the Board of Education. Capital assets purchased for departmental operating plans from approved budget expenditures do not require subsequent board approval

During the Annual and Amended Budget Process, the Board will consider the availability of accumulated operating surplus funds and the allocation of those funds between internally restricted surplus and unrestricted surplus (including contingency funds).

During the budget process, the Board will post information on its website about how, where and when the local community and education partner groups, including local First Nations and Metis Nation BC, will be engaged on the accumulation, spending and reporting of operating surplus funds. The Board will clearly explain the purpose of operating surplus and how the surplus will be used to support the Board's strategic objectives (for example, improving student educational outcomes) and other operational priorities of the Board.

#### **TYPES OF SURPLUS**

##### **Internally Restricted Operating Surplus**

There are three categories under which the Board may motion to designate internally restricted surplus funds:

1. Funds that are restricted due to the nature of constraints on the funds
  - Unspent Indigenous Education Targeted funds;

- Contractual obligations (e.g., professional development);
  - School generated funds (not externally restricted).
2. Funds for anticipated unusual expenses
- Staffing needs that are short term and variable in nature;
  - Self- insurance for minor equipment loss and breakage;
  - Implementation of new initiatives; and the impact of emerging events (i.e. Ministry projects; Emergent Events; Legislative Changes).
3. Funds for items requiring more than one year
- Future years' Operations/Budget (not beyond the next two fiscal years);
  - Schools and department surplus/carryforwards (not beyond the next two fiscal years);
  - Operating projects in progress;
  - Technology, utilities, equipment, and Capital projects (includes amounts to be transferred to Local Capital that have not yet been identified for specific initiatives);
  - Purchase order commitments; and
  - Educational programs spanning multiple years (e.g., distributed learning, summer school, International Student Program)

### **Unrestricted Operating Surplus (Contingency Reserve)**

In conjunction with the Board of Education's review and approval of the annual financial statements, the Board of Education will restrict a portion of accumulated operating surplus for the purpose of forming a Contingency Reserve.

The Contingency Reserve will be sufficient to reduce, to an appropriate level, financial risk that results from emergent operating issues and/or to offset unrealized revenues. Prior to the adoption of each annual budget and amended annual budget, the Secretary Treasurer will present for the Board of Education's review and approval, allocation of budget for the purpose of Contingency Reserve and when applicable; strategies for replenishing the Contingency Reserve. The ministry surplus policy says that the "amount of unrestricted at the end of a fiscal year should be laid out in the Boards Operating Surplus Policy, in accordance with ministry instructions " (for example, the Ministry Financial Statement Instructions).

The amount of Unrestricted Operating Surplus at the end of a fiscal year should be a minimum of 1.5% and maximum of 3.0 % of actual Operating Expenses in the fiscal year.

### **Examples**

- Major Emergent Operating Issues – the School District is exposed to major non-reoccurring costs related to various emergency events or situations, e.g., inclement weather, pandemic, or forest fires, etc. These situations cannot be anticipated and budgeted for and it may not be feasible to absorb the cost of such events in other budget areas in any given year.
- To Offset Unrealized Revenues – The School District is exposed to the possibility of unrealized revenues and/or declines in base revenues from year to year due to the cyclical nature of the revenue source being impacted by economic downturns, (e.g., lower international student enrolment).

### **Local Capital**

There are three sources of Local Capital:

1. The board's portion of any proceeds from the disposition of capital assets;

2. Transfers from operating funds; and
3. Interest earned on local capital funds restricted for the purchase of tangible capital assets.

Transfers from operating funds to Local Capital will be for specific initiatives related to the Board's strategic plan or other operational needs of the district. Examples include vehicle replacement, computer system upgrades, and renovation or replacement of administrative and operational buildings. If these transferred funds are not linked to strategic goals or they have not been used within the timeline identified for the relevant initiative, the Ministry may require boards to use these Local Capital funds for other capital projects.

### **Restricted for Future Capital Cost Sharing**

The Treasury Board requires the Ministry of Education to review district surplus funds and determine funds that are available to contribute towards major capital projects in the Board's 5-year Capital plan. When a project has been approved for concept plan or business case development, the Board may restrict operating surplus funds to meet the cost sharing expectations for that project.

### **Inter-Fund Transfers**

In some cases, funds need to be transferred between the operating fund, special purpose funds. In some cases, funds need to be transferred between the operating fund, special purpose funds and the capital fund. These transfers are authorized through a board motion. In some cases, this approval will be done through the approval of the budget or annual financial statements. Approval of inter-fund transfers related to confidential matters (such as land, legal or personnel) will be considered in an in-camera board meeting.

### **Reporting**

Boards are required to provide the Ministry with an annual report on their budget allocation decisions (including operating surplus and Local Capital) demonstrating that approved allocations support the Board's strategic objectives. The Board's annual Financial Statement and Discussion Analysis (FSD&A) was developed based on the Ministries Companion Guide.

The Ministry may take actions to monitor and evaluate operating surplus as outlined in the Companion Guide to the Ministry's Accumulated Operating Surplus Policy.

### **Definitions**

- *Accumulated Operating Deficit* means the accumulated excess of Operating Expenses over Operating Revenues Less Inter-Fund Transfers from current and prior years.
- *Accumulated Operating Surplus* means the accumulated excess of Operating Revenues over Operating Expenses Less Inter-Fund Transfers from current and prior years. Accumulated Operating Surplus is a term defined by the Public Sector Accounting Standards (PS1201). While boards of education may use the term Reserves to denote 'Surplus', when it comes to financial statements and budgets the term Surplus should be used.
- *Annual Operating Deficit* is the amount by which a fiscal year's Operating Expenses and Inter-Fund Transfers exceed that same fiscal year's Operating Revenues.
- *Annual Operating Surplus* is the amount by which a fiscal year's Operating Revenue exceeds that same fiscal year's Operating Expenses and Inter-Fund Transfers.
- *Inter-Fund Transfers* means the transfer of funds from one fund to another (e.g., between Operating Fund and Capital Fund).
- *Internally Restricted Operating Surplus* means a portion of an Accumulated Operating

