



Respectful and Professional Workplace (Employees)

300.45

Adopted:	February 24, 2026
Last Reviewed/Revised:	NEW
Responsibility:	Superintendent of Education
Next Scheduled Review:	2029-2030

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board is committed to fostering a respectful, inclusive, and psychologically safe workplace. Building a psychologically safe and inclusive environment depends on treating one another with civility and respect. All employees are expected to conduct themselves with respect, courtesy, and professionalism in all workplace interactions. A culture of mutual respect supports individual well-being and contributes to a collaborative and effective work environment aligned with Catholic values.

APPLICATION AND SCOPE:

This policy applies to all employees of the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School. All individuals are expected to engage in communication and behaviour that upholds dignity and respect. Actions or language that are offensive, intimidating, embarrassing, or bullying in nature – whether verbal, digital, written, or non-verbal – are not acceptable in the BHNCDSD workplace. The Board recognizes that differences of opinion and conflict may occur; however, these must be addressed in a constructive and respectful manner. The Board is committed to a proactive approach in preventing and managing workplace incivility, and to promoting dialogue, inclusion, and the respectful exchange of diverse perspectives. It expects employees to address these issues promptly and respectfully. The Board values diversity of viewpoints among staff, recognizing that when properly managed, this can foster creativity and continuous improvement.

REFERENCES:

- [Education Act](#)
- [Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996](#)
- [The Ontario Human Rights Code | Ontario Human Rights Commission \(ohrc.on.ca\)](#)
- [Employment Standards Act | ontario.ca](#)
- [HRS. 300.17.P – Professional Standards and Conflict of Interest - Employees](#)
- [HRS 300.19.P - Progressive Discipline \(Employees\)](#)
- [HRS 300.01.P - Workplace Harassment](#)
- [HRS 300.02 – Dress Code and Appearance Standards for Staff](#)

FORMS:

- N/A

APPENDICES:

- N/A



DEFINITIONS:

Civility: The act of showing regard for others and recognizing the inherent value of everyone in the workplace.

Unacceptable conduct: Objectionable, or unwelcome conduct with moderate impact, which may or may not have intent to cause harm and has a negative effect on an individual, group or work environment.

Employee: An individual employed by the Board in a permanent, temporary, or casual position. This also includes volunteers.

Professional: Working, dressing, and behaving with integrity in such a way that others think of them as competent, reliable, and respectful. Professionals are a credit not only to themselves, but also to others.

Supervisor: The Occupational Health and Safety Act defines a supervisor as a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker.

Unprofessional: Behaviours and/or actions that are below or contrary to Board Policy and the standards expected in a particular profession.

Workplace: For this policy, the workplace is any location in which you are engaged in work related activities, including, but not limited to, board offices, schools, board properties, vehicles used to complete work and travel between work sites, and external locations such as conferences, hotels, and restaurants. Workplace also includes communications via telephone, email, virtual/digital platforms, social media (including comments, emoticons, or reactions such as likes and dislikes).

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE:

1.0 Roles and Responsibilities: It is a shared responsibility among all individuals to create a culture where everyone is treated fairly, and with compassion and where differences are acknowledged and valued. This means ensuring that all communications and interactions are conducted in a professional, constructive, and courteous manner, both in tone and content.

1.1 Senior Administration:

- Supporting a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace environment.
- Providing ongoing education and training on what behaviour is and is not appropriate.
- Identifying and eliminating barriers to a psychologically safe and inclusive workplace.

1.2 Supervisors, Managers, Principals:

- Provide a work environment consistent with the objectives stated in this policy. This includes actively promoting a positive work environment and intervening whenever conduct below the standards set out in this policy occur.
- Act as champions of a respectful workplace.
- Confer with Human Resources regarding effective processes for handling any concerns raised under this standard.
- Support the Board's training on respectful workplaces and related topics.
- Keep a record and maintain confidentiality.

1.3 Employees:

- Share the responsibility of fostering a civil, respectful workplace by ensuring that all communications and interactions related to work are consistent with the required standards.
- Are responsible for adhering to this policy.



- Are encouraged to communicate with co-workers that their conduct and comments are unwanted and objectionable whenever they are exposed to conduct representing incivility, bullying, harassment, and/or discrimination.
- Raise any concerns to management.
- Understand, and participate in any training.
- Cooperate and participate in preventative measures.
- Cooperate fully in investigations of incidents in breach of this policy.

1.4 Human Resource Services:

- Provide regular communication about this policy including options for submitting and addressing complaints.
- Assist with the interpretation and application of Respectful Workplace policy and developing and assisting with related training of this policy.
- Support supervisors, managers, principals in responding to incivility and providing resources to support and manage conflicts.
- Assist in facilitating informal resolutions, mediations and investigations as required.

1.5 Union Representatives:

- Provide confidential support and representation to the employee they represent in accordance with the applicable collective agreement.

2.0 Commitment

2.1 The Board is committed to ensuring that all employees of our workplace community contribute to a workplace environment consistent with equal rights and respectful standards through the following initiatives:

- 2.1.1 Knowledge: Ensuring all employees are aware of the standards of acceptable conduct.
- 2.1.2 Empowerment: Providing an environment where everyone can expect and experience respectful interactions aligned with this policy.
- 2.1.3 Accountability: Holding all individuals accountable for maintaining appropriate behaviour in the workplace.

3.0 Intent vs Impact

3.1 It does not matter whether an individual intends to offend someone. Intent does not determine whether behaviour is acceptable. What matters is whether the behaviour was or should have reasonably been known to be unwelcome. Even if disrespectful behaviour does not rise to the level of harassment, it may still harm workplace relationships and culture. Failing to address such conduct is equivalent to condoning such behaviour.

