



Section Six

Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct should reinforce:

- Confidentiality
- Respect
- Transparency
- Democracy

A School Representative Body is responsible for providing input into the development of their Code of Conduct and endorsing it.

A School Representative Body Constitution states what members duties are when dealing with School Representative Body business. A School Representative Body can have additional duties to those stated in the Constitution. This can be done by including a reference to documents in the Constitution, such as a Code of Conduct, Standing Order, or Duty Statement/s.

When a Code of Conduct is adopted, the Constitution of the School Representative Body must be amended to include a reference under the 'Duties of Members'. All school and department staff that are members of a School Representative Body have an additional requirement to comply with the Department of Education Code of Conduct policy and guidelines, the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment Code of Conduct for NT Public Sector employees and the Public Sector Employment and Management Act.

The Code of Conduct for Schools policy and guidelines encourages schools to include a Code of Conduct for School Representative Body employees. Contractors, subcontractors and tradespersons engaged to work on assets on school grounds must agree to the requirement to comply with the site rules for contractors entering school premises.





CODE OF CONDUCT

Developing a Code of Conduct

STEP 1 Form a working group or committee – a “Committee for the Code of Conduct” (*or a name you consider is appropriate*), who will be responsible for developing your School Representative Body’s ‘Code of Conduct’ using the following pages to guide them through each of the areas which may be included.

STEP 2 Set a timeline for how long the working group has to complete the draft ‘Code of Conduct’ for presentation to all School Representative Body members.

STEP 3 Include a new agenda item under General Business called – ‘Code of Conduct’ Committee Report. At each School Representative Body meeting the Chair of the committee should provide a report on the group’s activity.

STEP 4 Send the completed draft to the Secretary to forward to all members. Members should receive the draft at least one week prior to the meeting where the draft will be discussed.

STEP 5 Members discuss the draft at the meeting. Any changes should be voted on at the meeting.

STEP 6 Endorsed changes are incorporated into the draft.

STEP 7 The revised ‘Code of Conduct’ is submitted again at the next meeting for approval to schedule a Special General Meeting.

A Special General Meeting is for the school community to ratify (which means agree), the new Constitution.

STEP 8 The School Constitution is amended to include the ‘Code of Conduct’.

Sample Code of Conduct

(NAME OF SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE BODY)

CODE OF CONDUCT

1 INTENT

This Code of Conduct applies to:

- (a) each member of the *(Name of School Representative Body)*

2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to:

- (a) set out the high standards of honesty, integrity and ethical behaviour expected of members in performing their functions under the Education Act and Regulations; and
- (b) guide members as to the practices necessary for confidence to be maintained in their integrity and for members to comply with their obligations in performing functions under the Education Act and Regulations.

3 REQUIREMENTS

School Representative Body members must:

- (a) act with honesty and integrity, this means:
 - (i) be open and transparent in their dealings; and
 - (ii) not place themselves in a position of conflict of interest; and
 - (iii) declare any conflict of interest that should arise; and
 - (iv) strive to earn and retain a high level of school community trust;
- (b) act in good faith, this means:
 - (i) demonstrate accountability for their actions; and
 - (ii) accept responsibility for their decisions; and
 - (iii) make all decisions in the best interests of students; and
 - (iv) not engage in activities that may bring them or the school into disrepute

(c) act fairly and impartially, this means:

- (i) avoid bias, discrimination, or self-interest; and
- (ii) demonstrate respect for others by always acting in a professional and courteous manner; and

(d) use information appropriately, that is, ensure that information gained in the performance of their functions is kept confidential and only used for proper purposes; and

(e) use their position appropriately, this means:

- (i) not use their position to seek an undue advantage for themselves, family members or associates; and
- (ii) not cause detriment to the school; and
- (iii) ensure that they refuse any offers of gifts or favours that may cast doubt on their ability to apply independent judgement in performing functions; and

(f) act in a financially responsible manner, this means:

- (i) participate in the global school budget planning each year and monitor the budget monthly reports and
- (ii) be accountable for all school resources used in performing functions.



