



## ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE

### Title: Public Tendering

**Effective Date:** February 14, 2013  
**Updated:** March 1, 2019

**Responsibility:** Superintendent of Business

### Rationale

It is the intent of the Near North District School Board to ensure that publically funded goods and services, including construction, consulting services, and information technology are acquired through a process that is open, fair and transparent.

### Principles

As a Broader Public Sector (BPS) organization, the Near North District School Board will embrace five key principals that will allow such organizations to achieve value for money while following a procurement process that is fair and transparent to all stakeholders:

- **Accountability**  
Organizations must be accountable for the results of their procurement decisions and the appropriateness of the process.
- **Transparency**  
Organizations must be transparent to all stakeholders. Wherever possible, stakeholders must have equal access to information on procurement opportunities, processes and results.
- **Value for Money**  
Organizations must maximize the value they receive from the use of public funds. A value-for money approach aims to deliver goods and services at the optimum total lifecycle cost.
- **Quality Service Delivery**  
Front-line services provided by the Board must receive the right product, at the right time, in the right place.
- **Process Standardization**  
Standardized processes should provide efficiencies and create a level playing field.

Our mission is to educate learners to their fullest potential in preparation for life-long learning.

## **Purchasing Code of Ethics**

The Board expects that honesty, integrity, professionalism, and responsible management guide all procurement decisions. All individuals involved in the purchasing or other supply-chain related activities must comply with the Board's Purchasing Code of Ethics and the laws of Canada and Ontario. Refer to Appendix # 1 for the Purchasing Code of Ethics.

## **Conflict of Interest**

In procurement activities with suppliers seeking to do business with the Board, staff is responsible for using good judgment to avoid situations that may present a conflict of interest.

No employee of the Near North District School Board shall knowingly purchase on behalf of the Board any goods or services from a supplier that is owned or operated by an employee of the Board or by a relative of an employee of the Board (including parent, child, spouse, partner, sibling, in-law). No employee nor trustee shall have a pecuniary interest, either directly or indirectly, in any contract with the Board or with any person acting for the Board in any contract for the supply of goods or services for which the Board pays or is liable, directly or indirectly. Such supplier, or employee, could be perceived to have a direct influence on the use of a particular good or service by the Board.

In procurement activities with suppliers, staff must declare a conflict of interest if the circumstances could give, or be perceived to give a supplier an unfair advantage. Where a conflict of interest arises, it must be evaluated and an appropriate mitigating action must be taken.

All Board staff must adhere to Section 217 of the *Education Act* regarding the promotion or sale of goods and services of the Board.

## **Purchasing Standards**

The Board will ensure that the purchasing function is performed with:

- a) Open competitive bidding on the acquisition of goods and services.
- b) A high level of service to all schools and administrative departments.
- c) The required quality of products and services through purchase, lease or rental at the lowest total acquisition cost from the most responsive and responsible vendor. The lowest of any submission shall not necessarily be accepted.

This policy applies to all personnel involved in the procurement of goods and services on behalf of the Board including schools, administrative departments, individuals and groups' fundraising under the umbrella of the Board.

## **Criteria for Dollar Limits on Purchases related to Quotations, Tenders and Proposals**

The Board must conduct an open competitive procurement process where the estimated value of procurement of goods or services is \$100,000 (excluding taxes) or more.

The Board must competitively procure consulting services irrespective of value.

It is not permitted to reduce the overall value of procurement in order to circumvent competitive procurement thresholds. (e.g., dividing a single procurement into multiple procurements)

The following dollar limits indicate the competitive purchasing process to be followed by all staff when acquiring supplies and services:

<b>Value of Procurement</b>	<b>Means of Procurement Excluding Taxes</b>	
\$0 - \$200	Petty Cash	Recommended
\$0 - Varies	Board Purchasing Card (Limits vary with positions of authority)	Recommended for travel and where a purchase order is not accepted
\$0 - \$10,000	Purchase order. No quotes required. Purchase must be within the authority and budget limits ensuring that the acquisition of such goods and services has encouraged open, fair and competitive pricing and that such is in the best interest of the Board.	Recommended
Exception	If the value is under \$100,000 and deemed to be a sole/single source initiative, written explanation supporting the sole/single source procurement is to be submitted to the Superintendent of Business for review and approval.	Required
\$10,001 - \$50,000	Request for Quotation (RFQ) Informal - which describes exactly the goods and services to be provided; the proposal evaluations based solely on price. Three (3) written quotations on firm's letterhead to be attached electronically with the requisition and submitted to purchasing.	Required
\$50,001 - \$100,000	Request for Quotation (RFQ) Formal / Sealed Response.  Three (3) written quotes on Board Bid Form to be completed with suggested suppliers by the requesting department/school submitted to the Purchasing Department, Date and Time as prescribed. RFQ shall describe exactly the goods and or services to be provided. The RFQ evaluations based solely on price. Award to be made in collaboration with purchasing.	Required
\$100,001 +	Request for Tender (RFT) or Request for Proposal (RFP)	Required

