

**August 22, 2012**

**TO:** All School Board Chairs

**FROM:** Carolyn Duhamel, Executive Director

**RE:** ***Sample School Trustee Code of Conduct***

In June 2012, the Manitoba Legislature passed amendments to *The Public Schools Act* requiring school boards to adopt a code of conduct for school trustees. The legislation specified the minimum provisions for these codes of conduct, namely that a trustee is required to:

* act with integrity and in a manner that maintains the dignity of the office;
* respect others who may have differing opinions; and
* keep in confidence any personal or confidential information obtained in his or her capacity as a trustee and not disclose the information except when required by law or authorized by the school board to do so.

The attached document is a template that may assist school boards that are working to develop their own codes of conduct that reflect local priorities and organizational cultures. It includes clauses that respond to the minimum provisions, above, as well as additional provisions that school boards may find appropriate. As the legislation also anticipates that the Minister of Education may make regulations that will further define the mandatory content of codes of conduct, both this sample code and any locally developed ones may need to be modified at a later date to ensure that they continue to meet the legal requirements established by the provincial government.

CD/hd***Code of Conduct***

*The position of school trustee is one of responsibility and trust, and individuals holding that position must conduct themselves accordingly. Therefore, the school trustees of XYZ School Division:*

* will abide by the provisions of all federal, provincial and local legislation, including but not limited to human rights statutes, *The Public Schools Act*, and school division by-laws and policies.
* recognize that the school board’s authority rests with the corporate body, not with individual trustees, and therefore will speak or act on behalf of the school board only if they have been authorized to do so.
* understand that their position may make them privy to confidential information about individuals including students or staff, or financial or other sensitive matters, and will keep any such information confidential.
* strive to attend all regular and special meetings of the board and those committees on which they serve, and if unable to do so, advise the appropriate individuals of their pending absence.
* review meeting agendas and other relevant information prior to board and committee meetings, and arrive at such meetings informed and prepared to contribute to the open and honest discussion about matters before the board or committee.
* listen respectfully and with an open mind to the full range of opinions on each matter before them, and make their decisions based on the merits of these varying opinions.
* treat board colleagues, divisional and school staff, students and community members in a respectful and courteous manner, and refrain from using abusive or denigrating language in any dealings with them.