The **(Name of School Representative Body)** Code of Conduct is based upon these ethical principles:

- A **member shall** consider the best interests of all students and parents
- A **member shall** be guided by the School Representative Bodies objectives
- A **member shall** act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a School Representative Body, as identified by the Education Act & Education Regulations
- A **member shall** recognise and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community
- A **member shall** treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption
- A **member shall** promote a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued
- A **member shall** acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the School Representative Body
- A **member shall** respect the confidential nature of some School Representative Body business and respect limitations this may place on the School Representative Body
- A **member shall** become familiar with relevant school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them
- A **member shall** maintain the highest standards of integrity
- A **member shall** not disclose confidential information
- A **member shall** limit discussions at School Representative Body meetings to matters under its mandate and of concern to the school community as a whole
- A **member shall** use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- A **member shall** declare any conflict of interest
- A **member shall** not accept any payment or benefit financially through School Representative Body involvement



Part One: Respect and Integrity

DECISION MAKING

School Representative Body decisions can affect the whole school community, so they must be fair, justifiable and based on relevant information. Good decisions take into account the school's current and future needs. They bring together all the factors of school life: academic, social, environmental and economic. They don't expose the school to problems that could be avoided. Our decisions should be clear and understandable to our school community. *Or your statement*

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The School Representative Body must observe all legislative requirements and instructions from the department and the government. This includes acts, regulations, policies and procedures that have a direct bearing on the school community, including, but not limited to; the Education Act and Education Regulations, workplace relations and occupational health and safety acts; and anti-discrimination and freedom of information legislation.

Note: This part of the Code remains the same for all School Representative Bodies as it is common practice by law and is part of good governance.

PROTECTING GOVERNMENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Members must respect the need for confidentiality and privacy with regard to sensitive matters that may arise at meetings, especially where there are matters of a personal nature relating to staff, students or parents. Discussion must remain in the meeting only.

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INTEGRITY IN PRACTICE

This means the intentions behind your actions. Behaving with integrity is about dealing with others openly and honestly, as well as observing all the relevant legislative, industrial and administrative requirements.

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REPORTING OF MISCONDUCT, CORRUPTION OR ILLEGAL ACTIVITY

The community expects members will have a high standard of integrity and be free from misconduct, corruption or other illegal activity. Each of us in the school community are accountable for any inappropriate conduct and the School Representative Body plays an important part in setting standards and ensuring standards are met. If required, the School Representative Body will report any inappropriate behaviour to the authorities. *Or your statement*

INTERNET AND EMAIL USE

School Representative Body members should only use school internet, Intranet and email resources responsibly, safely and as part of their official responsibilities, in line with school policies. *Or your statement*

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

School Representative Body members are free to take part in public debate and express opinion about education policy in general. They should not speak on behalf of the School Representative Body unless the Chair authorises them to do so. The Principal and the Chair are the only members who may make public statements on behalf of the School Representative Body. When they speak officially, they do not speak from a personal position; what they say must be based on School Representative Body policies and decisions.

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POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Members are free to be involved in political activity as part of their daily lives. They do need to be aware that it could create, or at least look like creating, a conflict of interest with their official duties. Members need to talk to the Chair if there is a conflict or the potential for a conflict.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest is where the financial or other interests of a School Representative Body member or associate are, or look to others as if they are, at odds with our duties as a member. We should all be on the look-out for any actual or potential conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, and let the Chair know about them.



ENSURING MERIT AND EQUITY

When we recruit people for positions at the school, we have to work to the merit principle. We choose people with the:

- abilities
- aptitudes
- skills
- qualifications
- knowledge
- experience and
- personal qualities to fit the job.

EXERTING INFLUENCE AND ACCEPTING GIFTS, BENEFITS OR FAVOURS

We must never use our position to give the impression that we can influence decisions. We should not accept gifts, benefits or favours which may influence, or be seen to influence, the decisions we make. *Or your statement*

INTEGRITY IN FINANCIAL REPORTING

School Representative Body financial accounts must be accurate and people should be able to trust the information. Members must not hide information, or try to influence, coerce, manipulate or mislead internal or external Auditors. A member should understand the financial, strategic and other implications of their recommendations or decisions.