	Request for Tender (RFT) and/or Request for Proposal (RFP) are to be advertised and posted on the Board's website, local newspapers, and available through an electronic tendering system that is readily accessible by all Canadian Suppliers nationally. Vendor responses are to be sealed.	
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The Board reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, quotations, tenders and proposals, in whole or in part, submitted by suppliers in accordance with the terms and conditions of the bid and the Board's policies and procedures.

Procurement documents and other pertinent information must be retained for (7) seven years. Information provided by suppliers should be considered confidential and commercially sensitive. Use and distribution of the information provided should be restricted to those involved in the procurement process and must be kept in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet, when not in use during and after the procurement process.

### **Signing Authorities – Approval Authority Schedule (As approved by Board)**

Superintendents, school administrators and managers are responsible for their budgets. They can make purchases of goods and services on behalf of the Board in accordance with the purchasing policies of the Board within their approved budgets as approved by the Board of Trustees and subject to the following Commitment Approval Authority Schedule:

#### **Commitment Approval Authority Schedule – Public Tendering:**

Board of Trustees	Over \$300,000
Director of Education	\$100,000 to \$300,000
Superintendent of Business	Up to \$100,000

All long-term rental commitments and service contracts are not to exceed a period of 60 months. All contracts entered into by the Board are to be endorsed and approved by the Board. The only signing authorities of the Board are the Chair of the Board of Trustees and either one of the Director of Education or Superintendent of Business.

If an individual department has a unique structure, the Superintendent of Business must approve the signing authority that is being requested outside of the above-mentioned staff. In addition, contracts or purchases shall not be divided to avoid the requirements of the purchasing policy.

### **Request for Information (RFI)**

Used as a tool to access market capabilities to determine general supplier, service or product information. Suppliers are given a general or preliminary description of a problem or need and are requested to provide information or advice on how to better define the problem or need, or alternative solutions. Response to RFI must not pre-qualify a potential supplier and must not influence their chances of being the successful proponent on any subsequent opportunity.

**RFI may include:**

- A general description of the problem or need
- Targeted questions about the required goods or service
- Request for recommendations
- Request for advice or an alternative solution
- Request of pitfalls or risks to avoid
- Any questions in order to help the buyer understand what is available on the market and the supplier's capabilities.

**Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI)**

An RFEI allows Organizations to gather information about vendors' interest, capabilities and qualifications. Used to gain better understanding of the capacity of the supplier community to provide the services or solutions needed. Response to RFEI must not pre-qualify a potential supplier and must not influence their chances of being the successful proponent on any subsequent opportunity

**NOTE:**

An RFI and RFEI can only be used for information-gathering purposes and may not result in award, used to pre-qualify, result in a legal contract or require suppliers to provide proprietary information.

Information Required	RFI	RFEI
General Supplier or product information	X	
Information about supplier interest in an opportunity		X
Information about supplier capabilities/qualifications		X

**Request for Supplier Qualifications (RFSQ)**

RFSQ is used to gather information about supplier capabilities and qualifications in order to create a list of pre-qualified suppliers. An RFSQ can be used for the purpose of a single procurement or to pre-qualify suppliers interested in supplying goods or services based on detailed specifications for a specified time in the future, if requested.

An RFSQ should specify:

- Type and specifications of goods or services to be provided with a necessary level of detail
- Upper limits of value of future awards (for VOR arrangements-ceiling price)
- Time duration the pre-qualified supplier list of VOR arrangement will be valid
- The method(s) and time intervals by which additional suppliers can be placed on the list (for VOR arrangements)
- Clearly indicate there is no obligation on the part of the Board to call on any supplier to provide goods or services as a result of the RFSQ.
- Indicate that any supplier who does not participate in the pre-qualification or does not appear on the list may be excluded from opportunities.

