

Tips for Handling Issues

As a school committee member, if you are not clear on your role, or what you can and cannot discuss in the community, ask yourself the following questions:

Will my participation in the hiring process – if I am related to the person being interviewed – put me in a conflict of interest?

If the answer is yes, then you must publicly disclose your relationship.

“...Committee members may conduct business with the Division, or their dependents may conduct business with the Division, provided the committee member

- publicly discloses his/her interest or his/her dependent’s interest,
- withdraws from the meeting without voting or participating in the discussion and,
- refrains from attempting to influence the matter.”

(Excerpt from Regulation E.1.E-R – Conflict of Interest, Item 1. B. iii.)

Was the information I received or heard sensitive?

Was the information discussed or presented during an in-camera session of the meeting?

If the answer is yes, then you are disregarding your school committee constitution and can be removed from sitting on the school committee.

Governance Support Officers

For further information on school committees please contact a Governance Support Officer in the following offices.

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Area 1 (Thompson)

16 Kelsey Bay
Thompson, Man. R8N 0L7
(204) 677-6744

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Area 2 (Dauphin)

38-1st Avenue N.W.
Dauphin, Man. R7N 1G7
(204) 638-6839

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Area 3 (Winnipeg)

30 Speers Road
Winnipeg, Man. R2J 1L9
(204) 775-9741

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Area 4 (Cranberry Portage)

General Delivery
Cranberry Portage, Man. ROB OH0
(204) 472-3800

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Area 5 (Norway House)

Box 1000
Norway House, Man. ROB 1B0
(204) 359-6711

School Committee Resource

Tips for Handling Issues



Frontier School Division
Governance Support Program

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is defined as:

- Any perceived or actual interest in, connection with, or benefit from activities, which might adversely affect Frontier School Division,
- Any perceived or actual benefit to an employee, committee member, trustee or his/her immediate family directly or indirectly as a result of their position or connection with the Division.

Frontier School Division believes that all employees, committee members and trustees occupy positions of trust and confidence in the public. All are expected to fulfill their duties and responsibilities professionally, impartially, and with integrity. Each person must anticipate and avoid conflicts of interest, including situations that could give the appearance of being in conflict with the interest of the Division.

(Excerpt from Policy E.1.E – Conflict of Interest)

Trustees, committee members or employees are in conflict of interest when:

- they use information gained by performing their duties, which is not public information, for their own benefit, the benefit of an immediate family, or for the benefit of anyone,
- they attempt to influence a decision that will benefit themselves or an immediate family member.”

(Excerpt from Regulation E.1.E-R – Conflict of Interest)

Some possible situations involving conflict of interest:

Example 1 – A position has become vacant at the school. You know your son is interested in applying for the job. You state at the meeting you intend to participate in the interviews. How should you handle this situation?

As a school committee member you are in conflict because your son is “immediate family,” and you know your son is applying for the job.

Example 2 – Each school has a code of conduct that includes a student attendance policy. Your nephew has exceeded the number of absences and is appealing the school’s decision to the school committee. How do you handle this situation?

As a school committee member you may be in conflict because you are making a decision involving a family member.

Example 3 – Your daughter-in-law is just graduating from teacher training. You are aware there are some issues with a current staff member. You decide to make an issue out the problem staff member, which could lead to a teaching position becoming available.

As a school committee member you are in conflict because you are influencing a decision for personal gain.



Confidentiality

“Any school committee member who breaches confidentiality of matters discussed in closure may be asked to resign by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the school committee.”

(Excerpt from Article 19 – School Committee Constitution and Terms of Reference)

“Local school committee members shall maintain strict confidentiality of privileged information.”

(Excerpt from Policy B.3.F – School Committee Code of Conduct)

Confidentiality is keeping information to yourself that was discussed at a meeting and not discussing it with anyone outside the meeting room.

Example – An in-camera discussion is held at a school committee meeting to discuss a staff member who appears to be abusive towards the students. The students are afraid of the staff member. The Principal is asked to look into the situation and to speak with the staff member. That afternoon the Principal receives a phone call from an irate parent about the staff member. It becomes apparent to the Principal that one of the school committee members had discussed the issue in the community.

School committee confidentiality has been breached. Not only does this interfere with the process for an investigation by the Principal and the Division, it can also become a legal matter.

The staff member was not given “due process” for a fair investigation as everyone in the community has already labeled the staff member guilty. Matters of this nature are confidential and must not be discussed outside the meeting.