TRUSTEES’ CODE OF CONDUCT

1. POLICY

The Trustees of the Halton District School Board occupy positions of public trust and confidence. They are expected to discharge their duties and responsibilities in a professional and impartial manner. Their behaviours are guided by integrity, impartiality, independence, accountability, transparency, leadership, responsiveness, honesty, confidentiality, legality and respect. As a result, every Trustee of the Board shall uphold the letter and spirit of this Trustee Code of Conduct.

Trustees have clearly defined duties and powers. As a Board, Trustees are responsible for promoting student achievement and well-being, and for the effective stewardship of resources. These duties and powers are outlined in Sections 169 through 171 of the Education Act. Trustees are elected to represent students, parents and stakeholders on the Board. This relationship with the electorate is governed by the Municipal Elections Act and the Education Act.

This Code of Conduct is a covenant among the Trustees of the Board. It is intended to instruct and guide Trustees through the challenges of public office as they undertake their individual and joint responsibilities. It is meant to provide clarity regarding Trustees’ conduct and the management of their relationships with the Board of Trustees, staff, students, parents and stakeholders in public education. A Code of Conduct policy contributes to confidence in public education and respect for the integrity of Trustees in the community.

2. DEFINITIONS

In this Trustee Code of Conduct, the following definitions apply:

"Bias" means and includes an inclination; bent; preconceived opinion; and a predisposition to decide a cause or an issue in a certain way, which does not leave the mind perfectly open to objectively treat all matters fairly and equally.

"Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive" or “BPS Procurement Directive” means the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive issued by the Management Board of Cabinet, effective July 1, 2011, as same may be amended from time to time.

"Conflict of interest" means and includes a situation in which financial or other personal considerations have the potential to compromise or bias professional judgment and objectivity. An apparent conflict of interest is one in which a reasonable person would think that the Trustee’s judgment is likely to be compromised.

A conflict of interest may exist when the decisions and/or actions of Trustees during the course of exercising their duties are affected by or perceived by another party or person to be affected by the Trustee’s personal, financial or business interests or the personal, financial or business interests of a relative, friend, and/or business associate of the Trustee.
"Economic, financial or commercial advantage" means the receipt, or expectation of receipt, of anything of value by either a Trustee of the Board, or a relative, friend and/or business associate of the Trustee resulting from a personal relationship.

"Favour" means any act on the part of a Supplier for the benefit of a Trustee or a relative, friend and/or business associate of the Trustee which may be perceived as having been made with a view to influencing process.

"Mitigating action" means and includes an action to avoid, minimize, reduce, eliminate or rectify a conflict of interest.

"Preferential treatment" includes unfairly affording opportunities to one or more Suppliers at the expense of all other Suppliers that are eligible to participate in the opportunities.

"Supplier" includes any person or organization that, based on an assessment of that person's or organization's financial, technical and commercial capacity is capable of fulfilling the requirements of the Board's procurement of goods and/or services.

"Supply Chain Activities" means and includes all activities directly or indirectly related to the Board's planning, sourcing, procurement, moving, and payment processes. Budgeting, planning and requesting, as well as the approval and processing of the acquisition for goods and services are all Supply Chain Activities.

"Trustee" means a Trustee of the Board.

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3. RESPECT FOR CONFIDENTIALITY

A Trustee shall:

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 that was closed to the public (private session), and keep confidential the substance of deliberations of a meeting closed to the public (private session), unless required to divulge such information by law or authorized by the Board to do so;

2. Not use confidential information for either personal gain or to the detriment of the Board, a fellow Trustee, a staff person, a student or a student's family, community members or partners;

3. Not divulge confidential information, including personal information about an identifiable individual or information subject to solicitor-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;

4. Accept that the duty of confidentiality with respect to private and confidential financial, business and/or commercial information, personnel information, student information, and legal matters and opinions survives their term as Trustee.

4. COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION

A Trustee shall:

1. Ensure that student success and well-being are considered foremost;
2. Fulfill their duties in accordance with the Education Act and any regulations, directives or guidelines thereunder, and comply with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act and any other relevant legislation, such as but not limited to the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive;

3. Ensure Board resources are not used for personal gain, for themselves, relatives, friends and/or business associates. Trustees recognize that such use of Board resources directly or indirectly for their personal benefit may constitute a criminal breach of trust contrary to s.122 of the Criminal Code (Canada);

4. Consult with parents, students and supporters of the Board on the Board’s Multi Year Plan under clause 169.1 (1) (f);

5. Accept that authority rests with the Board, and that Trustees have no authority other than that exercised as or delegated through the Board;

6. Respect and understand the roles and duties of the individual Trustees, Board of Trustees, the Director of Education and the Chair of the Board;

7. Accept the Chair of the Board as spokesperson to the public on behalf of the Board, unless otherwise determined by the Board;

8. Entrust the day to day management of the Board to its staff through the Board’s Director of Education.

5. INTEGRITY and DIGNITY OF OFFICE and CIVIL BEHAVIOUR

A Trustee shall:

1. Fulfill their duties loyally, faithfully, impartially and in a manner that will inspire public confidence in the abilities and integrity of the Board;

2. Recognize that the expenditure of school board funds is a public trust, and endeavour to ensure that the funds are expended efficiently, in the best interests of the students;

3. Act with decorum and respect the differing points of view of other Trustees, staff, students and all other stakeholders;

4. Represent all constituents (with or without children in our school system) at the Board table;

5. Respectfully explain a minority position in context of a decision;

6. Respect the rights of individual Trustees while honouring the will of the majority;

7. Express individual opinions on issues under consideration, refraining from personal, demeaning or disparaging comments;

8. Render all decisions based on available facts and independent judgment;

9. Carefully review all materials provided with agenda packages to prepare for attending and participating in meetings of the Board or committees of the Board;

10. Participate in Trustee development opportunities to enhance their ability to fulfill their obligations as a Trustee;

11. Not advance allegations of misconduct and/or a breach of this Code of Conduct that are trivial, frivolous, vexatious, made in bad faith, or vindictive in nature against another Trustee of the Board.
6. **UPHOLDING DECISIONS**

Trustees shall:

1. Be bound by the decisions of the Board;
2. Uphold the implementation of any Board resolution after it is passed by the Board;
3. Be prepared to explain the rationale for any decision passed by the Board. A Trustee may respectfully state their position on a resolution provided it does not in any way undermine the implementation of the resolution;
4. Monitor the decisions and direction of the board in accordance with the Education Act and applicable law;

7. **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Trustees shall:

1. Comply with the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, R.S.O., 1990, c. M-50 provisions, which requires a Trustee to declare and disclose the general nature of the interest for all direct and indirect pecuniary conflicts of interest and abstain from discussions and voting.
2. In all situations where a Trustee or their spouse, child or parent has a pecuniary interest in a matter before the Board, declare a conflict of interest, disclose the general nature of the interest, and abstain from discussions and voting with respect to that issue. Where such conflict of interest arises during an in-camera session of the Board, the Trustee must absent themselves from the room during discussion and deliberation of the issue for which they have a conflict.
3. Comply with the requirements of the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, and avoid conflicts of interest as defined by this Code of Conduct, as well as the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive.
4. If involved in Supply Chain Activities, declare actual or potential conflicts of interest. Where a conflict arises, it is to be evaluated and an appropriate mitigating action is to be taken.
5. Be responsible and accountable for exercising good judgement and avoiding situations that might present a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. Where a conflict of interest might exist, each Trustee has an affirmative duty to disclose such conflict when it becomes apparent.
6. Not use their position, authority or influence for personal, financial or material gain or personal business purposes or for the personal, financial or material gain or business purposes of a relative, friend and/or business associate. A Trustee shall not use their office to advance the Trustee’s interests or the interests of any family member or person or organization with whom or with which the Trustee is related or associated.
7. Not accept a gift from any person or entity that has dealings with the Board if a reasonable person might conclude that the gift could influence the Trustee when performing their duties to the Board. [http://www.hdsb.ca/Policy/Hospitality.pdf](http://www.hdsb.ca/Policy/Hospitality.pdf)

8. **IDENTIFYING A BREACH OF THE CODE**

1. A Trustee who has reasonable grounds to believe that a Trustee of the Board has breached the Board’s Code of Conduct may bring the alleged breach to the attention
of the Chair, Vice Chair and Trustee alleged of the breach. The Code of Conduct applies equally to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board. In the case of an allegation of a breach of the Code by the Chair, wherever a process requires action by the Chair, it shall be modified to read the Vice-Chair, alternate or Committee of the Board.