**Vendor of Record (VOR)**

VOR arrangements are used to increase procurement process efficiency and obtain consistent competitive prices for identified goods and services.

VOR arrangements are made with suppliers from pre-qualified supplier(s) lists through a second-stage process. A VOR is for a defined period on terms and conditions set out in the VOR arrangement and not to exceed the ceiling prices of the arrangement.

**Request for Tender (RFT)**

A document used to invite sealed supplier responses to supply goods or services based on precisely defined performance and product specifications, defined terms and conditions, and stated delivery requirements. The expectation is that the lowest bid meeting the requirements specified in the Call would be accepted.

**Request for Proposal (RFP)**

A document used to invite sealed responses from suppliers to propose solutions for the supply and delivery of complex products or services, or to provide alternative options or solutions. A RFP allows both parties to discuss needs, goods and or services to fill those needs in a particular manner or with products to be created for that purpose. It requires proponents to apply their best judgement and knowledge in order to fulfil the RFP requirements. The RFP process uses evaluation criteria in which price is not the only factor, and which may be subject to further negotiation prior to final award.

**Request for Quotation (RFQ) Informal (\$10,001 - \$50,000)**

An informal RFQ requests an offer in response to a request for goods and services where the requirements can be precisely defined. Response must be written/faxed or e-mailed. The expectation is that the lowest bid meeting the requirements specified in the call would be accepted.

**Request for Quotation (RFQ) Formal (\$50,001 - \$100,000)**

The Formal RFQ is to be made through the Purchasing Department.

An RFQ document is used to request supplier response for the provision of specific goods or services based on stated delivery requirements, performance specifications, terms and conditions.

When estimated value of the goods or services will exceed \$50,001.00 a request for a response to a Formal RFQ shall be completed by the school / department on Board Bid Form and submitted to the purchasing department with three (3) suggested suppliers.

The invitation will be sent out by purchasing to at least three (3) vendors for written response to the purchasing department by a specified date and time.

The expectation is that the lowest bid meeting the requirements specified in the Call would be accepted.

### **Criteria for Dollar Limits on Purchases of Consulting Services (As approved by Board)**

Under the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive, all consulting services must be competitively procured according to the thresholds below. For the purpose of this procedure, Consulting Service is defined as the provision of expertise or strategic advice that is presented for consideration and decision-making.

### **Procurement Approval Authority Schedule for Consulting Services:**

<b>Procurement Value:</b>	<b>Procurement Method:</b>	<b>Approval Authority:</b>
\$0 - \$50,000	Informal Invitational Competitive  Request for quotation (RFQ) that describes exactly the services to be provided. Three (3) written quotations on firm's letterhead.	Refer to Commitment Approval Authority Schedule in Purchasing Administrative Guideline
Over \$50,001-100,000	Formal Invitational Competitive  Formal Request for Quotation (RFQ) - Formal/Sealed Response. Three (3) written quotations on Board Bid Form that describes exactly the services to be provided. Vendor responses are sealed.	Refer to Commitment Approval Authority Schedule in Purchasing Administrative Guideline
\$100,001 +	Open Competitive Process  Request for Proposal (RFP) are to be advertised and posted on the Board's website, local newspapers, and available through an electronic tendering system that is readily accessible by all Canadian suppliers nationally. Vendor responses are sealed.	Board of Trustees

## **Cooperative Procurement – Professional Partnerships**

The Board participates in the Ontario Educational Collaborative Marketplace (OECM), Educational Computing Network of Ontario (ECNO) and Ministry of Government Services (MGS) collaboratively buying when there are benefits to the Board.

## **Non-Competitive Procurement**

Non-competitive procurements should be avoided at the greatest extent possible. If required, a non-competitive procurement must adhere to the strict requirements outlined in the Canada Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) and other applicable Trade Agreements that list limited exemptions, exceptions, or non-application clauses. Supporting documentation must be completed and approved by the Board of Trustees.