- Surplus that has been set aside through a board motion for specified use in future years.
- *Local Capital* is comprised of previous years' available operating surpluses, which are transferred to Local Capital with board approval; revenues from sale of capital assets; and investment income earned on these funds.
- *Operating Expenses* are the total of all expenses in the Operating Fund as disclosed on Schedule 2 of the annual financial statements.
- *Operating Revenue* is the total of all revenue in the Operating Fund as disclosed on Schedule 2 of the annual financial statements.
- *Special Purpose Funds* consists of targeted funding provided to the school district for a specific purpose. Pursuant to Sections 156(4) and (5) of the School Act, each special purpose fund must be accounted for in accordance with the terms of that special purpose fund. Treasury Board Restricted Contribution Regulation 198/2011, issued in November 2011, defines a restricted contribution as 'a contribution that is subject to a legislative or contractual stipulation or restriction as to its use'. Special purpose fund expenses are contingent on the amount of revenue received for the purpose of providing a specific service or program.
- *Unrestricted Operating Surplus (Contingency)* means the accumulated Operating Surplus built up in the School District's Operating Fund that has not been designated for specific uses

Legal Reference: Sections 65, 85.2, 110, *School Act*

Other References:

*K-12 Public Education Financial Planning and Reporting Policy*

*K-12 Public Education Accumulated Operating Surplus Policy*

*Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Policy*

*Board Policy 26 (Financial Planning and Reporting Policy)*

*District Strategic Plan*

*Budget and Transparency and Accountability Act*

Adopted: September 2019

Updated: March 2023

# INDIGENOUS RECOGNITION AND INDIGENOUS VOICE

## Land Recognition

The board directs that the following statement be read at the commencement of each board meeting:

***“The Board of Education acknowledges that we are on the traditional territories of the K’omoks First Nation. We would like to thank them for the privilege of living on their land and the gift of working with their children.”***

## Indigenous Education Council

The Board of Education, School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) recognizes that it operates on the traditional territory of the K’omoks First Nation.

Students of Indigenous ancestry must be provided with the opportunity to have an education that meets individual and community needs and includes their culture, heritage, language and self-government as Indigenous people.

The Indigenous community recognizes the importance of a shared responsibility for education between representatives of the Indigenous community, the Board of Education of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley), and the Ministry of Education.

The board recognizes the importance and right of people of Indigenous ancestry to participate in decisions affecting the educational programs of Indigenous children.

To support and acknowledge the importance of that shared responsibility, the school district will maintain an Indigenous Education Council (IEC).

In recognition of the shared responsibility to improve the quality of education of Indigenous students in School District No. 71 (Comox Valley), it is agreed that the terms and goals of the Indigenous Education Enhancement Agreement (IEEA) will enhance the basis of Indigenous education, programs and services of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley).

The IEC will have Terms of Reference governing its meetings and affairs, including representation and processes for electing representatives. These terms shall be shared annually with the Board of Education.

The Indigenous Education Council may advise the board on any matter pertaining to the education of Indigenous students.

Legal Reference: Section 65, *School Act*

Adopted: September 2019

### COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Board of Education is committed to balancing its fiduciary role with enhancing community involvement in the school district. As such, the board is committed to the principle of public involvement in education and endorses open, two-way communication with its internal and external partners.

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of effectively communicating and engaging with our community for the purpose of sharing information, receiving feedback and discussing important issues facing the school district.

As part of the process, the district will provide information about practices, programs, policies and provide opportunities to contribute opinions and perspectives on decisions pending or made by the board regarding the operation of the schools and school district.

*The Framework for Communications and Community Engagement* outlines procedures for operationalizing communications and community engagement in School District No. 71 (Comox Valley).

#### Communications and Community Engagement Framework Desired Outcomes

Desired outcomes of adopting the framework include:

1. Improve public education through effective communication and engagement.
2. Improve internal and external communications between the district, its schools, staff, parents, students and community partners.
3. Identify and increase opportunities for engaging the community in a manner that is meaningful, timely and appropriate.
4. Identify and increase opportunities to share district information and to gain community insights about our district.
5. Determine how best to engage with the various audiences.
6. Identify and increase opportunities for developing relationships with the media and using this medium effectively.
7. Use social media to deliver key aspects of the district's message and to receive information from the community.

#### Purpose of the Framework

The purpose of the *Framework* is to present a clear and concise direction for communicating with the school district's community. The plan primarily addresses two (2) types of school district

audiences: internal (students, teachers, staff, unions, administration and school board) and external (parents, businesses, civic groups, and other members of the district's community) and considers the processes to be used to reach these audiences.

Through the development and implementation of this communications framework, the school district will:

1. *Inform*: Provide timely information about board and administrative decisions made, and activities and events across the division.
2. *Consult*: Increase the involvement of staff and community through consultative practices to obtain feedback on issues or decisions.
3. *Collaborate*: Partner with staff and or community in arriving at a solution.
4. *Foster* the exchange of information between the school district and the communities it serves.

### Guiding Principles

The Board of Education believes that:

1. Meaningful decision-making and consultation processes are respectful of and use different ways to engage with our diverse educational partners.
2. District decision-making information are to be accessible, understandable, relevant and responsive to the needs of the community.
3. District-wide community engagement are to be authentic and meaningful.
4. Staff briefings to the board will include communication ideas and or recommendations (where appropriate).
5. The board will, as part of its deliberation process, consider if, when or how they will communicate or engage with the educational partners.

### Engagement and Communications Continuum

| <b>Inform</b>                                             | <b>Consult</b>                                                                                 | <b>Involve</b>                                                                                                                           | <b>Collaborate</b>                                                                       | <b>Empower</b>                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Provide internal and or external public with information. | Obtain public feedback on a future decision coming to the board and or planning for the board. | Work directly with members of the public (internal and or external) throughout the entire process that culminates with a board decision. | Work with the public from the inception of a project to the final decision by the board. | Places final decision-making in the hands of the public. |
| e.g. newsletters, web-pages, blogs                        | e.g. public meetings, focus groups, surveys                                                    | e.g. advisory groups, public forums, public hearings                                                                                     | e.g. Workshops, design charrettes                                                        | e.g. Plebiscite, working committee                       |

## **Identifying the Appropriate Engagement along the Continuum**

1. Moving from left to right in the framework, the communication processes becomes increasingly participative and the engagement level of the public in the process increases.
2. As policy and operational issues arise, the board will give consideration to the most appropriate level of engagement and the related strategies to employ.
3. Briefings to the board shall include a recommendation communications plan to most effectively engage the public based on a balance between time and importance of gaining public feedback on the topic.
4. Data and or other information collected through the engagement process shall be shared by placing it on the district webpage.
5. The data will be analyzed by staff and will be shared with the board as part of the decision-making process.
6. The board's eventual decision will be made public through the public-school board meeting process.