2. Any allegation of a breach of the Code must be brought to the attention of the Committee of the Whole in Private Session no later than six (6) weeks after the breach comes to the knowledge of the Trustee reporting the breach.

   Notwithstanding the foregoing, in no circumstance shall an inquiry into a breach of the Code be undertaken after the expiration of six (6) months from the time the contravention is alleged to have occurred.

3. Any allegation of a breach of the Code of Conduct shall be investigated following the Informal or Formal Complaint Procedures. It is recognized that a contravention may be trivial, or committed through inadvertence or error in judgment. Only serious and/or recurring breaches by a Trustee should be investigated following the Formal Complaint Procedure.

9. CHAIR/PRESIDING OFFICER
   1. The Code of Conduct applies equally to the Chair of the Board. In the case of an allegation of a breach of the Code by the Chair, or if the complainant is the Chair, wherever a process requires action by the Chair, it shall be modified to read the Vice-Chair, Alternate or Committee of the Board.

   2. Each year alternate Trustees shall be chosen by the Board to be used when the circumstances warrant that alternate Trustees are needed in place of the Chair and/or Vice-Chair of the Board to carry out any of the duties required under this Code of Conduct and Enforcement. In no circumstance shall the Trustee who brought the complaint of a breach of the Code of Conduct be involved in conducting any Formal or Informal inquiry into the complaint.

   3. Nothing in this Code prevents the Chair or Presiding Officer of any meeting of the Board or committee of the Board from exercising their power pursuant to s. 207(3) of the Education Act to expel or exclude from any meeting any person who has been guilty of improper conduct at the meeting. For greater certainty, this may be done at the sole discretion of the Chair or Presiding Officer, as the case may be, and without the necessity of a complaint or conducting an inquiry before an expulsion or exclusion from a meeting. A Trustee who does not abide by a reasonable exclusion from a meeting is deemed to have breached this Code.

   4. The Chair of the Board or Presiding Officer shall follow all Policies, By-laws and Rules of Order adopted by the Halton District School Board. A breach of a Rule of Order should be dealt with at the meeting by a Trustee rising on a point of order or appealing a ruling of the Chair. Enforcement of the Code of Conduct may be required for persistent or improper use of the applicable rules of order by the Chair or Presiding Officer.

10. INFORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE
   1. The Chair of the Board, on their own initiative, or at the request of a Trustee of the Board (without the necessity of providing a formal written complaint) who alleges a breach of the Code has occurred, may meet informally with a Trustee of the Board
who is alleged to have breached the Code, to discuss the breach. The purpose of the meeting is to bring the allegation of the breach to the attention of the Trustee and to discuss remedial measures to correct the offending behaviour. The Informal Complaint Procedure is conducted in private.

2. The remedial measures may include, for example, a warning, an apology, and/or the requirement of the Trustee to engage in the successful completion of professional development training such as that offered by the Ontario Education Services Corporation Professional Development Program for School Board Trustees. If the Chair of the Board [committee of the board] and the Trustee alleged to have breached this Code cannot agree on a remedy, then a formal complaint may be brought against the Trustee alleged to have breached this Code and that complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the Formal Complaint Procedure below.

11. FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE
1. A Trustee who has reasonable grounds to believe that another Trustee of the Board has breached the Board's Code of Conduct may bring the breach to the attention of the Board by first providing to the Chair of the Board, a written, signed complaint setting out the following:
   a. the name of the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code;
   b. the alleged breach or breaches of the Code;
   c. information as to when the breach came to the Trustee's attention;
   d. the grounds for the belief by the Trustee that a breach of the Code has occurred;
   and
   e. the names and contact information of any witnesses to the breach or any other persons who have relevant information regarding the alleged breach.

2. Except as provided below, if a written complaint is filed with the Chair of the Board then a formal inquiry shall be undertaken, unless the complainant subsequently withdraws the complaint or agrees that the complaint may be dealt with in accordance with the Informal Complaint Procedure.

3. In an election year for Trustees, a Code of Conduct complaint respecting a Trustee who is seeking re-election shall not be brought during the period commencing two months prior to election day and ending after the first Board meeting after the new term of office of the Board commences. If the Trustee accused of a breach of the Code is not re-elected, no inquiry into the alleged breach of the Code by that Trustee shall be undertaken. The limitation period for bringing a complaint shall be extended as necessary.