## **Exemptions**

Subject to above non-competition procurements and non-application clauses contained in Canada Free Trade Agreement and other applicable Trade Agreements, competitive bidding requirements may be waived, subject to due diligence review for compliance with Trade Agreement, for the following purchases:

- a) To ensure compatibility with existing products, to recognize exclusive rights, such as exclusive licenses, copyright and patent rights, or to maintain specialized products that must be maintained by the manufacturer or its representative.
- b) Where expenditure is mandated by a municipality or other body (e.g., building permit, utilities).
- c) The Board may participate in cooperative purchasing groups such as the Ontario Educational Cooperative Marketplace (OECM), Educational Computing Network of Ontario (ECNO) or Ministry of Government Services (MGS) collaboratively buying when it is in the best interests of the Board through cost savings or efficiencies.
- d) In cases of emergencies, the Director of Education or designate has the authority to obtain goods or services in the most expedient manner possible regardless of the amount. When an emergency exists, the Director of Education or designate will inform the Chair of the Board of Trustees regarding the action taken. Emergencies are defined as circumstances or situations beyond the Board's control that have the potential of affecting the health or safety of students or personnel, or will result in undue financial loss.

## **Negotiation:**

Purchase by negotiation may be used only with the approval of the Board of Trustees if any of the following conditions exist:

- a) Two or more identical low bids have been received.
- b) All bids fail to comply with the specifications, tender terms and conditions.



- c) The extension or revision of an existing contract of no more than one year would prove more cost effective or beneficial to the Board.
- d) When only one bid is received through the tendering process.
- e) Purchase of an item where compatibility with an existing product, service or program is an overriding consideration.

### **Board Approval Requirements**

- 1. All contracts involving the acquisition or disposition of real property of the Board.
- 2. All contracts with a term exceeding five years.
- 3. All contracts with a value of \$300,000 or greater.
- 4. Listing of capital projects that are part of annual Ministry funding for School Renewal and School Condition Improvement grant allocations or other capital grant allocations.

### **Capital Projects**

Public tenders or requests for proposal shall be called for construction contracts of new schools, additions, and major renovations.

Capital projects are not to commence until after the Board has approved the current year's budget as well as approved detailed lists for School Renewal and Condition Assessment projects.

### **Change Orders for Capital Projects**

Prior to any change order being issued, the Manager of Plant will budget each project and provide documentation to the Superintendent of Business or Project Manager. If for any reason it is anticipated that a project cost will exceed its original budget a detailed summary shall be provided by the Manager of Plant or Project Manager for consideration and subsequent approval.

Any requests for changes during a project resulting in change orders must under all circumstances be approved prior to work commencing. The Commitment Approval Authority Schedule or Building Committees' Terms of Reference is to be followed for authorization of all change orders.

### **Vendor Suspension/Removal from Pre-Qualified or Vendor of Record List**

The Superintendent of Business may through written notification suspend a vendor from participating in any Board request processes if any of the following causes occur:

- a) Unsatisfactory performance on Board contracts, failure to respond promptly to service calls.
- b) Poor delivery, failure to deliver, under or over shipments.
- c) Failure to abide by contract terms and conditions or failure to meet specifications.
- d) Making unauthorized substitutions.
- e) Continuous billing errors.
- f) Poor quality or workmanship.

- g) Conviction of the business or an officer or principal shareholder of the business, of a criminal offence in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain or performance of a contract or subcontract.
- h) Bankruptcy.
- i) Unethical practices or violation of Board policies.

### **Operational Procedures:**

#### **Procedures for Publically Advertised Tenders or Requests as indicated above.**

For all purchases requiring public procurement, a formal procurement process must be conducted, led by the initiating administrator in conjunction with the purchasing department. The Purchasing Department will assist in formulating and issuing Request for Tender (RFT) or Request for Proposal (RFP) based on specifications developed in consultation with the applicable departments. The RFT or RFP process shall be as follows:

1. The initiating departmental administrator is the lead of their department RFT or RFP and as such is to provide the Purchasing Department with the necessary specifications and RFT or RFP details that are to be contained in the RFT or RFP. Clear description of required goods or services. Goods or services must be described in generic and/or functional terms specific to the business needs. Where it is necessary to provide specifications in non-generic and/or non-functional terms, the specifications must set out the performance requirements in a manner that would not unfairly favour certain suppliers.
2. The Purchasing Department will assist in formulating and issuing an RFT or RFP based on specifications and RFT or RFP details as provided in (1) above.
3. Calls for open competitive procurement must be advertised by the Purchasing Department in a medium that will provide the best coverage across the geographical region of the Board. Open procurement calls in excess of \$100,000 must be advertised through an electronic tendering system that is readily accessible by all Canadian suppliers nationally.
4. The Supervisor of Purchasing is the sole contact for receipt of questions relating to any RFT or RFP and as such is responsible for the documentation of such questions to be subsequently followed up with initiating departmental administrator.
5. The initiating departmental administrator is responsible for addressing any questions arising out of (4) and providing written responses to the Supervisor of Purchasing. The Supervisor of Purchasing will then distribute such written responses to all vendors registered as receiving the respective RFT or RFP.
6. RFT or RFP documents will state the date, time and location of the opening meeting, and will include an invitation to bidders to attend the meeting.

