



Policy Section: **Trusteeship and the Board**

**200**

Policy Name: **Trustee Code of Conduct**

**207**

## **Purpose**

A Trustee is an elected position which carries with it the understanding that the electorate will decide at election time its support for the effectiveness of a Trustee. At the same time, it is important to recognize the public trust and responsibility the collective body carries and that this trust and responsibility is honoured through determining and enforcing norms of behaviour.

A Code of Conduct Policy contributes to confidence in public education and respect for the integrity of Trustees in the community. It deals with acceptable and respectful behaviours.

The Board is guided by its Vision and Values as follows:

### Vision:

- The Keewatin-Patricia District School Board puts students first by creating a culture of learning.

### Values:

- Students Come First
- Innovation in Classrooms
- Student Achievement & Mental Health
- High Standards
- Digital Citizenship
- Partnership
- Inclusiveness

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### Cross Reference

Municipal Elections Act  
Education Act: 207.(1), (3)  
Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive  
Criminal Code, s.122  
Statutory Powers Procedure Act  
Policies  
322, Code of Conduct  
330, Character Development  
503, Equity & Inclusive Education  
701, Criminal Record Checks  
706, Employee Code of Conduct  
708, Respectful Working & Learning Environment  
709, Workplace Harassment  
715, Substance Use by Employees and Volunteers (Drug and Alcohol)  
716, Use of Medical Cannabis  
717, Accountability  
Procedures  
706, Employee Code of Conduct  
717, Accountability

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## **Policy**

The Trustees of the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board occupy positions of public trust and confidence. They are expected to discharge their duties and responsibilities in a professional and impartial manner. Their behaviours are guided by integrity, impartiality, independence, accountability, transparency, leadership, responsiveness, honesty, confidentiality, legality, and respect. As a result, every Trustee of the Board, including Student Trustees, shall uphold the letter and spirit of this Trustee Code of Conduct.

Trustees have clearly defined duties and powers. As a Board, Trustees are responsible for promoting student achievement and well-being, and for the effective stewardship of resources. These duties and powers are outlined in the Education Act. Trustees are elected to represent students, parents, and stakeholders on the Board. This relationship with the electorate is governed by the Municipal Elections Act and the Education Act.

This Code of Conduct is a covenant among the Trustees of the Board. It is intended to instruct and guide Trustees through the challenges of public office as they undertake their individual and joint responsibilities. It is meant to provide clarity regarding Trustees' conduct and the management of their relationships with the Board of Trustees, staff, students, parents, and stakeholders in public education. A Code of Conduct Policy contributes to confidence in public education and respect for the integrity of Trustees in the community.

## **Definitions**

In this Trustee Code of Conduct, the following definitions apply:

**"Bias"** means and includes an inclination; bent, preconceived opinion; and a predisposition to decide a cause or an issue in a certain way, which does not leave the mind perfectly open to objectively treat all matters fairly and equally.

**"Broder Public Sector Procurement Directive"** or **"BPS Procurement Directive"** means the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive issued by the Management Board of Cabinet, effective July 1, 2011, as same may be amended from time to time.

**"Conflict of Interest"** means and includes a situation which financial or other personal considerations have the potential to compromise, or bias, professional judgment and



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objectivity. An apparent conflict of interest is one in which a reasonable person would think that the Trustee's judgment is likely to be compromised.

A conflict of interest may exist when the decisions and/or actions of Trustees, during the course of exercising their duties, are affected by, or perceived by, another party or person to be affected by the Trustee's personal, financial, or business interests, or the personal, financial, or business interests of a relative, friend, and/or business associate of the Trustee.

**"Economic, Financial, or Commercial Advantage"** means the receipt, or expectation of receipt, of anything of value by either a Trustee of the Board, or a relative, friend, and/or business associate of the Trustee, resulting from a personal relationship.

**"Favour"** means any act on the part of a Supplier for the benefit of a Trustee, or a relative, friend, and/or business associate of the Trustee, which may be perceived as having been made with a view to influencing process.

**"Mitigating Action"** means and includes an action to avoid, minimize, reduce, eliminate, or rectify a conflict of interest.

