

Title: Code of Conduct

Effective Date: September 10, 2024

Responsibility: Superintendent of Safe Schools

1.0 RATIONALE

The purpose of the Near North District School Board's Code of Conduct is:

1. to ensure that all members of the school community, especially people in positions of authority, are treated with respect and dignity;
2. to promote responsible citizenship by encouraging appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community;
3. to maintain an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility;
4. to encourage the use of non-violent means to resolve conflict;
5. to promote the safety of people in the schools;
6. to discourage use of alcohol, illegal drugs and, except by a medical cannabis user, cannabis;
7. to prevent bullying in schools.

Policy Program Memorandum (PPM) 128: *Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct* informs the Near North District School Board's Code of Conduct and this Administrative Guideline, which must be understood in the context of other policies, including but not limited to:

- *Education Act*, subsection 301(1), 301(2), Part XIII
- PPM 119 *Developing and implementing equity and inclusive education policies in Ontario schools*;
- PPM 120, *Reporting violent incidents to the Ministry of Education*;
- PPM 144, *Bullying prevention and intervention*; and
- PPM 145, *Progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour*.

2.0 APPLICATION

This Code of Conduct lays out a foundation for schools to use in order to help create a positive school climate that supports the achievement and well-being of all students and respects all human rights.

The NNDSB Code of Conduct applies to the entire school community and in all places related to school operations. This means that the Code of Conduct applies to all members of the school community which includes but is not limited to students, staff, parents, volunteers, visitors and guests, and members of the public in any spaces that NNDSB operates including on school property; on school buses; at school-related events or activities; in other circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate; and in a virtual learning environment.

School boards must develop and update their own codes of conduct to implement, at a minimum, the standards consistent with the Provincial Code of Conduct (PPM 128). Each school within the Near North District School Board will follow this Code of Conduct; principals do not have to develop school-specific Codes of Conduct. Should principals choose to develop school-specific Codes of Conduct to address local school-related needs, those Codes must be consistent with both the NNDSB Code of Conduct as set out in this administrative guideline, and the Provincial Code of Conduct, as set out in PPM 128.

3.0 STANDARDS OF ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

All members of the school community must:

- comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws;
- comply with all Ministry of Education, school board and school policies;
- demonstrate honesty and integrity;
- treat one another with dignity and respect, both in person and online, especially when there is disagreement or difference;
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, or disability;
- respect the rights of others;
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others;
- take appropriate measures to help those in need;
- seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully;
- refrain from using abusive language or swearing at another person;
- respect the needs of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching;
- not use personal mobile devices during instructional time except under the following circumstances:
 - for educational purposes, as directed by an educator (see Section 7.0 Mobile Device Use);
 - for health and medical purposes;
 - to support special education needs.

4.0 SAFETY

All members of the school community must not:

- engage in bullying behaviours, including cyberbullying;
- commit sexual assault or sexual harassment;
- traffic in weapons or illegal drugs;
- commit robbery or theft;
- be in possession of any weapon, including firearms;
- threaten or intimidate another person;
- be in possession of alcohol, cannabis, and illegal drugs;
 - for students, this would also include being in possession of electronic cigarette, tobacco and/or nicotine products

- use, or be under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, electronic cigarettes, illegal drugs or related products;
- provide others with alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, electronic cigarettes, cannabis and related products;
- inflict or encourage others to inflict bodily harm on another person;
- engage in hate propaganda and other forms of behaviour motivated by hate or bias;
- commit an act of vandalism that causes damage to school property, to property located on the premises of the school or to the property of a member of the school community;
- record, take or share non-consensual recordings or photos of members of the school community.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

School boards must ensure that opportunities which promote the standards of the Provincial Code of Conduct are made available for all members of the school community. This includes promoting the knowledge, skills, and attitudes relevant to the Code of Conduct at both the school and board-level.