4. The Chair of the Board shall provide to all Trustees of the Board a confidential copy of the complaint within ten (10) days of receiving it. The complaint, any response to the complaint and the investigation of the complaint shall be confidential until it is before the Board of Trustees for a decision as to whether or not the Trustee has breached this Code.

12. REFUSAL TO CONDUCT FORMAL INQUIRY
1. If the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board are of the opinion that the complaint is out of time, trivial, frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith, or that there are no grounds or insufficient grounds for a formal inquiry, a formal inquiry shall not be conducted and
a confidential report stating the reasons for not doing so shall be provided to all Trustees of the Board.

2. If the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board cannot agree on the above then a full formal inquiry shall be conducted.

3. If an allegation of a breach of the Code of Conduct on its face is with respect to the non-compliance with a more specific Board Policy with a separate complaint procedure, the allegation shall be processed under that procedure.

13. STEPS OF FORMAL INQUIRY

1. If a formal inquiry of an allegation of a breach of the Code of Conduct is undertaken, it shall be done by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board, if appropriate, or any two of the Chair, Vice-Chair and the alternate Trustees, or an outside consultant chosen by the whole board of trustees.

2. Regardless of who undertakes the formal inquiry the following steps shall be followed:

   a) The Statutory Powers Procedure Act does not apply to anything done regarding the Enforcement of this Code of Conduct. No formal trial-type hearing will be conducted.

   b) Procedural fairness and the rules of natural justice shall govern the formal inquiry. The formal inquiry will be conducted in private.

   c) The formal inquiry may involve both written and oral statements by any witnesses, the Trustee bringing the complaint and the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct.

   d) The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct shall have an opportunity to respond to the allegations both in a private meeting with the person(s) undertaking the formal inquiry and in writing.

   e) It is expected that the formal inquiry will be conducted within a reasonable period of time which will depend on the circumstances of the case. The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct shall provide a written response to the allegations within 10 days of receiving the written allegation, or such extended period of the time as the investigators deem appropriate in the circumstance.

   f) If the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct refuses to participate in the formal inquiry, the formal inquiry will continue in his/her absence.

   g) Once the formal inquiry is complete, the investigators shall provide a confidential draft copy of their report containing the findings of fact to the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct and the Trustee who brought the complaint for their written comment to the investigator(s). The purpose of providing the draft report to the parties is to ensure no errors of fact are contained in it. The two Trustees shall have ten (10) days (or such reasonable period of time as deemed appropriate by the investigators) from the receipt of the draft report to provide a written response.

   h) The final report shall outline the finding of facts, but not contain a recommendation or opinion as to whether the Code of Conduct has been breached. This will be determined by the Board of Trustees as a whole.
i) If the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board when conducting the formal inquiry cannot agree on the final finding of facts, it shall be referred to an outside investigator to complete the formal inquiry.

14. SUSPENSION OF FORMAL INQUIRY

1. If the investigators, when conducting the formal inquiry, discover that the subject-matter of the formal inquiry is being investigated by police, that a charge has been laid, or is being dealt with in accordance with a procedure established under another Act, the formal inquiry shall be suspended until the police investigation, charge or matter under another Act has been finally disposed of. This shall be reported to the rest of the Board of Trustees.

15. DECISION

1. The final report shall be delivered to the Board of Trustees, and a decision by the Board of Trustees as to whether or not the Code of Conduct has been breached and the sanction, if any, for the breach shall be made as soon as practical after receipt of the final report by the Board.

2. Trustees shall consider only the findings in the final report when voting on the decision and sanction. No Trustee shall undertake their own investigation of the matter.

3. If the Board of Trustees determine that there has been no breach of the Code of Conduct or that a contravention occurred, although the Trustee took all reasonable measures to prevent it, or that a contravention occurred that was trivial, or committed through inadvertence, or an error of judgment made in good faith, no sanction shall be imposed.

4. The determination of a breach of the Code of Conduct and the imposition of a sanction with respect to a complaint investigated in accordance with the Formal Complaint Procedure must be done by resolution of the Board at a meeting of the Board, and the vote on the resolution shall be open to the public. The resolutions shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The reasons for the decision shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Both resolutions shall be decided by a vote of at least 2/3 of the Trustees of the Board present and voting.