**"Preferential Treatment"** includes unfairly affording opportunities to one or more Suppliers at the expense of all other Suppliers that are eligible to participate in the opportunities.

**"Supplier"** includes any person or organization that based on an assessment of that person's or organization's financial, technical, and commercial capacity is capable of fulfilling the requirements of the Board's procurement of goods and/or services.

**"Supply Chain Activities"** means and includes all activities directly or indirectly related to the Board's planning, sourcing, procurement, moving, and payment processes. Budgeting, planning, and requesting, as well as the approval and processing of the acquisition for goods and services are all Supply Chain Activities.

**"Trustee"** means a Trustee of the Keewatin-Patricia District School Board.

## **Code of Conduct**

### 1. Respect for Confidentiality

A Trustee shall:

- a) Keep confidential any information disclosed or discussed at a meeting of the Board or committee of the Board, or part of a meeting of the Board, that was closed to the public (private session), and keep confidential the substance of deliberations of a meeting closed to the public (private session), unless required to divulge such information by law or authorized by the Board to do so;
- b) Not share confidential information for either personal gain or to the detriment of the Board, a fellow Trustee, a staff person, a student or a student's family, community members, or partners;
- c) Not divulge confidential information, including personal information about an identifiable individual or information subject to solicitor-client privilege that a Trustee becomes aware of because of their position, except when required by law or authorized by the Board to do so; and
- d) Accept that the duty of confidentiality with respect to private and confidential financial business and/or commercial information, personnel information, student information, and legal matters and opinions, survives their term as Trustee.

### 2. Compliance with Legislation

A Trustee shall:

- a) Ensure that student success and well-being are considered foremost;
- b) Fulfill their duties in accordance with the Education Act and any regulations, directives, or guidelines thereunder; and comply with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and any other relevant legislation, such as but not limited to the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive;

- c) Ensure Board resources are not used for personal gain, for themselves, relatives, friends, and/or business associates. Trustees recognize that such use of Board resources, directly or indirectly, for their personal benefit may constitute a criminal breach of trust contrary to s.122 of the Criminal Code (Canada);
- d) Accept that authority rests with the Board, and that Trustees have no authority other than that exercised as or delegated through the Chair of the Board;
- e) Respect and understand the roles and duties of the individual Trustees, Board of Trustees, the Director of Education, and the Chair of the Board;
- f) Entrust the day to day management of the Board to its staff through the Board's Director of Education; and
- g) Uphold the letter and spirit of this Code of Conduct.

### 3. Integrity and Dignity of Office and Civil Behaviour

A Trustee shall:

- a) Fulfill their duties loyally, faithfully, impartially, and in a manner that will inspire the public confidence in the abilities and integrity of the Board;
- b) Recognize that the expenditure of school board funds is a public trust, and endeavor to ensure that the funds are expended efficiently, in the best interest of the students;
- c) Act with decorum and respect the differing points of view of other Trustees, staff, students, and all other stakeholders;
- d) Represent all constituents (with or without children in our school system) at the Board table;
- e) Respectfully explain a minority position in context of a decision;
- f) Respect the rights of individual Trustees while honouring the will of the majority;

- g) Express individual opinions on issues under consideration, refraining from personal, demeaning, or disparaging comments;
- h) Render all decisions based on available facts and independent judgment;
- i) Carefully review all materials provided with agenda packages to prepare for attending and participating in meetings of the Board or committees of the Board;
- j) Participate in Trustee development opportunities to enhance their ability to fulfill their obligations as a Trustee; and
- k) Not advance allegations of misconduct and/or a breach of this Code of Conduct that are trivial, frivolous, vexatious, made in bad faith, or vindictive in nature against another Trustee of the Board.