## **Framework for Regular Engagement Activities**

The Board of Education will:

1. Hold regular meetings of the board in an open manner before assembled public and press who shall have the benefit of a publicized schedule of meetings. In order to protect the legitimate interests of individuals and the community, "in camera" or closed meetings in private session shall be reserved to discuss matters as defined in legislation and board policy.
2. Hold regular Committee of the Whole Meetings of the board periodically in various locations in the district.
3. Hold public forums in the district on educational issues as the need arises.
4. Provide the public with an opportunity to address questions to the board at each regular meeting.
5. Welcome delegations of students, parents, teachers, and others at regular board meetings.
6. Post agendas of regular meetings to the school district webpage and send, where appropriate, agendas to the associations representing the board's employees, to parent organizations in the district, and to groups and individuals requesting such agendas.
7. Publicize the deliberation and decisions of board meetings by distributing, via the district webpage an approved report of meetings.

8. Develop and maintain a regular community relations and information program which informs the community of the district's activities.
9. Establish a regular means of assessing the public's, parents', and students' needs and concerns regarding the district.

Legal Reference: Section 65, *School Act*

Adopted: September 2019

## Policy 21

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### **COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

The Board of Education endorses and supports the concept of community education and supports the development of community schools in appropriate areas of the school district.

Community education is an educational process which serves all age groups in the community. Furthermore, community education utilizes the total resources of the community to provide programs and services for all members of the citizenry. Community schools extend availability of programs and services beyond the traditional school boundaries, where appropriate.

Goals of community schools include the following:

1. use of schools as lifelong learning centres,
2. promote equitable and accessible educational opportunities for children, youth and adults,
3. use school, district and community resources to enrich services to children, youth and adults,
4. improve community relations and community development,
5. strengthen inter-agency cooperation and coordination of supports, and
6. recognize and respond to identified community needs.

The board shall approve schools as designated community schools. When considering proposals for approval as a designated community school, the board shall give consideration to factors including: existing community amenities, alignment to board priorities, consideration of board finances and resources, and input from the community.

Legal Reference: Section 65, *School Act*

Adopted: September 2019

## **PROVISION OF MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS TO STUDENTS**

The Board of Education is committed to providing menstrual products to students who may require them.

The Board will:

1. ensure menstrual products are made available to students of all gender identities or expressions in a manner that protects student privacy;
2. provide for barrier free, easily accessible menstrual products at no cost to student;
3. make menstrual products available in school washrooms;
4. consider students feedback with respect to the provision of menstrual products

Legal Reference: Sections 85(2)(a), 88(1), and 168(2)(t) *School Act*

Adopted: November 26, 2019

# PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION OF STUDENTS

The Administrative Procedures for the physical restraint and seclusion of students is aligned with the BC Ministry of Education Provincial Guidelines for Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings. June 2015.

The Comox Valley Board of Education believes that access to an effective educational program is a basic right of each student. The board further considers positive educational/behavioural interventions, mental health supports and least restrictive approaches to the provision of students supports to be best practice. Respect for human rights, maintaining student dignity and the safety of all involved is paramount. The board believes that schools should be safe and caring places in which educational programs are carried out in positive and supportive learning environments. Every effort should be made to structure learning environments and to provide learning supports that make physical restraint and seclusion unnecessary. The overarching goal of learning environment design is the creative use of space to facilitate and support positive student learning experiences, rather than punitive disciplinary ones. The board acknowledges that employees use a variety of educative, preventative and restorative interventions to respond to a range of disruptive student behaviours that compromise student safety. In exceptional circumstances when student behaviour presents an imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others, including school personnel and where less restrictive interventions have proven to be ineffective in ending the danger or serious physical harm it may be necessary, as a last resort, for staff to use reasonable physical restraint or seclusion.

The decision to use reasonable physical restraint is guided by the professional judgement of staff. Staff will have the full support of the board in their efforts to maintain a safe learning environment to the extent that their actions comply with relevant legislation and district policy and procedures governing the physical restraint and seclusion of students.

The Comox Valley School Board does not support any form of physical restraint or seclusion as an on-going intervention. Any intervention that involves physical restraint or seclusion may be used only in cases of extreme emergency where they physical actions of the student threaten to cause harm to self or others.

## Guiding Principles

1. Behavioural interventions for students must promote the rights of all students to be treated with dignity, honour and each student's right to feel safe.
2. Behavioural interventions for all students emphasize prevention and positive behaviour supports. Every effort must be made to employ preventative actions that preclude the need for the use of physical restraint or seclusion.

3. Positive emotional and behavioural interventions and mental health supports are provided for all students who need them in a safe and least restrictive environments.
4. Effective implementation of school-side programs that support positive behaviour, such as Positive Behaviour Intervention Supports (PBIS), are linked to greater academic achievement among students, and to significantly fewer disciplinary problems, increased constructive instructional time, and to increased perception of safer teaching and learning environments (pg.2 Provincial Guidelines – *Physical Restraint and Seclusion in School Settings*.)
5. There is a continuum of interventions in the management of disruptive behaviour. Behavioural interventions address the underlying cause and purpose of potentially harmful behaviour.
6. For students whose pattern of behaviour impedes their learning or the learning of others, a functional behaviour assessment is recommended to inform the development of a behavioural intervention plan. These plans incorporate positive interventions and include instruction in appropriate behaviour and strategies that will help students to learn to regulate and de-escalate their behaviour. Opportunities for parents/guardians and where appropriate, students to be consulted in the development of these plans must be offered.
7. Physical restraint or seclusion is only used in exceptional circumstances where the behaviour of a student poses imminent danger or serious physical harm to self or others and where less restrictive interventions have been ineffective in ending danger or serious physical harm. Physical restraint or seclusion is discontinued once imminent danger or serious physical harm to self/and or others has dissipated.
8. It is expected that all staff working in situations that involves physical restraint or seclusion is trained in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (CPI).
9. Students exhibiting behaviour that is compromising safety of self and/or students should be supported by appropriate documentation support (i.e. IEP and/or Behaviour Plan and/or Safety Plan and/or specialist consultation).
10. Parents/guardians of students who require physical restraint or seclusion will be informed as soon as possible when these interventions are used.
11. Recurring practice of physical restraint or seclusion is not common practice in any student's education program. If a student struggles to show safe behaviour and interrupts the learning of other consistently, educational programming may need to be reviewed with parents, outside agency and team. This review may include and is not exclusive to: an abbreviated school day, an alternate setting, alternate programming, home schooling, Distributed Learning until the student's behaviours have stabilized.

