

# Toronto District School Board

Policy P.044

Title: **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Adopted: April 10, 2002

Revised: April 18, 2007, January 31, 2008, **June 25, 2008**

Review: Every three years

## 1.0 OBJECTIVE

To establish a Code of Conduct for students,<sup>1</sup> employees, parents<sup>2</sup> and community members in accordance with the *Education Act*.

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS

Definitions for inappropriate student behaviour can be found in Operational Procedure PR.697: Consequences of Inappropriate Student Behaviour.

## 3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Associate Director

## 4.0 POLICY

The *Education Act* permits the Minister of Education to establish a Code of Conduct governing the behaviour of all persons in schools. A School Board must ensure that its Code of Conduct is consistent with the Provincial Code of Conduct<sup>3</sup>. The Toronto District School Board adopts the Provincial Code of Conduct in this policy.

The Board is committed to providing “learning environments that are safe, nurturing, positive and respectful” (Policy P.002, Mission and Values).

Awareness, understanding and implementation of this Code of Conduct will provide a foundation for respect, civility, responsible citizenship and safety at the Toronto District School Board.

Board policies are applicable to all Board employees, students, parents and guardians, volunteers and persons visiting a school or other Board location for personal or business purposes.

---

<sup>1</sup> The term *student*, as used in this policy, refers to *pupil*, as used in the *Education Act*.

<sup>2</sup> In this policy, *parent(s)* refers to parent(s) and guardian(s). Parental involvement applies, except in cases where the student is eighteen years of age or over or is sixteen or seventeen years of age and has “withdrawn from parental control”

<sup>3</sup> Policy/Program Memorandum No. 128: The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct

#### 4.1. General

- (a) Direction shall be provided to schools to promote safe and caring learning environments. According to the Provincial Code of Conduct a school should be a place that promotes responsibility, respect, civility, and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, comfortable, and accepted.
- (b) Actions that jeopardize the emotional well-being or physical safety of any person in a school or other Board facility shall not be condoned.
- (c) The standards of behaviour outlined in this Policy shall apply to all members of the school community, including students, parents and guardians, teachers or other school staff members, Board members, volunteers and visitors:
  - on school property;
  - while travelling on a school bus that is owned by the Board or that is under contract to the Board;
  - in-school sports activities;
  - in off-site school-sponsored activities; or
  - in circumstances where engaging in an activity will have an impact on the school climate.
- (d) Procedures shall be developed to respond to inappropriate student behaviour. The procedures shall be based on a progressive discipline approach and consideration of mitigating and other factors, as required by the *Education Act*. Refer to Operational Procedure PR.697: Consequences of Inappropriate Student Behaviour.
- (e) This policy and related procedures shall be reviewed regularly involving school councils, Board advisory committees, parents, students, staff members, and community members.
- (f) A process shall be established to communicate this policy, the Provincial Code of Conduct and local codes of conduct to all parents, students, staff members, and members of the school community in order to obtain their commitment and support. The plan will include those members of the school community whose first language is not English.
- (g) Effective strategies shall be developed for response to all infractions related to the standards for respect, civility, responsible citizenship, and safety.
- (h) Opportunities shall be provided for all staff to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to develop and maintain academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment.

#### 4.2. The Provincial Code of Conduct

According to the *Education Act*, the purposes of the Provincial Code of Conduct are:

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

##### (a) Standards of Behaviour: Respect, Civility, and Responsible Citizenship

Under the Provincial Code of Conduct, all members of the school community must:

- respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws;
- demonstrate honesty and integrity;
- respect differences in people, their ideas, and their opinions;
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement;
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of, for example, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, 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;
- respect all members of the school community, especially persons in positions of authority;
- respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching; and/or

- not swear at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority.

