



# Northeastern Catholic District School Board

## RIGHT TO DISCONNECT FROM WORK

Administrative Procedure Number: APP019

### POLICY STATEMENT

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The Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) is committed to ensuring a healthy work and home life balance for all employees. The NCDSB believes that uninterrupted time away from work improves an employee's physical and mental well-being. The NCDSB will support the right of employees to disconnect from work by significantly reducing the practice of work-related communications after-hours, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending or reviewing of other messages.

### REFERENCES

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*Employment Standards Act, 2000*

*Working for Workers Act, 2021*

NCDSB Policy

P-19 Right to Disconnect from Work

### DEFINITIONS

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#### **Disconnecting from work**

Not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending or reviewing of other message, so as to be free from the performance of work.

#### **After-Hours**

Any time between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., Monday to Friday, all day Saturday, Sunday, statutory holidays, and any other Board-designated non-working days (if applicable). This definition may be varied depending on specific agreements with employees, as to employee work hours or requiring an employee to be available for after-hours emergencies.

#### **Out-of-Office Notification**

An automatic response message in email or a voicemail greeting which states, at a minimum, that the employee will be unable to respond to a message until their return to work date of [DATE] and advises who to contact for immediate attention prior to that date.

#### **Regular Hours of Work**

The normal hours of work for the employee as determined by their immediate supervisor and the respective collective agreement, terms and conditions of employment, or employment contract. It is understood that different employees may have different Regular Hours of Work depending on their position with the Board and their work location.

## PROCEDURES

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- 1.0 Where possible, employees should avoid sending work-related communications after-hours (between the hours of 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Monday to Friday and all-day Saturday and Sunday) unless the matter can be reasonably constituted as an emergency or a significant event that calls for immediate action.
- 2.0 It is understood that different employees may have different Regular Hours of Work and may need to send correspondence when the recipient is not actively working (i.e. a Custodian working in the evening may need to send correspondence outside of the recipient's Regular Hours of Work).
- 3.0 All emergencies that call for immediate action after hours will be sent using the term "URGENT" and conveying realistic response time expectations. In the case of an emergency, an initial phone call should be made to the employee to ensure that they are aware of the emergency in order to monitor messages or emails.
- 4.0 Under normal circumstances, employees will not be expected to engage in work-related communications after hours, during their scheduled vacation time or while on leave.
- 5.0 Notwithstanding 4.0 above, certain employees/employee groups may have alternate work hours or be required to be available in accordance with their job description or collective agreements/terms and conditions.
- 6.0 All employees must turn on their out-of-office notifications and change their voicemail messages, when on vacation or during Board designated non-working days.
- 7.0 Employees in Supervisory positions may be required to respond to calls, message or emails outside of Regular Hours of Work in order to ensure that all matters are managed within an appropriate time frame, considering the nature and urgency of each issue.
- 8.0 The Director of Education or designate(s) shall annually send communication to families that encourages communication during the workday and that such communication to staff will not receive a response after-hours.
- 9.0 A copy of this administrative procedure shall be provided to all new employees within thirty (30) days of the date of employment by the Human Resources Department.
- 10.0 Any changes to this administrative procedure will be communicated to all employees within 30 days of any such changes by the Office of the Director of Education.
- 11.0 The Board reserves the right to schedule and modify the Regular Hours of Work of employees in compliance with applicable collective agreements, terms and conditions of employment and employment contracts.

12.0 These administrative procedures do not prohibit employees from working outside of their Regular Hours of Work.

**Director of Education:** *Tricia Stefanie Weltz*

**Date:** June 2022