



### **Disconnecting from Work**

The Disconnecting from Work procedure is intended to establish healthy and professional boundaries between work and personal time as an investment in positive mental health, well-being, and overall employee productivity.

#### **Scope:**

This Policy applies to all employees including school and divisional staff.

#### **Definitions:**

**After Hours** means any time between the hours of 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., Monday to Thursday, and after 6:00 p.m. Friday, all day Saturday, Sunday, statutory holidays, and (if applicable) any other Board-designated non-working days. After Hours differs from definition of Working Hours provided below.

**Disconnect from Work** means not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls, messaging/texting or the sending or reviewing of other messages, to be free from the performance of work.

**Emergency** means a time-sensitive situation due to legislative, Government, or regulatory requirements, or an unforeseen situation, or the threat of a situation, adversely affecting health, safety, security, and/or well-being, or resulting in significant legal risk or financial damage or loss, including operational requirements and crises, which by its nature and seriousness requires an immediate response.

**Employee** means an individual employed by Park West School Division to perform services in exchange for a salary or an hourly wage on a casual, temporary, or permanent basis. For clarity, independent and dependent contractors and their staff and subcontractors are not considered Employees.

**Working Hours** means an Employee's working hours as set out in their employment agreement/collective agreement or as determined by their manager/supervisor. Employees' working hours vary by department or work unit depending on specific agreements or arrangements with Employees (e.g., night, weekend, overtime), employment and collective agreements, and the Employee's duties, responsibilities, and professional obligations, which may require the Employee to be available for Emergencies, urgent or time-sensitive matters, or to be on-call.



### **General Principles**

- The Division is committed to professional boundaries between work and personal time that support Employees' mental health, well-being, and work-life balance.
- Employees are expected to Disconnect from Work outside of their Working Hours and After-Hours and will respect other Employees' desire to Disconnect from Work.
- Employees will not circulate group or mass emails to staff, engage other Employees in business meetings, or make work-related phone calls to Employees outside their Working Hours or After-Hours.
- Public inquiries will be responded to during the recipient Employee Working Hours.
- Employees are not required to respond to work-related emails, phone calls or engage in meetings outside their Working Hours subject to the noted Exceptions and Conditions.
- Employees will not be reprimanded, subjected to discipline, or denied the rights and privileges provided to them under their employment contracts and collective agreements for Disconnecting from Work.

### **Exceptions and Conditions**

- Notwithstanding the provisions above, Employees are expected and permitted to engage in business activities outside their Working Hours or After-Hours in response to an Emergency.
- Employees are expected to respond and engage in business activities outside their Working Hours or After-Hours once they become aware of an emergency and if they are available.
- Employees who are on-call or otherwise required to be available due to the nature of their role in accordance with their collective agreements/terms and conditions of employment, will address work activities outside their Working Hours or After-Hours as required. These situations include, but are not limited to, Board meetings, community meetings, parent-teacher conferences, off-site meetings, interactions with clients and stakeholders in different time zones, unexpected disruptions or requirements in operations, business functions, and services that require timely attention (e.g., snowstorms, water or electrical related service disruptions, opening and closing buildings, safety, and security), and any other situation as determined by the manager/supervisor as critical and time-sensitive.
- This Procedure is subject to conditions and requirements of applicable employment contracts, collective agreements, and employment statutory rights under the Manitoba Employment Standards Code (2022). In the event of a conflict between this Procedure and the above Code, the latter will prevail.
- Nothing in this Procedure takes away from or provides Employees with any additional rights or compensation beyond what is set out in their collective agreement/terms and conditions of employment.



### **Communications**

- Employees will not contact other Employees who are on vacation or an approved leave of absence on work-related matters unless communication is warranted under the previously noted Exceptions and Conditions. The sender will consider the timing of their communication and potential for disturbance, and the recipient should understand that they will not be expected to respond until they recommence work and during their Working Hours.
- Employees who anticipate being absent for an extended period will communicate this in advance to their supervisor/manager, colleagues, and/or contacts as appropriate.

### ***Reporting Concerns:***

- Employees are encouraged to respond to any concerns or issues they may have which they feel are impacting their ability to disconnect from work.
- If possible, Employees should first collaborate with colleagues or supervisors to resolve issues related to this Disconnecting from Work procedure.
- If resolution is not possible through collaboration, Employees will report concerns or issues related to Disconnect from Work to their immediate manager/supervisor in writing. If the Employee does not feel comfortable reporting concerns to their immediate manager/supervisor, the Employee may direct their concerns to the Superintendent, and or seek assistance of union/employee association.
- Employees will not be subject to reprisal for reporting concerns in good faith.
- An Employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a concern regarding Disconnect from Work in good faith may be subject to discipline.