

NUMBER:	<i>to be determined</i>
TOPIC:	Purchasing Procedure & Vendor Relationship Code of Ethics
EFFECTIVE:	March 31, 2010
CROSS-REFERENCE:	
REVISION DATE:	March 31, 2011
RESPONSIBILITY:	Superintendent of Business Services and Treasurer

INTENT STATEMENT

Employees of the Halton District School Board occupy positions of public trust and confidence. It is imperative that employees of the Board be, and be seen to be, acting in the best interests of the public they serve.

The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to define acceptable behaviours and standards that should be followed by everyone involved with supply chain activities to ensure an ethical, professional and accountable organization.

Code of Ethics

The Board expects honesty, integrity, professionalism, responsible management and the serving of the public interest to be primary values in its procurement decisions. In addition, participants shall know and obey the letter and spirit of laws, regulations and trade agreements applicable to supply chain management.

Board employees at all times will:

- a. maintain an unimpeachable standard of integrity, beyond reproach, in all business relationships both inside and outside the Board that will bear the closest public scrutiny,
- b. reject and denounce any business practice that is improper or inappropriate or may appear to be improper or inappropriate,
- c. preserve the image and integrity of the Board,
- d. not use the authority of public office for personal benefit of any kind,
- e. treat all suppliers in a fair and equitable manner and must not give any advantage or preferential treatment to anyone,
- f. not publicly endorse suppliers or products.

Reasonable hospitality is an accepted courtesy of a business relationship. Board staff may only accept infrequent and reasonable hospitality, or business gifts of a small intrinsic value less than \$75.00. The frequency and nature of gifts or hospitality shall not be allowed to be such that the recipient might be, or might be deemed by others to have been, influenced in making a business decision as a consequence of accepting such gift or hospitality. The absence of actual and perceived influence is of particular importance leading up to and during the tendering and/or proposal process for goods and/or services. Individuals should seek written approval from the Superintendent of Business prior to accepting the gift or hospitality to avoid either real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Conflict of Interest:

A conflict of interest exists where the decisions made and/or the actions taken in the exercise of duties by a Board employee, Trustee, member of a statutory committee or council of the Board, including School Council members could be, or could be perceived to be, affected by the personal, financial or business interests of that person or the person's family, friends, or business associates.

A Board employee, Trustee, member of a statutory committee or council of the Board, including School Council members are responsible and accountable for using good judgment in the exercise of the Board's duties and must:

- a. disclose in writing any real or perceived conflict of interest in a purchasing decision to the Manager of Purchasing, and
- b. avoid situations which may present a conflict of interest while dealing with persons or organizations doing business or seeking to do business with the Board.

No employee of the Board or Trustee of the Board shall personally sell goods or services to the Board, nor have a direct or indirect interest in a company that sells goods or services to the Board. The Board may reject any tender submitted, or cancel any contract awarded, in contravention of this requirement. Any sales of goods or services by employee's immediate family members may be deemed to be a conflict of interest. Such conflict must be declared prior to any transaction taking place. Purchasing must be provided with a written declaration of that conflict of interest to determine whether or not there is a conflict and to advise on further proceedings.

In addition, the Education Act of Ontario in Chapter E.2, Section 217 states:

“No teacher, supervisory officer or other employee of the Board or of the Ministry shall, for compensation of any kind other than his or her salary as such employee, promote, offer for sale or sell, directly or indirectly, any book or other teaching or learning materials, equipment, furniture, stationery or other articles to any board, provincial school or teacher's college, or to any pupil enrolled therein. No person or organization or agent thereof shall employ a teachers, supervisory officer or offer employee of the Board or of the Ministry to promote, offer for sale or sell, directly or indirectly any book or other teaching or learning materials, equipment, furniture, stationery or other article to any board, provincial school or teacher's college, or to any pupil enrolled therein. Or shall, directly or indirectly, give or pay compensation to any such teacher supervisory officer or employee for such purpose.”

Confidentiality:

Confidential information must be safeguarded.

All employees acknowledge that, as part of their duties to the Board, they may be exposed to confidential financial, business and/or commercial information belonging to the Board that may provide a financial, business, commercial or competitive advantage. Except as required by the law, all employees agree not to use, directly or indirectly, the Board's proprietary or confidential information disclosed or entrusted to that employee or developed or generated by that employee during the performance of his or her duties for the Board.

It is considered unethical and damaging to the Board's reputation to allow vendor's proprietary and/or confidential information to pass to another vendor or any person with a financial interest in the information whether potential or actual, direct or indirect.