#### 4. Upholding Decisions

A Trustee shall:

- a) Accept that authority rests with the Board, and that Trustees have no authority other than that exercised as or delegated through the Board;
- b) Uphold the implementations of any Board resolution after it is passed by the Board;
- c) Be prepared to explain the rationale for any decision passed by the Board. A Trustee may respectfully state their position on a resolution, provided it does not in any way undermine the implementation of the resolution;
- d) Comply with Board policies, procedures, By-laws, and Rules of Order;
- e) Accept the Chair of the Board as spokesperson to the public on behalf of the Board, unless otherwise determined by the Board. No other Trustee shall speak on behalf of the Board unless expressly authorized by the Chair of the Board to do so; and
- f) Monitor the decisions and direction of the board in accordance with the Education Act and applicable law.

5. Conflict of Interest

A Trustee shall:

- a) In all situations where a Trustee or their spouse, child, or parent has a pecuniary interest in a matter before the Board, declare a conflict of interest, disclose the general nature of the interest, and abstain from discussions and voting with respect to that issue. Where such conflict of interest arises during an in-camera session of the Board, the Trustee must absent themselves from the room during discussion and deliberation of the issue for which they have a conflict;
- b) Avoid conflicts of interest as defined by this Code of Conduct, as well as the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive;
- c) If involved in Supply Chain Activities, declare actual or potential conflicts of interest. Where a conflict arises, it is to be evaluated and an appropriate mitigating action is to be taken;
- d) Be responsible and accountable for exercising good judgment and avoiding situations that might present a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. Where a conflict of interest might exist, each Trustee has an affirmative duty to disclose such conflict when it becomes apparent;
- e) Not share their position, authority, or influence for personal, financial, or material gain or personal business purposes or for the personal, financial, or material gain or business purposes of a relative, friend, and/or business associate. A Trustee shall not use their office to advance the Trustee's interests or interests of any family member, or person, or organization with whom or with which, the Trustee is related or associated;
- f) Not sue their position to obtain employment within the Board for the Trustee, or a family member; and
- g) Not accept a gift from any person or entity that has dealings with the Board if a reasonable person might conclude that the gift could influence the Trustee when performing their duties of the Board.

## **Enforcement of Code of Conduct**

### 1. Identifying a Breach of the Code

A Trustee who has reasonable grounds to believe that a Trustee of the Board has breached the Board's Code of Conduct may bring the alleged breach to the attention of the Board through the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Board. The Code of Conduct applies equally to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board. In the case of an allegation of a breach of Code of Conduct by the Chair, wherever a process requires action by the Chair, it shall be modified to read the Vice-Chair or alternate.

Any allegation of a breach of the Code must be brought to the attention of the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Board no later than six (6) weeks after the breach comes to the knowledge of the Trustee reporting the breach. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in no circumstance shall an inquiry into a breach of the Code be undertaken after the expiration of six (6) months from the time the contravention is alleged to have occurred.

Any allegation of a breach of the Code of Conduct shall be investigated following the Informal or Formal Complain Procedures below, as the case may be.

It is expected that wherever possible, allegations of a breach of the Code of Conduct by a Trustee shall be investigated following the Informal Complaint Procedure. It is recognized that from time to time a contravention of the Code may occur that is trivial, or committed through inadvertence, or an error of judgment made in good faith. In the spirit of collegiality and the best interests of the Board, the first purpose of alerting a Trustee to a breach of the Code is to assist the Trustee in understanding their obligations under the Code. Only serious and/or reoccurring breaches of the Code by a Trustee should be investigated following the Formal Complaint Procedure.

### 2. Chair/Presiding Officer (Decision Point – Chair or Committee of the Board)

The Code of Conduct applies equally to the Chair of the Board. In the case of an allegation of a breach of the Code by the Chair, wherever a process requires action by the Chair, it shall be modified to reach the Vice-Chair of the Board.

Each year, two (2) alternate Trustees shall be chosen by the Board to be used when the circumstances warrant that one, or both, Trustees are needed in place of the



Chair and/or Vice-Chair of the Board to carry out any of the duties required under this Code of Conduct and Enforcement. In no circumstances shall the Trustee who brought the complaint of a breach of the Code of Conduct be involved in conducting any Formal inquiry into the complaint, nor shall the Trustee who is the respondent.

