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# CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

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Newfoundland and Labrador English School District



95 Elizabeth Ave.  
St. John's, NL



## Making the Right Choice

Message from the CEO, Tony Stack



As CEO of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, I am confident in our team efforts to work in an ethical, open and transparent manner as we deliver educational programs and services to students in our province.

The Code of Ethics and Conduct is designed for our employees, integrating our core values into the work we do in supporting teaching and learning throughout the province.

It will support our team in setting the tone for how we work together, with integrity, into the future. It provides us with guidance, direction, and training to ensure we have a respectful and ethical workplace and that we make the right choices in everything we do.

As an employee, it will direct you when you have questions or concerns on proper ethical practice; identifying personnel and resources to assist, and outline your responsibilities to ensure you are an ethical team member.

I am proud to lead the District and our team in this endeavour.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'T. Stack', written in a cursive style.

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Tony Stack  
CEO/Director of Education

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## Introduction

The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (the “District”) is committed to an ethical, respectful, open and transparent work environment that maintains high standards of conduct for its employees. This Code of Ethics and Conduct sets out expectations for all employees, and complements your own professional Codes of Conduct.

The Code of Ethics and Conduct upholds District values of ‘students first’, learning, inclusion, respect, collaboration, accountability and innovation. It supports an environment of knowing your responsibilities, making the **Right Choices**, acting with integrity, and reporting wrongdoing without fear.

As an employee, you are accountable to review and abide by the Code of Ethics and Conduct; sign a declaration confirming your agreement to follow the Code, and complete training. This Code also requires that you are familiar with, and abide by, District policies and provincial and national laws.

Your Code of Ethics and Conduct is intended to guide you as you uphold an ethical and honest work environment. It provides information on conflicts of interest, acceptance of gifts or benefits, hiring of family members, safety and well-being of employees, respectful workplaces, ethical dilemmas and reporting improper activity without fear of repercussions. As an employee you are required to abide by the Code of Ethics and Conduct.



As you read this Code, please reflect on your work ethic and consider:

- How do you act when no one is watching?
- How do you keep yourself accountable?
- How do you support your team to work ethically?



Your Code cannot cover every instance of improper conduct or behaviour. Please ask questions when in doubt.

## Responsibilities

As an employee of the District, you are expected to act ethically, honestly and with integrity at all times. **Act Ethically – Make Ethical Choices**



## Expectations for Employees

- Adhere to all District policies and procedures
- Abide by provincial and national laws
- Respond to conflict respectfully
- Respect and safeguard District property and assets
- Know your responsibilities:
  - Sign an ethics statement
  - Complete ethics training
  - Ask questions when in doubt
  - Report unethical behaviour
  - Avoid conflicts of interest
  - Do not use your position for personal gain
  - Do not accept personal rewards as a result of employment with the District
- Speak up without fear
  - Know where to go for help
  - Take action and report wrongdoing as per the District Whistleblowing Policy

### When in doubt, ask questions:

- Discuss the issue with your immediate supervisor
- If you are uncomfortable with asking your supervisor, seek advice from a human resources manager
- Raise the issue with executive of your division if the issue is not resolved
- Make the **Right Choice!**

## Guiding Policies

It is important for you to be aware of your responsibilities outlined in District policies. The following policies are highlighted to provide you with guidance:

### Conflict of Interest Policy (FIN – 405)

Employees are required to act with the best interest of the District and not influenced by personal interests. (See page 7 for more information)

### Respectful Workplace-Harassment Prevention and Resolution (HR- 800)

Employees are entitled to a respectful workplace through prevention and resolution of harassment and discrimination. (See page 11 for more information).

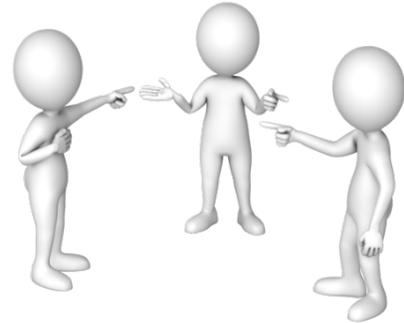
### Whistleblowing: Employee Disclosure of Wrongdoing (HR- 813)

Employees are required to report any improper activities or potential wrongdoing to your immediate supervisor without repercussions (See page 12 for more information.)

## Be Accountable

District employees are accountable for the work they do. Employees must exercise due diligence in performing your roles.

Employees are required to keep and/or create accurate records, documents and accurately reflect transactions, ensuring transparency. This applies to any document (human resources, finance, student records, etc.)