Procedures for enforcing the Code of Conduct with students utilizes a progressive discipline approach, grounded in developmentally appropriate education for students and restorative practices that aim to repair harm and restore relationships. Refer to the *Student Conduct Management Administrative Guideline* for more information about enforcing the Code of Conduct, available on the NNDSB website.

For staff, disciplinary policies and procedures exist for addressing unacceptable behaviour. School boards are also obligated to report concerning conduct to the relevant regulatory colleges, such as the Ontario College of Teachers, the College of Early Childhood Educators, etc. under applicable legislation and following collective agreements.

For other community members, such as visitors, volunteers or parents, they are required to follow this Code of Conduct and, should they fail to do so, may face action by the school or board which could include but is not limited to a letter of expectation, a letter of warning, police contact and/or a notice of trespass.

Principals must ensure that each step in addressing identified unacceptable behaviour, regardless of who within the school community contravened the Code of Conduct, is noted in a documentary record. This record may include legislated reporting requirements, as set forth in PPM 120 *Reporting violent incidents to the Ministry of Education* and PPM 145 *Progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour*, as well as other Board policies and general best practices for documenting incidents.

The NNDSB Code of Conduct can only be successfully implemented if members of the school community are aware and understand its policies and procedures. As such, all schools must communicate the expectations and responsibilities of acceptable behaviour as detailed in the NNDSB Code of Conduct to all parents, students, teachers, staff, and other members of the school community each September seeking their commitment and support in adhering to the Code and promoting a positive school culture. This annual communication must include

information on how any member of the school community could report unacceptable behaviour. It must also outline the potential consequences for non-compliance with the Code of Conduct. This annual communication must also remind parents and students of the restrictions and requirements related to student use of personal mobile devices and the consequences for non-compliance. This communication must also consider and include parents whose first language is a language other than French or English.

Schools must post signage at each entrance and within other common areas that reflect the behavioural expectations of the Code of Conduct, as provided by the Ministry of Education. The Code of Conduct Administrative Guideline must be available to the public on the school board's website.

Any agreements with another person or entity made by the Near North District School Board with respect to the use of a school, venue or property owned by the Board shall include in the agreement a requirement that the person or entity follows standards that are consistent with this Code of Conduct and related policies.

6.0 ENFORCEMENT RELATING TO ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES, RECREATIONAL CANNABIS, AND RELATED PRODUCTS AND ILLEGAL DRUGS:

Indigenous people have been using traditional or sacred tobacco for thousands of years. Traditional or sacred tobacco differs from commercial tobacco and is used for cultural purposes. It is grown and dried and so has no additives. Indigenous elders teach that tobacco is one of the 4 sacred medicines (Tobacco, Cedar, Sage and Sweetgrass). Non-traditional tobacco has additives, including nicotine, and is addictive. Non-traditional tobacco includes cigarettes and smokeless tobacco, such as chewing tobacco or snuff tobacco. Commercial tobacco is referenced in this Code of Conduct, unless specified as traditional tobacco.

This policy provides exemptions for the traditional use of tobacco as part of Indigenous and/or other cultural and spiritual practices as required under the Ontario Human Rights Code duty to accommodate. Smoking tobacco or holding lighted tobacco is permitted on school property and during school-related activities with notice and in identified school spaces when used by Indigenous staff, students, or community members as part of traditional Indigenous cultural or spiritual practices or if the activity is carried out with an Indigenous person and for traditional Indigenous cultural or spiritual purposes.

The *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017* prohibits smoking (tobacco and cannabis) and the use of electronic cigarettes (vaping) at schools, on school grounds, and all public areas within 20 metres of these grounds. Anyone smoking or vaping on school property is guilty of an offence and if convicted may result in a fine under the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017*. The *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017* also prohibits the sale and supply of tobacco or e-cigarettes to anyone under 19 years of age. Anyone who sells or supplies tobacco or an e-cigarette to a student under 19 years of age is guilty of an offence and if convicted may result in a fine under the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017*.