Nothing in this Code prevents the Chair or Presiding Officer of any meeting of the Board or committee of the Board, from exercising their power pursuant to s.207(3) of the Education Act to expel or exclude from any meeting any person who has been guilty of improper conduct at the meeting. For greater certainty, this may be done at the sole discretion of the Chair or Presiding Officer, as the case may be, and without the necessity of a complaint or conducting an inquiry before an expulsion or exclusion from a meeting. The rationale for this provision is that a Chair or Presiding Officer must have the ability to control a meeting. Any Trustee who does not abide by a reasonable expulsion or exclusion from a meeting is deemed to have breached this Code.

The Chair of the Board or Presiding Officer of any meeting of the Board or committee of the Board shall exercise their powers in a fair and impartial manner having due regard for every Trustees' opinion or views.

The Chair of the Board or Presiding Officer shall follow the special Rules of Order of the Board and/or the adopted Rules of Order and meeting procedures contained in a Policy or By-law of the Board. A breach of a Rule of Order should be dealt with at the meeting in a question by a Trustee rising to a point of order or appealing a ruling of the Chair in accordance with any applicable Rule of Order. Once such a motion is dealt with by the Board of Trustees, all Trustees shall abide by that decision and no further action shall be undertaken pursuant to the Enforcement of the Code of Conduct, except for persistent improper use of the applicable Rules of Order by the Chair or Presiding Officer.

### 3. Informal Complaint Procedure

The Chair of the Board, following discussion with Executive, or at the request of a Trustee of the Board (without necessity of providing a formal written complaint) who alleges a breach of the Code has occurred, may meet informally with a Trustee of the Board who is alleged to have breached the Code, to discuss the breach. The purpose of the meeting is to bring the allegation of the breach to the attention of the Trustee

and to discuss remedial measures to correct the offending behaviour. The Informal Complaint Procedure is conducted in private.

The remedial measures may include, for example, a warning, an apology, and/or the requirement of the Trustee to engage in the successful completion of professional development training such as that offered by the Ontario Education Services Corporation Professional Development Program for School Board Trustees. If the Chair of the Board and the Trustee alleged to have breached this Code cannot agree on a remedy, then a formal complaint may be brought against the Trustee alleged to have breached this Code, and that complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the Formal Complaint Procedure below.

#### 4. Formal Complaint Procedure

A Trustee who has reasonable grounds to believe that another Trustee of the Board has breached the Board's Code of Conduct, may bring the breach to the attention of the Board by first providing to the Chair of the Board a written signed complaint setting out the following:

- a) The name of the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code;
- b) The alleged breach or breaches of the Code;
- c) Information as to when the breach came to the Trustee's attention;
- d) The grounds for the belief by the Trustee that a breach of the Code has occurred;  
and
- e) The names and contact information of any witnesses to the breach, or any other persons who have relevant information, regarding the alleged breach. Except as provided below, if a written complaint is filed with the Chair of the Board, then a formal inquiry shall be undertaken, unless the complainant subsequently withdraws the complaint or agrees that the complaint may be dealt with in accordance with the Informal Complaint Procedure.

In an election year for Trustees, a Code of Conduct Complaint respecting a Trustee who is seeking re-election shall not be brought during the period commencing two (2)

months prior to election day and ending after the first Board meeting after the new term of office of the Board commences, unless the claim is in the public interest. If the Trustee accused of a breach of the Code is not re-elected, no inquiry by the Board into the alleged breach of the Code by that Trustee shall be undertaken. The limitation period for bringing a complaint shall be extended as necessary.

The Chair of the Board shall provide to all Trustees of the Board, a confidential copy of the complaint within ten (10) days of receiving it. The complaint, any response to the complaint, and the investigation of the complaint shall be confidential until it is before the Board of Trustees for a decision as to whether or not the Trustee has breached this Code.

#### 5. Refusal to Conduct a Formal Inquiry

If the Executive Committee of the Board are of the opinion that the complaint is out of time, trivial, frivolous, vexatious, or not made in good faith, or that there are no grounds or insufficient grounds for a formal inquiry, they shall prepare a confidential report to all the Trustees of the Board stating their opinion and the rationale for it. The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct shall not vote on the resolution. If the opinion is adopted by the Board of Trustees, a formal inquiry shall not be conducted.