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NEPOTISM AND PATRONAGE

It is unacceptable for School Representative Body members to favour relatives (*nepotism*) or people they know (*patronage*) in making decisions or getting jobs done. Members are expected to represent the school community. Members do not represent one viewpoint or the view of an individual. Members therefore regularly seek the views and opinions of the whole school community.

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USE OF SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE BODY MONEY, PROPERTY AND FACILITIES

School money, property and facilities should be used for official purposes only and with due care.

Part Two: Respect in Practice

Respect in Practice refers to how people are treated. As School Representative Body members, we should consider the impact of what we do and the decisions we make.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Cultural diversity is a valuable asset for the school community. School Representative Body members can expect to work within a culturally diverse environment.

We should therefore be inclusive and responsive to everyone; recognising the culture, history, uniqueness and diversity of the different groups in our school community.

DISCRIMINATION

School Representative Body members must not discriminate, directly or indirectly, in the way they deal with individuals or groups on the grounds of age, gender, race, disability, sexuality, marital status, pregnancy or any other ground covered by equal opportunity or anti-discrimination legislation.

Note: This part of the Code remains the same for all School Representative Bodies as it is common practice by law and is part of good governance.

ENVIRONMENT

School Representative Body members must recognise their responsibility to respect, protect and improve the environment in their work. *Or your statement*

EQUITY

Equity is about being fair and just toward all people, but it doesn't necessarily mean treating everyone in the same way. We might often have to treat a person differently according to their circumstances and needs so they receive an equal chance to others. School Representative Body and school services must be inclusive and responsive to everyone. *Or your statement*

PRIVACY OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Personal information is private and School Representative Body members have to respect it. We must recognise our responsibility to set the highest standards, as well as meeting legal requirements for collecting, managing, using and disclosing personal information. *Or your statement*

Part Three: Respect and Courtesy

Colleagues, school staff, students, stakeholders and members of the broader community are entitled to respect, courtesy and to maintain their dignity in their dealings with the School Representative Body and the school. They must never be coerced or harassed.

The underlying principles of a Code of Conduct include the promotion of:

- respectful partnerships
- clear and honest two-way communication
- transparent processes
- democratic, informed decision making and
- personal and professional integrity.

Conflict between School Representative Body members should be dealt with respectfully, fairly and in a manner that reflects the principles of natural justice.

BULLYING

Bullying is behaviour that demeans, humiliates, ignores, excludes or intimidates an individual or groups of people. Bullying is when these things happen repeatedly, and it is difficult for the person being bullied to defend against it or make the other person stop.

School Representative Body members must never bully colleagues, school staff, students, stakeholders and members of the broader community. *Or your statement*

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination that can involve sexual solicitation, physical advances or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature. Any behaviour that is unwelcome and offensive, creates a hostile work environment, or is sufficiently severe or intense to be perceived in the context as harassment to a reasonable person, is sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment can be a single severe act or a number of persistent acts. *Or your statement*

Part Four: Service to Community

Service to community is consistently providing the highest level of service to the school community.

School Representative Body decisions should meet demand as it arises and be based on research or professional expertise.

SERVICE AWARENESS

Schools service their community best when they're presented well, efficiently run and well-constructed. Members should take this into account when they're planning any development, including infrastructure projects that affect the school environment. We also need to let our school community know about the work our School Representative Body is doing. *Or your statement*

COMPLAINTS HANDLING

We should deal with complaints about the School Representative Body or school fairly and with respect. The school community is entitled to expect the highest standard of safety and service from the school, particularly when handling complaints. *Or your statement*

DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE

School Representative Bodies serve many different groups of people, so we need a high standard of service across the work environment. Measuring the quality of service involves thinking about how well and effectively people do things; and what the results of their actions are.

As members, we measure our own standards of service by how effectively we put into practice our commitment to the school's strategic goals and how consistently and effectively we work with and communicate what we're doing to everyone involved in the school. *Or your statement*

RESPONSIVE, TIMELY, EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT SERVICES

School Representative Body members should meet any requests from within our school community promptly, objectively and professionally. At times we need to think outside the square to develop the most efficient services to our community. *Or your statement*

BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

In the event that the actions of a member are against the intent of this code, they could be asked to step down, or removed from the School Representative Body.