7. Sealed RFT or RFP documents when received shall be delivered unopened to the Purchasing Department. RFT or RFP documents will not be accepted by fax or email. All documents shall be date and time stamped when received by the Purchasing Department.
8. The Purchasing Department shall keep all tenders or requests in a secure file until the opening.
9. The Supervisor of Purchasing along with one other witness shall be present to open and record the RFT or RFP documents received.
10. Only the Director of Education or designate shall be allowed discretion outside of the competitive procurement process when an item is urgently needed in an emergency.
11. The Purchasing Department shall use an appropriate RFT or RFP listing sheet showing the names of the bidders, date and time of the opening and other pertinent information. The RFT or RFP listing sheet is to be initialed by the Supervisor of Purchasing and one other witness present.
12. The Supervisor of Purchasing shall ensure that the submitted RFT or RFP documents conform to all stipulated conditions including mandatory criteria that must be met. Competitive documents must clearly outline that submissions that do not meet the mandatory criteria will be disqualified.
13. Upon completion of the opening, the Supervisor of Purchasing shall have all bids summarized.
14. The purchaser reserves the right to accept or reject any RFT or RFP whether or not it meets the required specifications or is the low bid.
15. Where applicable, the committee members within a reasonable time of opening a RFT or RFP submission document will review the RFT or RFP submission and prepare a recommendation to the Superintendent of Business for approval, if warranted. If such approval is not necessary, the committee will award the successful candidate.
16. Where the lowest tender meets all the specifications, conditions, and requirements of the Board, the administration is authorized to accept and award that tender. If other than the lowest tender is recommended for acceptance, a report providing information and a recommendation with supporting reasons will be placed before the Superintendent of Business for consideration and approval.
17. The Supervisor of Purchasing shall notify the successful bidder and unsuccessful bidders as soon as possible after the tender or request for proposal has been accepted.

18. The name of the successful bidder and the accepted prices will be available to the unsuccessful bidders by either visitation to the Board office, by phone or by email. This information will be provided to Trustees monthly as part of the agenda of regular board meetings as pertains to tenders awarded and posted to the Board's website.
19. Not all RFT or RFP submission documents arriving at the Board office /purchasing department after the indicated closing hour will be opened. They shall be stamped with the date and time of arrival and clearly marked "LATE ARRIVAL – NOT ACCEPTED". The unopened envelopes will be taken to the tender or requests opening meeting, where the late RFT or RFP submission documents will be announced and noted in the record. Following the meeting all late arrival – not accepted RFT or RFP submitted documents shall be returned to the sender "unopened".
20. **Tie Scores** – In the event of a tie between the overall scores of two or more proposals, the contract will be awarded to the proponent with the lowest price. Other tie-breakers which may be considered may include such factors as more favorable delivery times, payment discounts and after sales service, which must be identified in the evaluation criteria. In the event that all factors are equal a coin toss will be used with the agreement of both parties to determine the successful proponent.

### **Requests for Proposal (RFP)**

The RFP provides a special procedure to obtain goods and services on a competitive basis where the specifications and technical details cannot be clearly defined as in the tendering process. The Purchasing Department will assist in the development of the RFP in consultation with the department requiring the goods or services.

The issue and receipt of requests for proposals will be handled in the same fashion as tenders noted above. The committee evaluating the proposals will take into consideration **all relevant evaluation criteria as pre-established in an evaluation matrix including but not limited** to the capability of the firm, its personnel, experience, past performance and level of expertise. Competitive procurement documents used in the RFP process must clearly outline mandatory, rated, and other criteria that will be used to evaluation submissions, including weight of each criterion.

- a) The initiating departmental administrator is responsible for the development of the evaluation matrix to be utilized in assessing the requests for proposal. The Supervisor of Purchasing and Purchasing Department are available to provide assistance, if needed.
- b) Competitive procurement processes require an evaluation team to evaluate compliant bids. Team members must be made aware of the restrictions related to utilization and distribution of confidential and commercially sensitive information and must refrain from engaging in activities that may create or appear to create a conflict of interest. Evaluation team members must sign a conflict of interest declaration and non-disclosure of confidential information agreement before the evaluation process begins.