If an allegation of a breach of the Code of Conduct on its face is with respect to the non-compliance with a more specific Board Policy with a separate complaint procedure, the allegation shall be processed under that procedure.

If a complaint is deemed to be frivolous or vexatious, the Trustee who brought the complaint is subject to sanctions outlined in section 9 of this policy.

#### 6. Steps of Formal Inquiry

If a formal inquiry of an allegation of a breach of the Code of Conduct is undertaken, it shall be done by the Executive Committee of the Board, if appropriate, or any three (3) of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and the alternate Trustee(s), or by an outside consultant chosen by the Executive Committee of the Board.

Regardless of who undertakes the formal inquiry, the following steps shall be followed:

- a) The Statutory Powers Procedure Act does not apply to anything done regarding the Enforcement of this Code of Conduct. No formal trial-type hearing will be conducted.
- b) Procedural fairness shall govern the formal inquiry. The formal inquiry will be conducted in private.
- c) The formal inquiry may involve both written and oral statements by any witnesses, the Trustee bringing the complaint, and the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct.
- d) The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct shall have an opportunity to respond to the allegations both in a private meeting with the person(s) undertaking the formal inquiry and in writing.
- e) It is expected that the formal inquiry will be conducted within ninety (90) calendar days of the receipt of the written response to the complaint. If a longer period of time is required to complete the inquiry, the reason for the extension shall be explained in the final report to the Board. The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct shall provide a written response to the allegations within ten (10) days of receiving the written allegation, or such extended period of the time as the investigators deem appropriate in the circumstance.
- f) If the Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct refuses to participate in the formal inquiry, the formal inquiry will continue in their absence.
- g) The final report shall outline the finding of facts and a recommendation or opinion as to whether the Code of Conduct has been breached.
- h) If the Executive Committee of the Board, when conducting the formal inquiry, cannot agree on the final findings of facts, it shall be referred to an outside investigator to complete the formal inquiry.

#### 7. Suspension of Formal Inquiry

If the investigators, when conducting the formal inquiry, discover that the subject matter of the formal inquiry is being investigated by police, that a charge has been

laid, or is being dealt with in accordance with a procedure established under another Act, the formal inquiry shall be suspended until the police investigation, charge, or matter under another Act has been finally disposed of. This shall be reported to the rest of the Board of Trustees.

#### 8. Decision

The final report shall be delivered to the Board of Trustees, and a decision by the Board of Trustees as to whether or not the Code of Conduct has been breached and the sanction, if any, for the breach shall be made as soon as practical after receipt of the final report by the Board.

Trustees shall consider only the findings in the final report when voting on the decision and sanction. No Trustee shall undertake their own investigation of the matter.

If the Board of Trustees determine that there has been no breach of the Code of Conduct, or that a contravention occurred although the Trustee took all reasonable measures to prevent it, or that a contravention occurred that was trivial, or committed through inadvertence, or an error of judgement made in good faith, no sanction shall be imposed.

The determination of a breach of the Code of Conduct and the imposition of a sanction with respect to a complaint investigated in accordance with the Formal Complaint Procedure must be done by resolution of the Board at a meeting of the Board, and the vote on the resolution shall be open to the public. The resolutions shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The reasons for the decision shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Both resolutions shall be decided by a majority of the Trustees of the Board present and voting.

Despite s.207(1) of the Education Act, the part of the meeting of the Board during which a breach, or alleged breach, of the Board's Code of Conduct is considered may be closed to the public when the breach, or alleged breach, involves any of the matters described in clauses 207(2) (a) to (e), being:

- a) The security of the property of the Board;

- b) The disclosure of intimate, personal, or financial information in respect of a member of the Board or committee, an employee or prospective employee of the Board, or a pupil or their parent(s) or guardian(s);
- c) The acquisition or disposal of a school site;
- d) Decisions in respect of negotiations with employees of the Board; or
- e) Litigation affecting the Board.