5. Despite s.207 (1) of the Education Act, the part of the meeting of the Board during which a breach or alleged breach of the Board's Code of Conduct is considered may be closed to the public when the breach or alleged breach involves any of the matters described in clauses 207(2) (a) to (e) being:

   a. the security of the property of the board;
   b. the disclosure of intimate, personal or financial information in respect of a member of the board or committee, an employee or prospective employee of the board or a pupil or their parent or guardian;
   c. the acquisition or disposal of a school site;
   d. decisions in respect of negotiations with employees of the board; or
   e. litigation affecting the board.

6. The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct shall not vote on a resolution to determine whether or not there is a breach or the imposition of a sanction. The Trustee who brought the complaint to the attention of the Board also shall not vote on those resolutions.
7. The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct may be present during the deliberations regarding the above but shall not participate in the deliberations, and shall not answer any questions at that meeting.

8. The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct shall not in any way, after the final report is completed, influence the vote on the decision of breach or sanction, except as permitted below after these decisions have been made.

16. SANCTIONS

1. If the Board determines that the Trustee has breached the Board’s Code of Conduct, the Board may impose one or more of the following sanctions:
   a. Censure of the Trustee.
   b. Barring the Trustee from attending all or part of a meeting of the Board or a meeting of a committee of the Board.
   c. Barring the member from sitting on one or more committees of the Board, for the period of time specified by the Board.

2. The Board shall not impose a sanction which is more onerous than the above but may impose one that is less onerous such as a warning or a requirement that the Trustee successfully complete specified professional development courses at the expense of the Board. The Board has no power to declare the Trustee's seat vacant.

3. A Trustee who is barred from attending all or part of a meeting of the Board or a meeting of a committee of the Board is not entitled to receive any materials that relate to that meeting or that part of the meeting and that are not available to members of the public.

4. The imposition of a sanction barring a Trustee from attending all or part of a meeting of the Board shall be deemed to be authorization for the Trustee to be absent from the meeting and therefore, not in violation of the Education Act regarding absences from meetings.

17. RECONSIDERATION

1. If the Board determines a Trustee has breached the Board’s Code of Conduct, the Board shall:
   a. give the Trustee written notice of the determination, the reasons for the decision and any sanction imposed by the Board;
   b. the notice shall inform the Trustee that he or she may make written submissions to the Board in respect of the determination or sanction by the date specified in the notice that is at least fourteen (14) days after the notice is received by the Trustee; and
   c. consider any submissions made by the Trustee and shall confirm or revoke the determination or sanction within 14 days after the submissions are received.

2. If the Board revokes a determination, any sanction imposed by the Board is revoked.

3. If the Board confirms a determination, the Board shall, within the fourteen (14) days above, confirm, vary or revoke the sanction.

4. If a sanction is varied or revoked, the variation or revocation shall be deemed to be effective as of the date the original determination was made.
5. The Board decisions to confirm or revoke a determination or confirm, vary or revoke a sanction shall be done by resolution at a meeting of the Board and the vote on the resolution shall be open to the public. Both resolutions shall be decided by a vote of at least 2/3 of the Trustees present and voting. The resolutions shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting together with the reasons for confirming or revoking a determination. The Board shall provide to the Trustee alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct written notice of the decision to confirm or revoke the determination together with reasons for the decision and written notice of any decision to confirm, vary or revoke a sanction. The Trustee alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct shall not vote on those resolutions. The Trustee who brought the complaint to the attention of the Board also shall not vote on those resolutions.

6. The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct may be present during the deliberations regarding the above but may not participate in the deliberations and shall not be required to answer any questions at that meeting.

7. If appropriate, the original sanction may be stayed pending the reconsideration by the Board of the determination or sanction.

18. DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1. The Director of Education shall provide Trustees with a copy of this code and copies of documents referred to herein and upon which it relies, in a timely fashion, so that they may be read and understood prior to signing this document;

2. The Director of Education shall provide legal counsel for any Trustee who requires it prior to signing this document;

3. The Director of Education shall ensure that each Trustee signs this document when being sworn into office.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND UNDERTAKING
As Trustee of the Board I shall uphold this Code of Conduct.
I confirm that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Halton District School Board’s Trustee Code of Conduct, Policies and By-Laws.

DATE: __________________

TRUSTEE SIGNATURE: ______________________________

Please Print Trustee Name: __________________________

WITNESS SIGNATURE: ______________________________

Please Print Witness Name: __________________________