(b) Standards of Behaviour: Safety

All members of the school community must not:

- engage in bullying behaviours;
- commit sexual assault;
- traffic weapons or illegal drugs;
- give alcohol to a minor;
- commit robbery;
- be in possession of any weapon, including firearms;
- use any object to threaten or intimidate another person;
- cause injury to any person with an object;
- be in possession of, or be under the influence of, or provide others with alcohol or illegal drugs;
- 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; and/or
- commit an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property or to property located on the premises of the school.

(c) Standards of Behaviour: Students

(i) Progressive Discipline

When students breach the code of conduct, consequences will be consistent with progressive discipline techniques. Progressive discipline is a whole-school approach that utilizes a continuum of interventions, supports, and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviour and to build on strategies that promote positive behaviours. When inappropriate behaviour occurs, disciplinary measures should be applied within a framework that shifts the focus from one that is solely punitive to one that is both corrective and supportive. Schools should utilize a range of interventions, supports, and consequences that include learning opportunities for reinforcing positive behaviour while helping students to make good choices.

Interventions (in no particular order) may include:

- Discussion with a teacher, member of the support staff, vice-principal or principal
- Attendance/performance/behaviour contracts
- Time out
- Reflection sheet
- Parental contact and involvement in applying an appropriate remedy
- Loss of privilege to participate in specified school activities
- Peer mediation
- Individual or group counseling
- Written or oral apology
- Essay / poster campaign
- Detention
- Restitution for damage or stolen property
- Community service
- Restorative justice practices

Student breaches of the Board's Code of Conduct and School's Code of Conduct will be dealt with in accordance with Operational Procedure PR697 – Consequences of Inappropriate Student Behaviour (See Appendix A).

(ii) Suspension

Under subsection 306(1) of the *Education Act*, a principal shall consider whether to suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

- Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person.
- Possessing alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Being under the influence of alcohol.
- Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority.
- Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school.
- Bullying.

- Any other activity that is an activity for which a principal may suspend a pupil under the policy of the board.

Under clause 306 (1) 7 of the *Education Act*, a pupil may be suspended if he or she engages in an activity that is an activity for which a principal may suspend a pupil under a policy of the board.

Under Board policy, a principal may suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

1. Wilful destruction of school property; vandalism causing damage to school or Board property or property located on school or Board premises;
2. Use of profane or improper language;
3. Use of tobacco;
4. Theft;
5. Aid/incite harmful behaviour;
6. Physical assault;
7. Being under the influence of illegal drugs;
8. Sexual harassment;
9. Racial harassment;
10. Fighting;
11. Possession or misuse of any harmful substances;
12. Hate-motivated violence;
13. Extortion;
14. Distribution of hate material;
15. Inappropriate use of electronic communications/media; and/or
16. An act considered by the principal to be a breach of the Board's or School's Code of Conduct.

(iii) Suspension Pending Possible Expulsion

Under subsection 310 (1) of the *Education Act*, a principal shall suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

17. Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm.
18. Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person.
19. Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner.
20. Committing a sexual assault.

21. Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs.
22. Committing robbery.
23. Giving alcohol to a minor.

Under Board policy, a principal shall suspend a pupil pending possible expulsion if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

1. Possession of explosive substance; and/or
2. An act considered by the principal to be a serious breach of the Board's or School's Code of Conduct.

#### 4.3. Roles and Responsibilities

##### (a) Principals

Principals have a duty to maintain proper order and discipline within the school. As part of their responsibility, principals shall develop local codes of conduct for their schools. Local codes of conduct must be consistent with this Policy and the Provincial Code of Conduct.

Under the provisions of the Education Act, principals have the authority to suspend students and to refer expulsions to the school board. Principals will conduct investigations in accordance with the Guidelines for Conducting a Disciplinary Investigation.

School principals shall take a leadership role in the daily operation of the school by:

- demonstrating care for the school community and a commitment to academic excellence in a safe teaching and learning environment;
- holding each person under their authority accountable for his or her behaviour and actions;
- empowering students to be positive leaders in their school and community;
- communicating regularly and meaningfully with all members of their school community;
- ensuring the communication of local codes of conduct includes a communication plan that outlines communication of the standards to the entire school community, including those members whose first language is not English and
- providing an example of respect and civility for all members of the school community.