The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct shall not vote on a resolution to determine whether or not there is a breach or the imposition of a sanction. The Trustee who brought the complaint to the attention of the Board may not vote on those resolutions.

The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct may be present during the deliberations regarding the above, but shall not participate in the deliberations, and shall not be required to answer any questions at that meeting.

The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct shall not in any way, after the final report is completed, influence the vote on the decision of breach or sanction, except as permitted below after these decisions have been made.

## 9. Sanctions

If the Board determines that the Trustee has breached the Board's Code of Conduct the Board may impose one or more of the following sanctions:

- a) Censure of the Trustee;
- b) Barring the Trustee from attending all, or part of, a meeting of the Board or a meeting of the committee of the Board. Where a Trustee is appointed to represent the interests of Indigenous students, consideration of the role of First Nation's Trustee when imposing any sanction for a breach of the Code of Conduct should be considered, including items to be considered at meetings of the Board; and/or

- c) Barring the member from sitting on one or more committees of the Board, for the period of time specified by the Board. Where a Trustee who is appointed to represent the interests of Indigenous students, the Trustee shall not be barred from attending IEAC meetings, except under exceptional circumstances.

The Board shall not impose a sanction which is more onerous than the above but may impose one that is less onerous such as a warning or requirement that the Trustee successfully complete specified professional development courses at the expense of the Board. The Board has no power to declare a Trustee's seat vacant.

A Trustee who is barred from attending all or part of a meeting of the Board or a meeting of a committee of the Board is not entitled to receive any materials that relate to that meeting or that part of the meeting and that are not available to members of the public.

The imposition of a sanction barring a Trustee from attending all or part of a meeting of the Board shall be deemed to be authorization for the Trustee to be absent from the meeting and therefore, not in violation of the Education Act regarding absences from meetings.

#### 10. Reconsideration

If the Board determines that a Trustee has breached the Board's Code of Conduct, the Board shall:

- a) Give the Trustee written notice of the determination, the reasons for the decision, and any sanction imposed by the Board;
- b) The notice shall inform the Trustee that they may make written submissions to the Board in respect of the determination or sanction by the date specified in the notice that is at least fourteen (14) days after the notice is received by the Trustee; and
- c) Consider any submissions made by the Trustee and shall confirm or revoke the determination or sanction within fourteen (14) days after the submissions are received.

If the Board revokes a determination, any sanction imposed by the Board is revoked.



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If the Board confirms a determination, the Board shall, within the fourteen (14) days above, confirm, vary, or revoke the sanction.

If a sanction is varied or revoked, the variation or revocation shall be deemed to be effective as of the date the original determination was made.

The Board decisions to confirm or revoke a determination or confirm, vary, or revoke a sanction shall be done by resolution at a meeting of the Board, and the vote on the resolution shall be open to the public. Both resolutions shall be decided by a vote of at least two thirds (2/3) of the Trustees present and voting. The resolutions shall be recoded in the minutes of the meeting, together with the reasons for confirming or revoking a determination. The Board shall provide to the Trustee, alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct, written notice of the decision to confirm or revoke the determination together with reasons for the decision and written notice of any decision to confirm, vary, or revoke a sanction. The Trustee alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct shall not vote on those resolutions. The Trustee who brought the complaint may not vote.

The Trustee who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct may be present during the deliberations regarding the above, but may not participate in the deliberations, and shall not be required to answer any questions at that meeting.

If appropriate, the original sanction may be stayed pending the consideration by the Board of the determination or sanction.

### **Director of Education**

The Director of Education shall provide Trustees with a copy of this code, and copies of the documents referred to herein and upon which it relies, in a timely fashion so that they may be read and understood prior to signing this document.

The Director of Education shall ensure that each Trustee signs this document when being sworn into office.

The Director of Education shall ensure an opportunity for training on this Code of Conduct is provided for Trustees near the beginning of each Trustee's term of office.





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### **Acknowledgement and Undertaking**

As a Trustee of the Board, I shall uphold this Code of Conduct.

I confirm that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Board's Code of Conduct, Policies, and By-Laws and the Enforcement Procedures.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Print Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Print Witness Name: \_\_\_\_\_