## Equity and Non-Discrimination Policy

### PREAMBLE

The Board of Education is committed to ensuring learning and working environments that are safe, inclusive, equitable, and welcoming for all members of the school district community. The Board recognizes and celebrates the diversity of the community it serves and believes that each individual contributes to the richness and strength of the School District culture. The letter and spirit of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the B.C. Human Rights Code and the B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and the B.C. Multiculturalism Act will be observed, supported, and enforced, so that all members of the School District community may work together in an atmosphere of respect where differences are honored.

This commitment is grounded in the understanding that Discrimination:

- Exists and takes many forms, including but not limited to racism, indigenized racism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism.
- Can be direct or indirect, overt, or subtle (microaggressions), intentional or unintentional and exists at institutional and systemic levels.
- Impacts people in different ways, each person's reaction to discrimination is unique, and some members of our school district community face multiple forms of discrimination.
- Can have long term negative consequences on a person's sense of self and /or a person's ability to fully actualize. (*The legacy of residential schools*).
- Has no one-size-fits-all solution. Different types of discrimination will require different approaches, strategies, and procedures to combat; and
- Constitutes an infringement of a person's equality rights and acts as a barrier to full participation in the school district community and society at large.

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Education is committed to creating an inclusive environment through the elimination of all forms of discrimination and the support of educational and employment equity for all who learn and work in Comox Valley Schools. It also recognizes and celebrates the diversity of the community it serves and believes that each individual contributes to the richness of the School District culture.

The Board of Education also acknowledges that all members of the School District community, staff, students, parents, caregivers, partner groups and rightsholders, share the responsibility for creating a responsive, compassionate, inclusive environment which honors and respects everyone. The Board is

committed to supporting all members in their efforts to create an environment where all individuals feel safe, cared for and a sense of belonging. The Board of Education expects each member of the district community to participate in the ongoing development of practices that promote fair and equitable treatment for everyone, cultivating mutual respect, civility, and a sense of belonging, as we eliminate all forms of discrimination and address the effects of historic, organizational, systemic, and attitudinal discrimination of all forms.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The Board of Education is committed to:

- Equity and inclusivity in all contexts, activities, and places.
- Supporting the education of how to act directly or as a bystander against all forms of discrimination.
- Developing cross-cultural connections to create understanding, show respect for, and to honor racial, ethnic, and cultural identity, religion and individual abilities.
- Ensuring that school codes of conduct make explicit references to the prohibited grounds of discrimination as outlined in the B.C. Human Rights Code.
- Supporting employment equity through the provision of effective process to recruit, retain and develop all staff acknowledging gender, sexual orientation, race, color, disabilities, ancestry, national and ethno-cultural organization, and religion.
- Support educational equity through quality programs that celebrate diversity and welcome all learners recognizing gender identity, race, color, disabilities, ancestry, national and ethno-cultural organization, and religion.
- Create an educational and workplace environment that promotes equality and welcomes and values diversity.

### **Legal Reference:**

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms  
B.C. Human Rights Code  
B.C. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act  
B.C. Multiculturalism Act

Adopted: January 25, 2026  
Revised: May 2026

# CHILD CARE

### Background

Bill 8, the Education Statutes Amendment Act, came into force on March 5, 2020. This amendment of the School Act by the provincial government enacts new provisions related to childcare facilities located on board of education property. It includes a prescriptive order from the Minister of Education with respect to the contents required in board policy to govern the establishment of childcare facilities. Order M326, the Child Care Order, further defines the role of boards of education with respect to the provision of childcare programs.

The Board of Education of School District 71 (Comox Valley) recognizes the value and importance of available childcare and quality early learning programs in the community. Effective early childhood programming (0-8 years) is an important service a society can offer to ensure that all children have the opportunity to reach their potential. It is critically important that these opportunities are offered at the earliest stages of a child's life when formative lifelong skills and abilities are being developed. Investment in quality programming during early childhood reaps significant long-term benefits for children, their families, and the community. If child care programs are operated by a licensee other than the Board, the Board will require the licensee to agree to comply with this Policy and Administrative Procedure 553 – Child Care and Before & After School Programs.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance with respect to how the Board will promote the use of board property for the provision of childcare programs between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on business days by either the Board or third-party licensees.

The use of board property by licensed childcare providers must not disrupt or otherwise interfere with the provision of educational activities including early learning programs and extracurricular school activities.

### Definitions

In this policy, the terms “board property”, “business day”, “childcare program”, “educational activities” and “licensee” have meanings given to those terms in the School Act.

“Direct and indirect costs” include:

- a. Utilities;
- b. Maintenance and repair;
- c. Insurance;
- d. A reasonable allowance for the cost of custodial services;
- e. A reasonable allowance for time school administrators and other staff spending on matters relating to the use of board property by licensed childcare providers;
- f. Capital replacement costs.

### Guiding Principles

The district will, on an ongoing basis, assess community need for childcare programs on board property, through a process of engagement with employee groups, parents and guardians, Indigenous community representatives, Indigenous rightsholders, Indigenous service providers, and existing childcare operators. The process for engagement will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and shall be conducted in a manner acceptable to the Board.