### Employees must:

- Follow District procedures and policies for all record keeping.
- Conduct purchasing in accordance with the Public Procurement Act.
- Do not claim rewards due for travel or other District business.
- Follow District authority approval processes and ensure approvals are in place for purchasing, contracts, and agreements. Consult with the purchasing team for guidance.
- Maintain confidentiality of District information in purchasing and bidding processes.
- Accurately reflect transactions; do not falsify documents.
- Accurately record information in student files or records.
- Ensure transparency in actions.

### Review Policies/Procedures:

- [Signing Authority \(FIN-400\)](#)
- [Travel – District Employees \(FIN-401\)](#)
- [Guide to NLESD Purchasing for Schools](#)
- [Public Procurement Act](#)
- [Student Records Policy \(PROG-310\)](#)

## Safeguard District Assets

District assets include, but are not limited to, facilities, furniture, computers, software, laptops, cell phones, vehicles, tools and various kinds of teaching and learning resources and equipment. These assets are the property of the District, and provided to employees to conduct District business.

### Employees must adhere to District policies that address assets.

- Use technology ethically, in a respectful manner, and in accordance with the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.
- Do not use personal emails, social media, websites or interactive accounts for District activities.
- Use vehicles and equipment safely for District business only.
- Secure facilities and assets.



- Familiarize yourself with policies.
- Do not conduct or participate in any activities that are fraudulent, and report improper activities or potential wrongdoing.

#### Review Policies:

- Acceptable Use of Technology (FIN-500)
- Email (FIN-501)
- Social Media Policy (FIN-502)
- Vehicle Usage (FIN-504)
- Facility Security and Access Control (OPER-605)
- Occupational Health and Safety (HR-808)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act

## Protect Records & Information

As an employee of the District, you may have access to information and records that are the property of the District. Employees are required to maintain confidentiality of all records, unless release is authorized and related to District business.



- Records include information accessed through administering primary, elementary and secondary education in the province (e.g., PowerSchool, Review 360, School Financial Records, Bus Planner Software, Student Records, School District Systems - SDS and more).
- Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, student records, personnel files, District internal information, information from other companies related to quotes, bids, or competition for District business, information accessed through company programs or software, and more.
- Employees cannot use confidential information for your personal benefit or release information unless authorized.
- Employees are required to direct requests for confidential District information to the Manager of ATIPP (Access to Information and Protection of Privacy).
- You must return all confidential information (files and property that belong to the District) at the end of employment.
- Employees are required to adhere to privacy laws and protect information such as: student records, personnel addresses, phone numbers, salary information; information related to employee benefits, leave, medical history, or performance appraisals.

#### Review Policies/Legislation:

- Employee Records (HR- 804)
- Student Records (PROG – 310)
- Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPPA)

## Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest may occur in a number of areas. Employees are required to declare any potential or perceived conflicts of interest and advise your supervisor if they have reason to believe a conflict exists with another employee.



## Gifts/Benefits/Travel

Employees will not receive benefits or rewards because of employment with NLESD.

### Stick to the rules! **DO NOT:**

- Accept money, gifts, or favours from contractors or third parties or suppliers of the District.
- Accept Air Miles, Aeroplan, Yay! Cards, etc., due to business incurred on behalf of the District (such as travel, fuel or other District purchases).
- Sell supplies, equipment, or services to the District when there is a conflict with your employment, outside the public procurement process.
- Promote any materials or services related to curriculum (books, training materials) for which you have a personal interest.
- Use or lend District property (equipment/vehicles/facilities) for activities not associated with your role as an employee.
- Participate in an area of conflict unless it has been disclosed with proper approvals acquired (see FIN-405 declaration form).

Employees are not to participate in any areas of potential conflict unless disclosed and approved through the Conflict of Interest Policy Disclosure Form.

## Purchasing

When there is a perceived or real conflict of interest, employees will not:

- Initiate, approve, or authorize purchases.
- Participate in the RFP or tendering process.
- Supply information (acquired through District employment) for your own or someone else's personal or financial gain.



### Review Policies/Legislation:

- Conflict of Interest (FIN-405)
- Community Use of Schools (OPER-602)
- Vehicle Usage (FIN-504)
- Signing Authority (FIN-400)
- Travel District Employees (FIN-401)
- Student Travel (PROG-320)
- Public Procurement Act
- Conflict of Interest Act

## Human Resources

### Hiring

When employment involves family members, employees involved in hiring staff shall:



- Declare a conflict of interest, and remove yourself from the recruitment process.