- c) The evaluation team members within a reasonable number of days of opening a request for proposal document will review, assess and complete the evaluation matrix rating each submission. Evaluators must ensure that everything they say or write about submissions is fair, factual, and fully defensible.
- d) Purchasing Supervisor shall prepare a recommendation to the Superintendent of Business for approval, if warranted. If such approval is not necessary, the committee will award the successful candidate.

### **Tenders and Requests for Proposal – Disclosure of Information**

The results of all tenders and requests for proposal shall be available through the Board's web site under Tenders and RFP's.

A binder with up-to-date tender and request for proposal bid results shall be maintained at the Purchasing Department.

The name of the successful bidder and the accepted price is public knowledge and is to be released in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. However, a request for this information can be made informally. It need not be made under the Act.

### **Debriefing**

Debriefings to be offered upon request of vendor. Information to be shared with the vendor includes name of successful vendor, value of the successful bid, and reasons the proposal was not selected.

### **Bid Dispute Resolution**

Competitive procurement documents must outline bid dispute resolution procedures that comply with bid protest or dispute resolution procedures set out in the applicable trade agreements.

All contracts must include a dispute resolution process. All disputes with suppliers must be managed throughout the life of the contract.

### **Procurement Execution**

- **Contract Award Notification** – for procurements valued at \$100,000 or more, the Board must post, in the same manner as the procurement documents where posted, contract award notification. The notification must be posted after the agreement between the successful supplier and the Board was executed. Contract award notification must list the name of the successful supplier, agreement start and end dates, and any extension options.
- **Executing the Contract** – Contracts/Agreements must be finalized using the form of agreement that was released with the competitive procurement document. The agreement

between the Board and the successful supplier must be formally defined in a signed written contract/agreement before the provision of supplying goods or services commences.

Where an immediate need exists for goods or services, and the Board and the supplier are unable to finalize the contract as described above an interim purchase order must be used. The justification of such decision must be documented and approved by the Superintendent of Business.

- **Establishing the Contract** – In the event where an alternative procurement strategy was used (where the form of agreement was not released with the procurement document), the agreement between the Board and the successful supplier must be defined formally in a signed written contract before the provision of supplying goods or services commences.
- **Term of Agreement** – The term of agreement and any options to extend the term of agreement must be set out in the competitive procurement documents. An approval by an appropriate authority must be obtained before executing any modifications to the term of agreement.

Extending the term of agreement beyond what was set out in the competitive procurement document amounts to non-competitive procurement where the extension affects the value and/or stated deliverables in procurement.

- **Termination Clauses** – All procurement contracts must include appropriate cancellation and termination clauses. For complex procurements, the contract should include clauses that permit cancellation or termination at critical project lifecycle stages.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Purchasing Code of Ethics**

#### **Goal:**

The purpose of the Purchasing Code of Ethics is to provide all employees and trustees with a framework to guide them in the conduct of their responsibilities to ensure an ethical, professional and accountable supply chain. All Board employees involved in any aspect of purchasing or other supply-chain related activities must comply with the following Code of Ethics based on the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive:

#### **Personal Integrity and Professionalism**

All individuals involved with purchasing or other supply chain-related activities must act, and be seen to act, with integrity and professionalism. Honesty, care and due diligence must be integral to all supply chain activities within and between BPS organizations, suppliers and other stakeholders.

Respect must be demonstrated for each other and for the environment. Confidential information must be safeguarded. All participants must not engage in any activity that may create, or appear to create, a conflict of interest, such as accepting gifts or favours, providing preferential treatment, or publically endorsing suppliers or products.

#### **Accountability and Transparency**

Supply chain activities must be open and accountable. In particular, contracting and purchasing activities must be fair, transparent and conducted with a view to obtaining the best value for public money. All participants must ensure that public sector resources are used in a responsible, efficient and effective manner.

#### **Compliance and Continuous Improvement**

All individuals involved in purchasing and other supply chain-related activities must comply with this Code of Ethics and the laws of Canada and Ontario. All individuals should continuously work to improve supply chain policies and procedures, to improve their supply chain knowledge and skill levels, and to share leading practices.