Enforcement to address the possession, use and provision of tobacco, electronic cigarettes, nicotine products, recreational cannabis, alcohol and illegal drugs must comply with PPM 145 *Progressive Discipline and promoting positive student behaviour*, obligations under the Education Act, and other applicable legislation including the Smoke Free Ontario Act, 2017. Additional information including further considerations under progressive discipline, student supports and education related to these topics, mitigating factors and formal consequences can be found within the Student Conduct Management Administrative Guideline, available on the NNDSB website.

At a minimum, in the case of these substances being found in the possession of students, parents must be notified and the student must surrender the item(s) to the principal. The items cannot under any circumstance be returned to the student. Any surrendered tobacco/nicotine items, alcohol, illegal drugs, recreational cannabis and associated items will be disposed of in a manner that is safe and consistent with Board policies and procedures.

Every effort must be made to support students in learning from their inappropriate behaviour and help them to make choices that support them in promoting a safe school climate under the Code of Conduct.

7.0 ENFORCEMENT OF RESTRICTIONS TO STUDENT PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICE USE

Personal mobile devices are defined as any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate or to access the internet, such as a cellphone, tablet, laptop or smartwatch.

All members of the school community must not use personal mobile devices during instructional time except under the following circumstances:

- for educational purposes, as directed by an educator;
- for health and medical purposes;
- to support special education needs.

‘Educational purposes’ will be defined as any learning opportunity that cannot otherwise be provided to students without access to a personal mobile device. Educators should make every effort to plan lessons and activities that do not require the need for students to access personal mobile devices. Various forms of technology tools exist in classrooms and schools, including school purchased tablets and laptops, which can be used for educational purposes as required and thereby remove the need for students to access mobile devices during instructional time.

‘Health and medical purposes’ will be defined as any requirement for a personal mobile device as outlined in the student’s Plan of Care to support a formal medical diagnosis. Refer to the *Supporting Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions Administrative Guideline* for more information about Plans of Care, available on the NNDSB website.

‘To support special education needs’ will be defined as any requirement for a personal mobile device as outlined in the student’s Individual Education Plan. Refer to the Special

Education Parent Guide for more information regarding Individual Education Plans, available on the NNDSB website.

7.1 Elementary Students:

Students in Grades 8 and below must store their mobile devices in their locker if applicable or out of view in their backpack and powered off/set to silent mode throughout the full instructional day, except when their use is explicitly permitted by the educator under the circumstances outlined above.

Student nutritional breaks and recess are opportunities for students to develop important life skills including the development of prosocial behaviour, social skills, conflict resolution, sportsmanship, and building and maintaining healthy relationships. As such, students in Grade 8 and below are not permitted to access their personal mobile devices during nutritional breaks or recess. These devices are to remain out of view and powered off/set to silent mode throughout the course of the school day.

If an educator sees a personal mobile device that is not stored out of view, they must require the device be handed in for the instructional day and the device must be placed, by the student, in a storage area in a location designated by the Principal.

7.2 Secondary Students:

Students in Grades 9-12 must store their mobile devices in their locker if applicable or out of view in their backpack and powered off/set to silent mode during instructional time except when their use is explicitly permitted by the educator under the circumstances outlined above.

If the educator sees a personal mobile device that is not stored out of view, they must require the device be handed in for the instructional period and the device must be placed, by the student, in a storage area in a location in the classroom designated by the educator. Educators are not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen devices that are kept in the classroom.

7.3 Student conduct related to personal mobile devices

Every student in Grade 12 and below is responsible for their personal mobile device, how they use it and the consequences of not following this Code of Conduct policy on personal mobile device use.

If the student does not hand in their personal mobile device when required, they must be sent to the Principal's office. Principals have discretion under PPM No. 145, *Progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour*, to consider a range of responses to address this behaviour including suspension. Refer to the Student Conduct Management Administrative Guideline for more information about enforcing the Code of Conduct, available on the NNDSB website.

Parents are expected to support their child in adhering to the Code of Conduct, including the policy described above related to personal mobile devices. Parents who choose to send their child to school with a personal mobile device must understand the expectations for the device's use, as well as the consequences should the student fail to meet the expectations outlined in this Code of Conduct.