### Supervision

When an employee supervises a family member, they must:

- Disclose the relationship.
- Not approve overtime or expense reimbursements (including travel) and refer the individual to a designated alternate for approval.

#### Review:

- Conflict of Interest Policy (FIN-405)
- Conflict of Interest Act
- Public Procurement Act

## Questions & Answers

### Recruitment

**Q:** I am an administrator with the District. My brother applied for a teaching position and I am on the hiring panel. I completed a conflict of interest form for the District to consider a potential conflict. Did I need to do this?

**A:** Yes you made the **Right Choice** in completing a Conflict of Interest Declaration Form. In this case, the District advises you should remove yourself from the hiring panel and any decisions (remuneration, or reclassification) connected to the teaching position.

### Purchasing

**Q:** My mother owns an office supplies business. I am involved in the preparation of a District RFP for a province-wide supply of equipment. I declared the conflict. Did I make the right choice?

**A:** Yes, you made the **Right Choice**. In a situation where there is a conflict of interest, you must declare it through the Conflict of Interest Declaration Form. In this case, District policy requires you to remove yourself from the RFP process.

## Tutoring

**Q:** I am a music teacher and provide music lessons in rural Newfoundland. I have a student that I tutor in music. I declared a conflict of interest through the Conflict of Interest Form. Did I do the right thing?

**A:** Yes you made the **Right Choice** and declared the conflict. In this case District policy allows you to tutor the student on the condition that you do not solicit clients for your music business through your role as a teacher in the school.

## Manager's Role

Managers are vital in supporting an ethical workplace, and supporting your employees in reporting wrongdoing without fear of repercussions.

### Managers:

- Lead by example
- Support open dialogue in the workplace
- Promote a respectful and ethical workplace
- Provide guidance and information on ethical dilemmas
- Emulate the core values of the District
- Encourage and reward ethical decision-making
- Support an inclusive workplace
- Assist employees in making the **Right Choice**



## Questions and Answers

**Q:** A person I supervise asked about receiving points from Yay! Cards as a result of purchases on the District credit card. I advised that this was not endorsed by the District and employees are not permitted to gain points. However, the individual advised they would continue to accumulate points as it wasn't a big deal. What should I do?

**A:** You should lead by example, and explain that you don't gain points from travel and direct the person to review the District's Conflict of Interest Policy.

As a supervisor, you can also review the receipts for purchases to ensure the employee is not acquiring the points.

### Review Policy:

- Conflict of Interest Policy (FIN-405)
- Conflict of Interest Act

## Safety and Well-Being

A safe and healthy workplace is required for employees to fulfil your roles and responsibilities. We all play a role in preserving a safe workplace through the District's Occupational Health and Safety Program.

- Supervisors are responsible for taking every reasonable precaution to protect the health and safety of those they supervise.
- Employees are responsible to report hazards, injury and illnesses in a timely manner and take reasonable precautions to protect themselves and those around them.
- Employees are required to report unsafe practices (e.g., someone using unsafe equipment or hazardous materials).
- You must report to your supervisor: any safety issues, accidents, or injuries.



### Review Policy:

- Occupational Health and Safety Program (HR- 808)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act





## Whistleblowing

The District has confidence in its employees to make the **Right Choices**. The District will not tolerate improper activities or wrongdoing by its employees.

Furthermore, the District requires employees to report wrongdoing or undisclosed conflict with another employee to your immediate supervisor.

What are improper activities or wrongdoing? Activities where an employee commits an act or omission designed to deceive others, or suppress the truth, or suggest what is false. Some examples include:

- Falsification of District records (financial, payroll, employment)
- Accepting bribes, kickbacks
- Bid rigging or collusion with vendors
- Failing to disclose a conflict of interest
- Any misuse or misappropriation of District funds and assets (funds, equipment, buildings, vehicles)
- Unauthorized use of District vehicles, credit cards or equipment
- Theft or fraudulent use of public funds

### Review Policies:

- **Whistleblowing: Employee Disclosure of Wrongdoing (HR-813)**
- **Public Interest Disclosure and Whistleblower Protection Act**
- **Conflict of Interest Policy (FIN-405)**

## Protection

The District will protect any employee who reports improper activities or potential wrongdoing and will conduct a fair and timely investigation.

## Repercussions

The Code of Ethics and Conduct sets out clear expectations on ethical and appropriate conduct required by all employees. Non-compliance by employees will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.