4.0 Unacceptable Conduct

4.1 Unacceptable conduct refers to behaviour that undermines employee wellbeing and is inconsistent with the Board's commitment to a civil and respectful workplace. Examples of unacceptable conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Yelling or screaming;
- Volatile or explosive displays of anger;
- Speaking in a belittling, condescending, or disrespectful tone;
- Making snide, sarcastic, or demeaning comments;
- Using foul, abusive, or threatening language toward anyone in the workplace;
- Repeatedly interrupting or speaking over others;



- Non-verbal expressions of disrespect such as glaring, finger-pointing, or eye-rolling;
- Undermining a colleague's reputation or work relationships through disparaging remarks;
- Gossiping, including sharing private information or speaking negatively about someone behind their back;
- Intentionally ignoring or excluding someone;
- Embarrassing or humiliating a colleague;
- Publicly criticizing another employee's performance;
- Engaging in passive aggressive behaviour, such as refusing to directly communicate with someone about an issue and instead complaining to others behind their back;
- Using profanity or unprofessional language.

4.2 Depending on the context, circumstances, frequency, and impact, some of the examples above may also meet the threshold of workplace harassment and be subject to Board Policy 300.01 Workplace Harassment.

4.3 This policy does not preclude reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers.

4.4 Determining if unacceptable conduct has occurred is based on an objective assessment of the specific facts of each situation, and not solely on the perceptions or intentions of those involved.

4.5 Unacceptable conduct at any work-related social event (including school related activities and social gatherings outside of work) that could impact the workplace and harm workplace relationships and culture, is also covered under this policy.

5.0 Unacceptable Conduct Does Not Include

5.1 Constructive, respectful discussions or disagreements.

5.2 Reasonable performance management discussions.

5.3 Stressful or high-pressure situations that are a normal and expected part of workplace duties.

6.0 Professional Expectations

6.1 Being professional in the workplace ensures a respectful, inclusive, and effective work environment that aligns with Catholic values and models civility to students and community.

6.2 Professionalism in a Catholic setting begins with unwavering integrity and ethical conduct. Staff are expected to meet universal professional standards and the spiritual commitments that shape Catholic institutions into communities of faith and learning.

6.3 In accordance with Board policies, collective agreements, and applicable legislation all employees of the BHNCDSB, including school-based and central office personnel, are expected to consistently meet the expectations of a professional and dignified Catholic workplace by:

6.3.1 Aligning their work with the mission of the Church.

6.3.2 Upholding Catholic Social Teachings and the ethical standards rooted in Gospel values.

6.3.3 Advocating for equity, justice, and respect for human dignity.

6.3.4 Supporting the Catholic identity of the institution in behavior and communication.

6.3.5 Upholding the dignity and integrity of their role as educators and public servants.

6.3.6 Demonstrating responsibility, accountability, and ethical behavior while maintaining high standards in teaching, leadership, and administration.

6.3.7 Protecting sensitive information about students, staff, and Board operations.



- 6.3.8 Maintaining professional relationships with students and colleagues. Avoid favoritism, inappropriate familiarity, or any conduct that could be perceived as unscrupulous, toxic, careless, or unprincipled.
- 6.3.9 Respecting personal boundaries.
- 6.3.10 Utilizing board technology responsibly. Do not engage in unsanctioned digital communication with students and staff, or excessive personal use during work hours.
- 6.3.11 Adhering to Board Policy 300.02 - Dress Code and Appearance Standards for Staff.
- 6.3.12 Supporting the holistic wellbeing and development of students and staff.
- 6.3.13 Serving others with humility.

6.4 Staff adhere to universal principles of professionalism while supporting the mission-driven values of Catholic education. Educators are further committed to Catholic mission and faith integration into daily responsibilities and interactions with students. They take a pastoral approach that provides compassionate and empathetic guidance and support to others.

7.0 Interpersonal Relationship Conflict

- 7.1 Personality Conflicts: Personality conflicts arise when two or more employees become involved in ongoing interpersonal disputes or conflict. This can create stress not only for those directly involved, but also for other employees in the workplace.
- 7.2 Team Difficulties: Team-related issues can emerge when there is a lack of cohesiveness, role clarity, and/or cooperation. These factors can disrupt the productivity of a team due to increased levels of stress and dysfunction within the group.
- 7.3 Conflict Resolution: Conflicts and misunderstandings are a natural part of any workplace. Employees that are in conflict with another person(s) are expected to take the initiative to address it respectfully and try to resolve it. If direct resolution is not possible, seek support from your supervisor or Human Resource Services. Early intervention helps maintain a healthy and productive work environment.

8.0 Reporting

- 8.1 Concerns about breaches of workplace respect and professionalism should be reported promptly to a supervisor.
- 8.2 The Board will ensure fair and consistent application of policies and provide support for resolution.
- 8.3 Violations may result in corrective measures under the Board's Progressive Discipline Policy.

9.0 Support

- 9.1 The Board has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available to employees for confidential and anonymous counselling.
- 9.2 Both supervisory and non-supervisory employees have an obligation to uphold this standard and ensure a safe, comfortable non-hostile environment for everyone. This means acknowledging and valuing differences, being open and honest about behaviour that makes you or someone else feel uncomfortable, communicating in ways that are non-threatening and inviting dialogue and providing support to those who are seeking advice. We must all do our part by ensuring that our individual behaviour does not violate this policy and by fostering a work environment based on respect.