Prior to entering into or renewing a contract with a licensee other than the Board to provide childcare programming on board property, the Board will consider:

- a) Whether it is preferable for the Board to become a licensee and operate the childcare program directly;
- b) The availability of school district staff to provide before and after school care;
- c) Whether, with respect to a licensee seeking renewal or extension of a contract, the licensee has performed its obligations under this policy and its contract with the Board, with specific regard to performance in respect of providing an inclusive childcare program and one that promotes Indigenous reconciliation in childcare.

If the Board decides to operate a childcare program, the Board will ensure that it is operated in a manner that:

- a) Fosters Indigenous reconciliation in childcare. In particular, the childcare program will be operated consistently with the following principles of the BC *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*: (i) Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including in the area of education; and (ii) “Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which will be appropriately reflected in education”; and
- b) Is inclusive and consistent with the principles of non-discrimination set out in the BC *Human Rights Code*.
- c) Is inclusive and consistent with the Early Childhood Educators of BC Code of Ethics.

Childcare programs, if operated by the Board, will be operated for a fee no greater than the direct costs the Board incurs in providing the childcare program.

In selecting licensees other than the Board to operate a childcare program, district staff will give special consideration to the candidates’ proposals to: (a) provide inclusive childcare; and (b) foster principles of Indigenous reconciliation in childcare.

Fees for the use of board property by licensees to third-party operated programs will not exceed the direct and indirect costs the Board incurs in making board property available for the childcare program, as provided for in the School Act and set by the Secretary-Treasurer.

Any contract with a licensee other than the Board, to provide a childcare program on board property must be in writing and subject to review annually. The contract, which will be in the form of a Licensee to Occupy Agreement must contain:

- a) A description of the direct and indirect costs for which the licensee is responsible;
- b) An agreement by the licensee to comply with this Policy and its Administrative Procedures, and all other applicable policies of the Board;
- c) A provision describing how the agreement can be terminated by the Board and the licensee;
- d) An allocation of responsibility to ensure adequate insurance is in place to protect the interests of the district;
- e) A statement that the agreement can only be amended in writing, signed by the Board and the licensee;
- f) A requirement for the licensee to maintain appropriate standards of performance;
- g) A requirement that the licensee must at all times maintain the required license to operate a childcare facility;
- h) A requirement that the licensee must ensure that children have at all times immediate access to an employee who:
  - i. Holds a valid first aid and CPR certificate, provided on completion of a course that meets the requirements of Schedule C,

- ii. Is knowledgeable respecting each child's medical condition, if any, and
  - iii. Is capable of effectively communicating with emergency personnel.
- 
- i) A requirement that the licensee must have first aid kits that are readily accessible to all employees, including while care is provided off the childcare facility premises.
  - j) An understanding that the licensee will work in cooperation with the Early Learning staff on professional development and in-service, as well as engage in information sharing opportunities that support children's successful participation in the program and at school as they arise.

Where the Board decides to change the use of board property that is being used for providing a childcare program, the Board must, without delay, provide the Minister with written notification of the decision in a form and with information specified by the Ministry.

Adopted: April 2022

### **FINANCIAL PLANNING AND REPORTING**

The purpose of the Financial Planning and Reporting Policy (Policy) is to provide greater transparency and accountability for the planning and reporting of financial resources managed by the Board of Education of School District No. 71 (Comox Valley) (Board). This Policy aligns with and ensures compliance with the Ministry of Education and Child Care (Ministry) Financial Planning and Reporting Policy, Accumulated Operating Surplus Policy and the Framework for Enhancing Student Learning. These legislative requirements mandate that the Board develop, implement and provide to the Ministry multi-year financial plans to show how funding and resources have been allocated in support of the Board's strategic priorities and operational needs with a focus on improving educational outcomes for all students.

#### **Specifically**

The Board will:

1. Ensure that it adequately plans for core educational programs.
2. Develop a multi-year financial plan which includes the efficient and effective allocation of resources.
3. Align financial planning decisions with the strategic priorities set by the Board.
4. Identify a process of engagement with the local community, education partners, First Nations and the BC Metis Nation that will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to provide input into the development of the Annual Budget and multi-year financial plan.
5. Engagement requesting feedback can include in person meetings, virtual consultation, web-based surveys, or email submissions.
6. Ensure that the Annual Budget and multi-year financial plans are developed in accordance with applicable legislation, regulations, and Treasury Board policy.
7. Report annually on the progress towards alignment of funding with the Board's strategic plan and priorities, operational goals, and student educational outcomes.
8. The policy incorporates financial management including transparency, demonstrated accountability and consistent outcome-based planning, monitoring, and reporting.

#### **Budget Development and Multi-Year Plan**

The Board authorizes the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer to develop the Annual Budget and the multi-year financial plan.

The Annual Budget will be compiled and submitted on the specified form and containing the content required by the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

The Annual Budget and multi-year financial plan will prioritize funding for mandated educational programs and, where available, may support the Board's strategic priorities and operational plans.

Each year, by the March Public Board meeting, the Board will approve the Annual Budget timelines which will include a process and schedule for engagement with the local community and educational partners. This process will include engagement of Local First Nations and the BC Metis Nation. The multi-year financial plan will be presented to the Board for approval along with the draft Annual Budget.

The main consultations for the Annual Budget will be conducted within the Open Committee of the Whole (CoTW) structure so the entire Board and public are aware of the input that has been considered in the development of the Annual Budget and multi-year financial plan. Other types of consultation may also occur with new input reviewed at the next CoTW.

The Budget and multi-year financial plans must adhere to the Budget and Transparency and Accountability Act which required that the Ministry of Education use 3 year rolling services plans. The intent of the Policy is for Boards to follow similar practices to that of the Ministry.

The Board is responsible for their own approval process for the annual budget and multi-year financial plan.

Overall, the purpose of the multi-year financial plan is to disclose to the public the board's long-term objectives.

## **Financial Reporting**

The Board authorizes the Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer to monitor financial reporting of the Annual Budget.

The Secretary-Treasurer will provide financial updates to the Board of Education on the progress towards meeting the financial objectives and goals contained in their strategic plan. This will be achieved through the current reporting structures in place, as well as the Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis

### Specifically:

Year-End Financial Projections will occur monthly beginning in January of each year.

Quarterly financial reports will be compiled and submitted to the Ministry in the form and containing the content specified by the Ministry of Education and Child Care.

