



POLICY

HR9

Conflict of Interest Related to Hiring, Selection, Promotion and Evaluation of Employees

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Policy Statement

The Grand Erie District School Board is committed to a policy of employment and advancement based on qualifications, merit, and principles of equity. This Policy is intended to facilitate an employee's ability to maintain the highest business and ethical standards, and to facilitate the protection of the integrity of employees in the course of their hiring/supervision responsibilities to the Board.

This Policy defines and addresses potential, apparent and actual conflicts of interest. It provides guidance to employees so that conflicts of interest are recognized and either avoided or resolved expeditiously through appropriate disclosure and management.

The fundamental principle underlying this Policy is that employees must not permit relationships with others or external business activities to conflict, or appear to conflict, with the interests of the Board.

In limited circumstances, there may be situations where an exemption may be granted by the Director of Education or designate.

Accountability:

1. Frequency of Reports – As needed
2. Criteria for Success – Effective and transparent hiring, supervision and transfer/placement procedures.

1.0 Definitions:

- a. Conflict of interest means a potential, apparent, or actual conflict where an employee's financial or other personal interest, whether direct or indirect, conflicts or appears to conflict with the employee's responsibility to the Board, or with the employee's participation in any recommendation or decision pertaining to the hiring/selection/promotion or evaluation of employees within the Board.
- b. Employee means full-time or part-time employees of the Board involved in hiring/supervision of staff.
- c. External activity means any activity of an employee outside the scope of their employment with the Board undertaken as part of a commercial or volunteer enterprise.
- d. Relationship means any relationship of an employee to persons of their immediate family whether related by blood, adoption, marriage, or common-law relationship, and any relationship of an intimate and/or financial nature during the preceding five years, any student-supervisor relationship, or any other past or present relationship that may give rise to a reasonable apprehension of bias.
- e. Supervisor means the person to whom an employee reports to.

2.0 Specific Conflicts:

Without restricting the generality of this Policy, the following circumstances may give rise to conflicts of interest:

- a. Participating in, or influencing the outcome of the appointment, hiring, promotion, supervision, or evaluation of a person with whom the Employee has, or has had, a relationship.
- b. Acceptance by an employee of a gift from any of the following persons or entities if a reasonable person might conclude that the gift could influence the employee when performing hiring duties with the Board.
 - (i) A person, group or entity that has dealings with the Board
 - (ii) A person, group or entity to whom the employee provides services in the course of their duties to the Board
 - (iii) A person, group or entity that seeks to do business with the Board.

An employee who is offered a gift in the circumstances in (b) above shall notify their supervisor in writing.

3.0 Procedures for Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

- a. All employees have an obligation to disclose to their supervisor or the Director of Education, or designate, any conflict of interest. The employee must disclose in writing as soon as they could reasonably be aware that a conflict of interest exists. The existence of a conflict of interest does not necessarily preclude involvement in the issue which has given rise to the conflict (the 'Matter'). The employee must declare, in writing, the nature and extent of the conflict of interest no later than any meeting or process in which the employee participates and at which the matter is to be considered. The employee must refrain from taking part in any discussion or decision-making in relation to the matter and withdraw from any meeting or process when the matter is being discussed until a decision has been reached regarding the manner in which the conflict of interest will be addressed.
- b. A conflict of interest involving an employee may also be reported to a supervisor by any other person. A report to a supervisor about the existence of a potential, apparent or actual conflict of interest shall be made in writing.

4.0 Procedures for Management of Conflicts of Interest

- a. If the supervisor or Director of Education, or designate, to whom the disclosure is made also has a conflict of interest, the disclosure should be made in writing to the person at the next highest level of authority.
- b. The supervisor or Director of Education, or designate, will investigate to determine if a conflict of interest exists. Where appropriate, the Supervisor or Director of Education, or designate, may consult with the employee and/or others.
- c. If the supervisor or Director of Education, or designate, determines there is a conflict of interest, the supervisor, or Director of Education, or designate, should resolve the matter as noted below and shall document, in writing, any remedies that have been applied.

Contraventions of this Policy

Adherence to this Policy, in letter and in spirit, is crucial to the relationships of trust that exist between the Board, its employees and the public. Contraventions of this Policy, whether arising from dishonesty or inattention, undermine these relationships and may lead to disciplinary action. For employees, disciplinary sanctions for breach of this Policy will be in accordance with HR119 – Progressive Discipline and may include a range of outcomes appropriate to the nature of the contravention and could include dismissal from employment.