

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: Disconnecting from Work

The Lambton Kent District School Board (the “Board”) is committed to providing employees with the opportunity to balance between work and home, which should positively impact health and employee wellness. Disconnecting from work, outside of regular working hours, is important for sustainable work-life balance and personal well-being.

The Board is responsible for maintaining compliance with all statutory duties and obligations under the *Employment Standards Act* (the “ESA”), as amended, as well as the relevant Collective Agreement provisions and/or Terms and Conditions of Employment.

This Administrative Procedure shall apply to all Board staff, whether working remotely, in the workplace, or are mobile.

Nothing in this procedure precludes the Board or other employees of the Board from contacting colleagues, other employees, students and/or families outside regular working hours for circumstances as outlined below, or as otherwise required to meet business needs, subject to any rights or other entitlements the receiving colleague or employee may have under the ESA.

Objective

The objective of disconnecting from work refers to a period in which employees do not engage in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending or reviewing of other messages, so as to be free from the performance of work.

There may be occasions when it is necessary to share time sensitive information and/or contact employees, colleagues, students and/or families outside of regular working hours, including but not limited to emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances that require a response/immediate attention. Although all employees are asked to be mindful of the right to disconnect, it is important that employees are also mindful that there will be situations that arise where it is not possible to deal with matters solely during regular working hours.

Hours of Work

An employee’s regular working hours are as set out in their employment contract and/or applicable collective agreement or terms and conditions of employment.

Regular working hours for employees may vary. It is important to remember that all employees’ ability to disconnect from work is within the context of their own individual work schedules.

Despite the establishment of normal working hours, all employees of the Board recognize that there may be busier periods or other circumstances where work must be completed outside of normal working hours.

In the ordinary course of business, there will be situations when it is necessary to contact an employee outside of the employee's regular working hours, including but not limited to:

- a. checking availability for scheduling;
- b. to fill in on short notice for a colleague who has called in sick or is unavailable for work;
- c. where unforeseeable circumstances may arise;
- d. where an emergency may arise;
- e. where employees voluntarily wish to communicate with one another for work-related purposes outside of their regular working hours; or
- f. other business or operational reasons that require contact outside of an employee's regular working hours.

Communications

Where possible, work-related communications should be checked or sent only during regular working hours. Due to differing/non-standard patterns of work in the organization, some employees may send communications at times which are inopportune for other employees, such as evenings or weekends. The sender should give due consideration to the timing of their communication and potential for disturbance. The recipient should understand that they will not be expected to respond to the communication until their working time recommences (or unless otherwise required and stipulated within the communication per the circumstances as outlined within this Procedure).

If a manager/supervisor sends communications outside applicable normal working hours and it requires immediate or prompt response, the response expectation should be set out in the communication.

System Communications

Employees should continue to expect system communications / automated alerts to be delivered outside of regular work hours, such as emails that are quarantined, etc. These messages do not require a response from employees and therefore employees may read them during regular working hours. Similarly, schools may send out routine communications outside of regular working hours, such as staff updates and newsletters. As these communications do not require a response from employees, they too can be read during regular working hours.

Concerns

Should an employee have any issues in exercising their right to disconnect, they should raise their concern with their immediate supervisor and/or Human Resources, in order that the matter may be addressed.

Employees will not be subject to reprisal for reporting such concerns as outlined above.

Posting, Notice and Retention

The Board shall provide a copy of this Policy to each employee of the Board within 30 calendar days of implementation. Should any changes be made to the Policy after its implementation, the Board shall provide each employee of the Board a copy of the revised Policy within 30 days of the changes being made.

The Board shall provide a copy of this Policy to all new employees within 30 calendar days of the employee commencing employment with the Board.

The Board shall retain a copy of this Policy for three years after it ceases to be in effect.

Implementation Date: June 1, 2022
Reference: [Employment Standards Act 2000 \(Part VII.0.1; 21.1.1 and 21.1.2\)](#)