Annually, the Board of Education will communicate its progress towards the alignment of funding and resources with the Board's strategic priorities, operational goals, and student outcomes.

Progress will be reported annually through the publication of the audited financial statements and an accompanying Financial Statement Discussion and Analysis Report.

Legal Reference: Sections 65, 85.2, 110, *School Act*

Other References:

*K-12 Public Education Financial Planning and Reporting Policy*

*Framework for Enhancing Student Learning Policy*

*Board Policy 18 (Accumulated Operating Surplus Policy)*

*District Strategic Plan*

*Budget and Transparency and Accountability Act*

Adopted: March 21, 2023

# WHISTLE BLOWER PROTECTION

## PREAMBLE

The Board of Education of School District No. 71 ("School District") is committed to honesty, integrity, and accountability in its operations, programs, and services and to promoting a culture of openness and transparency. The School District encourages and supports all personnel in bringing forward reports of unlawful acts and acts of wrongdoing in a manner consistent with the provisions of the British Columbia *Public Interest Disclosure Act* ("PIDA").

The purpose of this Policy and related Administrative Procedures is to establish a process, in compliance with the PIDA, for employees and trustees to report, in good faith, wrongful or unlawful conduct without fear of retaliation or reprisal.

## POLICY

The Board is committed to upholding ethical standards in the school district. All employees, and others performing work on behalf of the district, are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner, adhere to applicable laws and board policies and regulations that apply to their work activities in addition to demonstrating ethical behavior in all their decisions and interactions.

The Board expects employees who have serious concerns about any aspect of the district's operations with respect to potential evidence of wrongdoing, to come forward and voice those concerns.

## AUTHORITY

The responsibility for the day-to-day administration and enforcement of this Policy rests with the Superintendent of Schools and the Secretary-Treasurer as authorized by the Board of Education. The provisions of this Policy are independent of, and supplemental to, the provisions of collective agreements between the District and its Unions relative to grievance procedures, and to any other terms and conditions of employment.

This Policy is consistent with the statutory responsibility falling from the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* (PIDA), which becomes effective December 01, 2023. This Policy applies to alleged wrongdoing related to the School District's operations or personnel. This Policy does not displace other mechanisms set out in School District Policy for addressing and enforcing standards of conduct, disputes, complaints, or grievances, including issues of discrimination, bullying and harassment, occupational health and safety, or disputes over employment matters or under collective agreements.

## REGULATION

### DEFINITIONS

In this Policy and the Administrative Procedures, the following capitalized terms are defined as indicated:

**“Advice”** means advice that may be requested in respect of making a Disclosure or a complaint about a Reprisal under this Policy or the PIDA;

**“Discloser”** means an Employee or Trustee who makes a Disclosure or seeks Advice or makes a complaint about a Reprisal;

**“Discloser”** means an Employee or Trustee who makes a Disclosure;

**“Disclosure”** means a report of Wrongdoing made under this Policy;

**“Employee”** refers to a past and present employee of the School District;

**“FIPPA”** means the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and all regulations thereto;

**“Investigation”** means an investigation undertaken by the School District under this Policy or by the Ombudsperson under the PIDA;

**“Personal Information”** has the same meaning set out in FIPPA, namely “recorded information about an identifiable individual”, and includes any information from which the identity of the Discloser or any person who is accused of Wrongdoing or participates in an Investigation can be deduced or inferred;

**“Personnel”** means Employees and Trustees;

**“PIDA”** means the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* of British Columbia, and all regulations thereto;

**“Procedure”** means the School District’s Administrative Procedure associated with this Policy, as amended;

**“Reprisal”** means the imposition of, and any threat to impose, discipline, demotion, termination or any other act that adversely affects employment or working condition of a member of Personnel because they made a Disclosure, sought Advice, made a complaint about a Reprisal or participated in an Investigation;

**“Trustee”** means a past or present member of the School District’s Board of Education; and

**“Wrongdoing”** refers to:

- a. a serious act or omission that, if proven, would constitute an offence under an enactment of British Columbia or Canada;
- b. an act or omission that creates a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons, or to the environment, other than a danger that is inherent in the performance of an employee’s duties or functions;
- c. a serious misuse of public funds or public assets;
- d. gross or systematic mismanagement;
- e. knowingly directing or counselling a person to commit any act or omission described in paragraphs (a) to (d) above.

## *STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES*

- The School District is committed to supporting ethical conduct in its operations and seeks to foster a culture in which Employees and Trustees are encouraged to disclose Wrongdoing, including by receiving, investigating, and responding to Disclosures and by providing information and training about the PIDA, this Policy and the Procedures.
- The School District will investigate Disclosures that it receives under this Policy. Investigations under this Policy will be carried out in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.
- The School District will not commit or tolerate Reprisals against any Employee or Trustee who, in good faith, makes a request for Advice, makes a Disclosure, participates in an Investigation, or makes a complaint under this Policy.
- The School District is committed to protecting the privacy of Disclosers, persons accused of Wrongdoing and those who participate in Investigations in a manner that is consistent with its obligations under the PIDA and FIPPA.

## *PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY*

All Personal Information that the School District collects, uses, or shares in the course of receiving or responding to a Disclosure, a request for Advice, a complaint of a Reprisal, or conducting an Investigation will be treated as confidential and will be used and disclosed as described in this Policy, the Procedures, the PIDA or as otherwise permitted or required under FIPPA and other applicable laws.

## *REPORTING*

Each year, the Superintendent shall prepare, in accordance with the requirements of the PIDA, and make available, a report concerning any Disclosures received, Investigations undertaken and findings of Wrongdoing. The annual report prepared by the Superintendent shall be presented to the Board of Education prior to submission. All reporting under this Policy will be in compliance with the requirements of FIPPA.

## *RESPONSIBILITY*

The Superintendent is responsible for the administration of this Policy and shall ensure that training and instruction is available to all Employees and Trustees concerning this Policy, the Procedures and the PIDA. In the event that the Superintendent is unable or unavailable to perform their duties under this Policy, the Superintendent may delegate their authority in writing to the Secretary-Treasurer or other senior members of Personnel.