Students who demonstrate unwillingness to adhere to this Code of Conduct despite educational supports, collaborative problem solving, progressive discipline, and formal consequences, can be asked to keep their mobile device at home or to surrender it to the office each morning. In such cases, the device would not be returned until the end of the school day. Principals are not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen devices that are kept at the office.

7.4 Report Cards:

Beginning in the 2024-25 school year, report cards are to communicate information to students and their parents about classroom distractions, where applicable, including those related to the use of personal mobile devices. This will be communicated using the section of the report card reserved for comments on learning skills and work habits in the Elementary Provincial Report Cards and in the comment box reserved for course comments in the Secondary Provincial Report Card.

It is expected that comments are supportive of students' ongoing development of learning skills and work habits as outlined in Growing Success (2010) and assessment, evaluation and reporting practices and procedures are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students.

8.0 RESTRICTING ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA ON SCHOOL NETWORKS

Under PPM 128 *The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct*, NNDSB is required to restrict access to all social media platforms on school networks and school devices.

Social media in the context of PPM 128 is defined as interactive technologies including websites, platforms and applications that facilitate and enable users to create, share, and interact with content, and to connect and communicate with other users publicly.

9.0 CONSULTATION

In developing and reviewing these policies, input will be sought from various stakeholders including students; teachers; principals; other staff of the board; volunteers; parents and guardians; and community members as well as committees such as the Parent Involvement Committee; Special Education Advisory Committee; First Nation Advisory Council; and community partners such as social services administration boards and mental health agencies. This consultation is done through our administrative guideline consultation process, as outlined in NNDSB's Governance Manual.

Reviews of the school board code of conduct policies and procedures should occur at least every three years or more often if necessary. Reviews must assess the content of both the policies and procedures, ensuring they meet the requirements and expectations laid out in this document.

All communications with parents must be accessible and be made available in English and French and other languages based on the needs of each school community.

10.0 EXPECTATIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS

10.1 Principals, Vice-Principals or Designates

It is expected that Principals:

- demonstrate care for the school community and a commitment to student achievement and well-being in a safe, inclusive, and accepting learning environment;
- hold everyone under their authority accountable for their own behaviour and actions;
- empower students to be positive leaders in their school and community;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with all members of their school community;
- model the standards of respect, civility and responsible citizenship.

10.2 Teachers and other school staff

It is expected that teachers and staff:

- help students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth;
- empower students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school, and community;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents;
- maintain consistent and fair standards of behaviour for all students;
- demonstrate respect for one another, all students, parents, volunteers, and other members of the school community;
- prepare students for the full responsibilities of citizenship, in particular the skill of respectful communication, both in person and online;
- model the standards of respect, civility, and responsible citizenship. This includes modeling appropriate use of personal mobile devices. Educators are not to use personal mobile devices during instructional time, unless explicitly for work-related purposes, such as communicating with the office, or in emergency situations.

10.3 Students

It is expected that students:

- come to school prepared, on time, and ready to learn;
- show respect for themselves, and for others, and for those in positions of authority;
- refrain from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others;
- follow the established rules and take responsibility for their own actions.

10.4 Parents

It is expected that parents:

- are engaged in their child's schoolwork and progress;
- communicate regularly with the school;
- help their child be appropriately dressed and prepared for school;
- ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time;
- promptly report to the school their child's absence or late arrival;
- become familiar with the Provincial Code of Conduct, the board's code of conduct, and, if applicable, the school's Code of Conduct;
- encourage and assist their child in following the rules of behaviour;
- assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues involving their child.

10.5 Community partners

Partnerships with members of the community and community-based service providers should be developed and enhanced. Community-based service providers are resources that boards can use to deliver prevention or intervention programs. These partnerships must respect all applicable collective agreements.

The police play an essential role in making our schools and communities safer. The police investigate incidents in accordance with the protocol developed with the local school board and applicable legislation. These protocols are based on the *Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol, 2015*, developed by the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Education.