
POLICY 2.30 PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE

All employees, and others performing work on behalf of the District, are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner, to adhere to applicable laws, regulations, policies and procedures that apply to their work activities and to demonstrate ethical behavior in all their decisions and interactions.

The Board is committed to honesty, integrity, and accountability in its operations, programs, and services and to promoting a culture of openness and transparency. Accordingly, and consistent with the provisions of the British Columbia *Public Interest Disclosure Act* ("PIDA"), the Board encourages and supports employees in bringing forward reports of unlawful acts and acts of wrongdoing.

The purpose of this Policy and related Administrative Procedures is to establish a process, in compliance with the PIDA, for employees to report, in good faith, wrongful or unlawful conduct without fear of retaliation or reprisal.

This Policy applies to alleged wrongdoing related to the District's operations or its employees. This Policy does not displace other mechanisms set out in District Policy for addressing and enforcing standards of conduct, disputes, complaints, or grievances, including issues of discrimination, bullying and harassment, occupational health and safety, or disputes over employment matters or under collective agreements.

The Superintendent will appoint a senior staff member(s) who will be responsible for responding to requests for advice, receiving disclosures and investigating disclosures of wrongdoing.

1. Definitions

- 1.1. **"Advice"** means advice that may be requested in respect of making a Disclosure or a complaint about a Reprisal under this Policy or the PIDA;
- 1.2. **"Discloser"** means an Employee who makes a Disclosure or seeks Advice or makes a complaint about a Reprisal;
- 1.3. **"Disclosure"** means a report of Wrongdoing made under this Policy and includes allegations of Wrongdoing received by the School District from the Ombudsperson or another government institution for investigation in accordance with PIDA;
- 1.4. **"Employee"** refers to past and present employee of the District;

- 1.5. **"FIPPA"** means the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and all regulations thereto;
- 1.6. **"Investigation"** means an investigation undertaken by the District under this Policy or by the Ombudsperson under the PIDA;
- 1.7. **"Personal Information"** has the same meaning set out in FIPPA, namely "recorded information about an identifiable individual", and includes any information from which the identity of the Discloser or any person who is accused of Wrongdoing or participates in an Investigation can be deduced or inferred;
- 1.8. **"PIDA"** means the *Public Interest Disclosure Act of British Columbia*, and all regulations thereto;
- 1.9. **"Procedure"** means any School District's Administrative Procedure associated with this Policy;
- 1.10. **"Reprisal"** means the imposition of, and any threat to impose, discipline, demotion, termination or any other act that adversely affects employment or working condition of a Discloser because they made a Disclosure, sought Advice, made a complaint about a Reprisal or participated in an Investigation; and
- 1.11. **"Wrongdoing"** refers to:
 - 1.1.1. a serious act or omission that, if proven, would constitute an offence under an enactment of British Columbia or Canada;
 - 1.1.2. an act or omission that creates a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons, or to the environment, other than a danger that is inherent in the performance of an employee's duties or functions;
 - 1.1.3. a serious misuse of public funds or public assets;
 - 1.1.4. gross or systematic mismanagement; or
 - 1.1.5. knowingly directing or counselling a person to commit any act or omission described in the paragraphs above.

2. Statement of Principles

- 2.1. The District is committed to supporting ethical conduct in its operations, and seeks to foster a culture in which Employees are encouraged to disclose Wrongdoing, including by receiving, investigating and responding to Disclosures and by providing information and training about the PIDA, this Policy and the Procedures.
- 2.2. The District will investigate Disclosures that it receives under this Policy. Investigations under this Policy will be carried out in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.

2.3. The District will not commit or tolerate Reprisals against Employees, who in good faith, makes a request for Advice, makes a Disclosure, participates in an Investigation or makes a complaint under this Policy.

2.4. The District is committed to protecting the privacy of Disclosers, persons accused of Wrongdoing and those who participate in Investigations in a manner that is consistent with its obligations under the PIDA and FIPPA.

3. Privacy and Confidentiality

3.1. All Personal Information that the District collects, uses or shares in the course of receiving or responding to a Disclosure, a request for Advice, a complaint of a Reprisal, or conducting an Investigation will be treated as confidential and will be used and disclosed as described in this Policy, the Procedures, the PIDA or as otherwise permitted or required under FIPPA and other applicable laws.

4. Reporting

4.1. Each year, the Superintendent shall prepare, in accordance with the requirements of the PIDA, and make available, a report concerning any Disclosures received, Investigations undertaken and findings of Wrongdoing. All reporting under this Policy will be in compliance with the requirements of FIPPA.

5. Responsibility

5.1. The Superintendent is responsible for the administration of this Policy and shall ensure that training and instruction is available to all Employees concerning this Policy, the Procedures and the PIDA.

5.1.1. In the event that the Superintendent is unable or unavailable to perform their duties under this Policy, the Superintendent may delegate their authority in writing to the Secretary-Treasurer or other senior members of staff.

5.2. Individuals who knowingly make a false complaint of Wrongdoing and/or who provide false information about a complaint are in violation of this policy and subject to disciplinary and/or corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.