## *DUTY TO DISCLOSE*

The Board expects that an employee who is aware of any improper activity or wrongdoing will bring the matter to the attention of the Board and give the district a reasonable opportunity to investigate and take corrective actions appropriate to the circumstances. The reportable activity will be reported in a timely manner.

Adopted: November 28, 2023  
Updated: February 27, 2024

## Sanctuary Schools Policy

### PREAMBLE

The Board of Education affirms the role of public education in supporting the well-being, dignity, and success of all students. Schools must be safe, inclusive, and welcoming environments where students are able to participate and learn without barriers related to their personal circumstances.

The Board of Education recognizes that students and families may experience uncertainty or vulnerability related to immigration or residency status. The purpose of this policy is to affirm that every student has the right to access public education without fear and that the district will act in accordance with its legal and moral obligations to protect student privacy, equity, and human dignity.

### POLICY STATEMENT

All school-age children who are ordinarily resident within the boundaries of the district are entitled to admission to school and the provision of educational services in accordance with the School Act.

This commitment applies to students and families regardless of immigration or residency status. No child who is ordinarily resident in the district will be denied access to education based solely on immigration status.

### OBJECTIVES

- Schools are expected to ensure that students can participate fully in educational programs and school life without barriers related to personal circumstances, including immigration or residency status.
- All school-age children who are ordinarily resident within the district are entitled to access public education in accordance with the School Act.
- No student who is ordinarily resident will be denied admission or access to educational services based solely on immigration or residency status.
- The District will take reasonable steps to support equitable access to education, recognizing its importance to student well-being and community inclusion.
- Personal information collected for the purposes of registration, student records, and educational programming will be used, stored, and disclosed in accordance with applicable privacy legislation, including the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- The District will not disclose personal information related to a student or their family to external parties except where legally required or permitted. Any such disclosure will be conducted in accordance with established District protocols.

#### Legal Reference:

School Act (RSBC 1996, c. 412)  
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (RSBC 1996, c. 165)  
British Columbia Human Rights Code (RSBC 1996, c. 210)  
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Part I of the Constitution Act, 1982)

Adopted: June 2026

## Gender-Based Violence & Sexual Misconduct Policy

### PREAMBLE

Gender-based violence and sexual misconduct is complex, underreported, and pervasive in our society, and can have serious and long-lasting impacts on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health and wellness of an individual and their families.

Gender-based violence and sexual misconduct exists on a continuum from discrimination and harassment to sexual violence, sexual exploitation, and related misconduct that targets a person because of gender, gender identity, or gender expression. Gender-based violence and sexual misconduct is rooted in unequal power relations and biased social constructions of gender. It disproportionately affects individuals who are Indigenous, racialized, persons with disabilities, and those who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+. The internet and online environments have increased opportunities for exploitation, including among youth. This policy recognizes historical and intergenerational factors linked to colonization and residential schooling that add complexity and vulnerability to those that experience gender-based violence and sexual misconduct.

Freedom from gender-based violence is an inherent human right.

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Board of Education is committed to safe, supportive, and inclusive learning and work environments, free from gender-based violence and sexual misconduct in any form across all district schools, facilities, district-related activities, and online environments involving district-affiliated individuals.

It is the responsibility of all School District staff and the expectation of the school community to promote an environment that is free of gender-based violence and sexual misconduct and to be knowledgeable about this policy and associated procedures.

This policy applies to gender-based violence and sexual misconduct incidents at all district schools and sites, and to gender-based violence and sexual misconduct occurring at any district-related activities or in circumstances where such conduct could have a negative impact on the school environment, including online activity outside school hours or premises.

### DEFINITIONS

- **Gender-based Violence (GBV):** Any unwanted behaviour targeting a person based on gender, gender identity, or gender expression. This includes verbal, physical, emotional, psychological, financial, or sexual conduct and may occur on a continuum from discrimination to sexual violence or misconduct.

- **Sexual Violence and Misconduct:** Any sexual activity or behaviour that occurs without voluntary and informed consent. This includes actions that are physical, sexual, verbal, psychological, or financial, and that target a person's sexuality. Sexual violence can be threatened, attempted, or completed and may involve one or multiple incidents, and can occur between strangers, peers, or intimate partners, including online.
- **District-Related Activity:** Any activity at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school environment, including online behaviours created outside of the school setting.

Additional definitions included in Appendix A.

## OBJECTIVES

The Board is committed to:

- A safe and secure learning and working environment free from gender-based violence and sexual misconduct.
- Preventative education and organizational practices that promote a culture of consent, safety, and respectful relationships.
- Individuals who have experienced gender-based violence and sexual misconduct receiving trauma-informed and culturally responsive support.
- Protecting the privacy and dignity of individuals involved in accordance with human rights, legislation, privacy laws, and educational standards.
- Accountability through clearly defined roles, training, and documented processes for education, reporting, investigation, discipline, and remedial measures.

Legal Reference:

British Columbia School Act  
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act  
BC Human Rights Code

Adopted: June 2026

## APPENDIX A - Definitions

**Coercive control:** describes a pattern of abusive behaviour used to control or dominate another person through repeated acts that disempower or make the other person feel “trapped” in the relationship. Examples include repeated acts of humiliation, intimidation, criticism, gaslighting, isolation, monitoring, jealousy, exploitation, manipulation, playing “mind games” and/or other weaponizing behaviours.

**Consent:** means the active, voluntary agreement to engage in a specific sexual activity at a particular time. Consent must be given actively, willingly, and continuously throughout all sexual activity. Any sexual activity without consent is sexual assault. Consent cannot be assumed or implied; silence or the absence of “no” is not consent. A person who is impaired by alcohol or drugs may not be capable of giving consent. Consent cannot be obtained through threats, fraud, deception, or coercion, and it can be withdrawn or revoked at any time. A person who is unconscious cannot give consent. A person may also be unable to give consent due to their age (under 12), an age difference between the people engaged in the sexual activity, or because one person is in a position of power or authority over the other.

**Cultural Safety:** refers to policies and practices that are respectful of diverse cultural identities, values, and lived experiences of individuals and communities. It involves ensuring that policies do not perpetuate harm, discrimination, or marginalization and instead actively support the dignity, empowerment, and safety of all individuals, particularly those who are most vulnerable. Cultural safety incorporates an acknowledgment of intergenerational trauma.