## Remember: Report wrongdoing.....

- Use the Employee Disclosure of Wrongdoing Form on the District Website
- If you prefer, report wrongdoing to:
  - Your immediate supervisor
  - The Director of Education/CEO
  - Or to the Associate Director of Education (Programs and Human Resources).

## Questions & Answers

**Q:** A friend of mine was moving to a new apartment and needed a van to move his belongings. He asked if he could borrow the District van for a couple of hours as it wouldn't take that long. I said no I wasn't able to lend the van as it was not my property to lend, even though I had access to the District vehicle. Did I do the right thing?



**A:** You made the Right Choice. You cannot lend or use District equipment for purposes other than for District business

**Q:** I saw a co-worker at the gas station using the District credit card to buy gas for his family vehicle. I went on the District website and completed the whistleblower form anonymously. Did I do the right thing?

**A:** You made the Right Choice. You cannot use a District credit card for any purchases other than for District business. While you can report anonymously, it helps if you provide your name to assist with investigating. Remember, the District will protect you when you report wrongdoing.

## Training

District employees are required to complete a Code of Ethics and Conduct Training Module. As part of this training, employees are also required to complete and upload Appendix A, a Declaration of Agreement with the NLESD Code of Ethics and Conduct.



## Appendix A

### Declaration

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# CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

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I have completed the Code of Ethics and Conduct training for the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District. The Code includes, but is not limited to: conflicts of interest, whistleblowing, the acceptance of gifts/benefits/travel, accountability, maintaining a respectful, harassment free and safe work environment, the acceptable use of technology and social media, the protection of District assets, and the accurate reflection of information in transactions, documentation, records and correspondence.

I agree to abide by the Code of Ethics and Conduct and the Conflict of Interest Policy as a condition of my employment. I acknowledge and accept that any violation of the Code can lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without compensation.

# Appendix B

## Definitions

**Accountable:** subject to the obligation to report, explain, or justify something; responsible; answerable.

**Bribe:** money or any other valuable consideration given or promised with a view to corrupting the behavior of a person, especially in that person's performance as an athlete, public official, etc.

**Conflict of Interest:** A situation where there is a potential deviation between an employee's personal interest and professional obligation/responsibility to the District whereby independent observer would reasonably question whether the employee's behaviour or decisions are motivated by personal interest (financial or otherwise). A conflict of interest may be real or perceived.

**Real Conflict:** When a known personal interest exists that has a connection to his/her District duties that may influence how he/she exercises these duties.

**Perceived Conflict:** When a known personal interest exists that has a connection to his/her District duties that could appear to influence how he/she exercises these duties

**Ethical:** being in accordance with the rules or standards for right conduct or practice, especially the standards of a profession.

**Family Member:** A person who is related to an employee of the District by blood or adoption or is related to the employee by marriage or common-law marriage. Specifically, this would include an employee's husband, wife, common-law partner, fiancé/financée, in-laws, child, grandchild, sibling, niece, nephew, aunt, uncle, and first cousin. This includes step, foster and guardian relationships.

**Harassment:** Comments or conduct which are abusive, offensive, demeaning or vexatious that are known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Harassment may be intended or unintended, e.g.,:

**Any conduct** that endangers any employee's employment, undermines any employee's performance, or threatens the economic livelihood of any employee.

**Any use of power or authority** by a supervisor that endangers, undermines, threatens, interferes with or influences an employee's job, the performance of that job, or the economic livelihood of the employee. This does not include the legitimate and proper

exercise of supervisory responsibilities such as distribution of work assignments or training opportunities, work evaluation, disciplinary measures taken for valid reasons and or staffing decisions. Bullying behaviour consisting of actions or verbal comments that are intended to intimidate, offend or humiliate a particular person or group of people.

**Kickback:** a form of negotiated bribery in which a commission or gift is provided to the bribe-taker in exchange for a transaction/contract/benefit with the District.

**Inclusion:** when all people, regardless of gender, ability, race, religion, sexual orientation, are respected and appreciated as valuable members of the District, school and community.

**Overbidding:** to bid more than the actual value or worth.

**Respectful Behaviour:** The universal duty to respect all people and accept the differences that diversity brings to the District.

**Transparent:** open and clear processes or activities, conducted by the District that are not complicated or difficult to understand.

**Vendor Collusion:** the willingness to conduct dishonest activities to favor a vendor.

**Whistleblowing:** the reporting of improper activities or potential wrongdoing within the District. Employees have the right and obligation to bring forward their concerns.