(b) Teachers and Other School Staff Members

Under the leadership of principals, teachers and other school staff members maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, teachers and school staff shall uphold these high standards by:

- helping students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth;
- empowering students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school, and community;
- communicating regularly and meaningfully with parents;
- maintaining consistent standards of behaviour for all students;
- demonstrating respect for all students, staff, parents, volunteers, and the members of the school community;
- preparing students for the responsibilities of citizenship.

Teachers shall also assist principals in maintaining close co-operation with the school community and in establishing and maintaining consistent disciplinary practices in the school. In addition, teachers shall assist the principals by reporting incidents and assisting the principal in conducting investigations.

(c) Students

Students are to be treated with respect and dignity. In return, they shall demonstrate respect for themselves, for others, and for the responsibilities of citizenship by:

- coming to school prepared, on time, and ready to learn;
- showing respect for themselves, for others, and for those in authority;
- refraining from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others;
- following the established rules and taking responsibility for their own actions.

Students shall also:

- exercise self-discipline;
- accept such discipline as would be exercised by a kind, firm and judicious parent;
- be courteous to fellow pupils and obedient and courteous of teachers;
- show respect for school property;
- understand and comply with their school's code of conduct.

(d) Parents and Guardians

Parents play an important role in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Parents fulfill their role by:

- showing an active interest in their child's school work and progress;
- showing respect for the Principal and school staff;
- communicating regularly with the school;
- helping their child to be neat, appropriately dressed and prepared for school;
- ensuring that their child attends school regularly and on time;
- promptly reporting to the school their child's absence or late arrival;
- showing that they are familiar with the Provincial Code of Conduct, the Board's Code of Conduct and school rules;
- encouraging and assisting their child in following the rules of behaviour";
- assisting school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues involving their child.

(e) Community Partners, Including Police Services

Police Services and community members are essential partners in making schools and communities safe. Community agencies provide additional prevention and intervention strategies at the request of Board staff. Many partnerships will have protocols that define the linkages between the Board and the community partner. As one example, Police Services investigate and response to incidents in accordance with the Police-School Board Protocol.

4.4. Local School Codes of Conduct

- (a) Schools shall develop local codes of conduct that promote and support respect, civility, responsible citizenship, and safety in accordance with Board policies and provincial legislation and guidelines.
- (b) School codes of conduct shall set out clearly what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for all members of the school community.
- (c) School codes of conduct shall include the stipulation that all personal communication devices are to be powered off and stored out of view during an instructional class and other areas in the school, unless otherwise authorized by the principal.
- (d) Schools shall seek input from school councils, parents, students, staff members, and the members of the school community.

- (e) Schools shall develop procedures that set out implementation measures for the school's code of conduct.
- (f) School codes of conduct shall be communicated to all members of the school including those members whose first language is not English and
- (g) Schools shall review their local codes of conduct and related procedure regularly and in accordance with the reviews of this policy and involve school councils, parents, students, staff members, and the members of the school community.

Note: The template for a school code of conduct is contained in operational procedure PR.585: School Code of Conduct.

## **5.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES**

The Director is authorized to issue operational procedures to implement this policy.

## **6.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

Board Documents (available on the Board's Policies and Procedures website)

### *Policies*

P.064: Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour

P.065: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

P.051: Safe Schools

### *Operational Procedures*

PR.585: School Code of Conduct

PR.522: Suspension Appeals and Expulsion Hearings

PR.586: Programs for Students on Long-term Suspensions and Expulsions

PR.697: Consequences of Inappropriate Student Behaviour

PR.698: Police-School Board Protocol

PR.540: Safe Schools Student Transfer

### Other Documents

*Education Act*, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER E.2

O. Reg. 472/07, Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils

O. Reg. 612/00, School Councils

### Ministry of Education's Policy/Program Memoranda

PPM 128: The Provincial Code of Conduct and School Board Codes of Conduct