**Emotional abuse:** happens when a person repeatedly uses words, threats, or actions to control, frighten, isolate, embarrass or undermine another person, or to take away their self-respect. It is also called psychological abuse. It can include:

- put downs, name calling or insults
- frequently yelling or raising one’s voice at the other person
- ongoing criticism, blaming or mocking the other person
- controlling behaviour, including stopping someone from seeing friends or family
- preventing the other person from practicing their religion, faith, or culture, or expressing their own opinions
- destroying someone’s personal belongings, hurting pets, or threatening to do so
- bullying, intimidation or humiliation
- making false or unsupported accusations, including accusations of flirting, cheating, or being interested in someone else
- threatening:
  - to harm the other person, themselves, or someone important to that person
  - to share intimate images, private information, or secrets
  - to withhold love and affection from the other person
- gaslighting or playing mind games

**Gaslighting:** is a form of psychological manipulation that usually happens over time and causes a person to question their own memory, judgment, or sense of reality. It can lead to confusion, loss of confidence and self-esteem, uncertainty about one’s emotional or mental stability, and dependence on the person causing the harm.

**Gender-based Violence:** any unwanted behaviour targeting a person based on gender, gender identity, or gender expression, and which behaviour may be verbal, physical, emotional, psychological, financial, or sexual.

**Sexual Violence and Misconduct:** Is any sexual activity or behaviour that happens without a person's consent. This can include unwanted or unwelcome actions that are physical, sexual, verbal, psychological, or financial, and that target a person's sexuality. Can be threatened, attempted, or carried out, and may happen once or repeatedly. Can happen between strangers, between students or co-workers, or between people in a relationship, and can happen in-person or online. Includes:

- Sexual assault
- Sexual exploitation
- Sexual abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Threats of harm to oneself or others
- Threats or pressure to engage in sexual activity
- Coercive or controlling behaviour\*, including gaslighting
- Stalking
- Indecent or sexualized exposure
- Voyeurism
- Trafficking
- Sharing or threatening to share intimate and/or sexually explicit images or personal information without consent
- Creating, showing, or distributing pictures or materials that are degrading or of a sexual nature
- Sharing or threatening to share private information about a person's sexual history or sexuality without their consent

**Homophobia:** refers to attitudes or actions based on fear, dislike, or lack of acceptance of gay, lesbian, bisexual, or Two Spirit people. These attitudes are often rooted in traditional beliefs about gender or sexuality.

**Indecent or Sexualized Exposure:** refers to intentionally exposing one's genitals in public.

**Intersectional (Intersectionality):** refers to how a person's lived experiences are shaped by the interaction of different social positions that can result in privilege or oppression. These may include sex, sexual identity, gender identity or expression, Indigeneity, race, ethnicity, dis/ability, or faith. These interactions are rooted in and shaped by interconnecting systems of power such as colonialism, racism, homophobia and transphobia, ableism, and patriarchy.

**Misogyny:** means the belief or attitude that men and masculinity, are more valuable, powerful, or naturally dominant than women and femininity.

**Peer-to-peer:** means interactions between children or youth who are close in age or stage of development.

**Physical abuse:** is the intentional use of force against someone without their consent. It can cause pain or injuries that may be long lasting. Physical abuse can include:

- pushing or shoving
- hitting, slapping, or kicking
- pinching or punching
- strangling or choking
- spitting or biting
- stabbing or cutting
- throwing objects at someone
- damaging someone's property
- holding someone down
- other acts that hurt or cause physical harm

**Sexual Assault:** is any sexual contact without the other person's consent and can range from unwanted kissing or sexual touching to forced sexual intercourse (also known as rape).

**Sexual Abuse:** describes any situation where a person is forced, pressured, or manipulated into unwanted sexual activity, and can include being forced to look at or watch sexual images or acts.

**Sexual Exploitation:** occurs when someone uses a position of power, authority, or trust for sexual purposes, and can include, but is not limited to, situations involving blackmail.

**Sexual Harassment:** refers to any unwanted sexual behaviour which contributes to an intimidating, hostile, offensive, or uncomfortable learning or work environment. It can happen in person or online, and may include, but is not limited to:

- Unwanted sexual comments, flirting, advances, or propositions
- Requests for sexual favours
- Unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature (such as touching, grabbing, pinching, or brushing up against a person)
- Sexually suggestive, obscene, or degrading comments or gestures, or name-calling
- Sexual jokes or remarks
- Leering, staring, or catcalling
- Stalking or cyber-stalking
- Sharing or displaying sexual images, videos, or livestreams, including material involving sexual violence
- Creating AI generated sexual images of another person
- Unwanted questions or remarks or rumours about someone's sex life, appearance, clothing, gender expression or sexual orientation
- Promises of rewards (spoken or implied) in exchange for complying with a sexual request
- Intimidation, such as blocking or cornering someone in a sexual way
- Microaggressions of a sexual nature

**Stalking:** involves repeated unwanted attention that makes someone feel uncomfortable or afraid, and can include repeatedly following, watching, or communicating with someone over time

**Trafficking:** involves recruiting, housing, controlling, or transporting a person for the purpose of sexually exploiting them or enabling their exploitation.

**Transphobia:** refers to attitudes or actions that deny, disrespect, or violate the existence and human rights of trans people.

**Trauma-Informed:** means recognizing how trauma affects the brain and a person's life and responding in ways that avoid re-traumatization. A trauma-informed approach prioritizes safety, choice, empowerment, and respect, acknowledges that healing looks different for everyone, and rejects myths and stereotypes about victims and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

**Two-Spirit:** is a term used to describe an Indigenous person who embodies both masculine and feminine qualities, often involving a spiritual, cultural and gender identity outside the Western gender binary.

**2SLGBTQIA+:** is an acronym that stands for Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and asexual, and the '+' recognizes that there are many more gender and sexual identities as well.

**Victim/survivor:** refers to a person who has experienced gender-based violence and/or sexual misconduct.

**Voyeurism:** means watching someone for sexualized purposes without their knowledge and consent, including but not limited to while they are undressing, naked, or engaged in sexual or other private activity; includes "up-skirting".