

# Ontario Schools

---

# Code *of* Conduct



Ontario

Une publication équivalente est disponible en français sous le titre suivant  
*Écoles de l'Ontario : Code de conduite.*

This publication is available on the Ministry of Education's website at  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>.

# Introduction

A school is a place that promotes responsibility, respect, civility and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment.

All students, parents, teachers and staff have the right to be safe, and feel safe, in their school community. With this right comes the responsibility to be law-abiding citizens and to be accountable for actions that put at risk the safety of others or oneself.

The Ontario Code of Conduct sets clear provincial standards of behaviour. It specifies the mandatory consequences for student actions that do not comply with these standards.

The Provincial standards of behaviour apply not only to students, but also to all individuals involved in the publicly funded school system – parents or guardians, volunteers, teachers and other staff members – whether they are on school property, on school buses or at school-authorized events or activities.

It is recognized that this Code of Conduct will require the force of law. While it is the intention of the Government to introduce legislation, it does not presume the outcome of the legislative process.

## Guiding Principles

---

- All participants involved in the publicly funded school system – students, parents or guardians, volunteers, teachers and other staff members – are included in this Code of Conduct whether they are on school property, on school buses or at school-authorized events or activities.
- All members of the school community are to be treated with respect and dignity, especially persons in positions of authority.
- Responsible citizenship involves appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community. Active and engaged citizens are aware of their rights, but more importantly, they accept responsibility for protecting their rights and the rights of others.
- Members of the school community are expected to use non-violent means to resolve conflict. Physically aggressive behaviour is not a responsible way to interact with others.
- The possession, use or threatened use of any object to injure another person endangers the safety of oneself and others.

- Alcohol and illegal drugs are addictive and present a health hazard. Ontario schools will work cooperatively with police, drug and alcohol agencies to promote prevention strategies and, where necessary, respond to school members who are in possession of, or under the influence of, alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Insults, disrespect, and other hurtful acts disrupt learning and teaching in a school community. Members of the school community have a responsibility to maintain an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility.

## Roles and Responsibilities

School boards provide direction to their schools that ensure opportunity, excellence and accountability in the education system. School boards:

- develop policies that set out how their schools will implement and enforce the Provincial Code of Conduct and all other rules that they develop as related to the provincial standards for respect, civility, responsible citizenship and physical safety;
- seek input from school councils and review these policies regularly with students, staff, parents or guardians, volunteers and the community;
- establish a process that clearly communicates the Provincial Code of Conduct to all parents, students and staff in a manner that ensures their commitment and support;
- ensure an effective intervention strategy and response to all infractions related to the standards for respect, civility, responsible citizenship and physical safety;
- provide opportunities for all staff to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to develop and maintain academic excellence and safe learning and teaching environments.

**Principals**, under the direction of their school board, take a leadership role in the daily operation of a school. They provide this leadership by:

- demonstrating care and commitment to academic excellence and a safe teaching and learning environment;
- holding everyone, under their authority, accountable for their behaviour and actions;
- communicating regularly and meaningfully with all members of their school community.

**Teachers and school staff**, under the leadership of their principals, maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, staff uphold these high standards when they:

- help students work to their full potential and develop their self-worth;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents;
- maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all students;
- demonstrate respect for all students, staff and parents;
- prepare students for the full responsibilities of citizenship.

**Students** are to be treated with respect and dignity. In return, they must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour. Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a student:

- comes to school prepared, on time and ready to learn;
- shows respect for themselves, for others and for those in authority;
- refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others;
- follows the established rules and takes responsibility for his or her own action.

**Parents** play an important role in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Parents fulfill this responsibility when they:

- show an active interest in their child's school work and progress;
- communicate regularly with the school;
- help their child be neat, appropriately dressed and prepared for school;
- ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time;
- promptly report to the school their child's absence or late arrival;

- become familiar with the Code of Conduct and school rules;
- encourage and assist their child in following the rules of behaviour;
- assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues.

**Police and community members** are essential partners in making our schools and communities safer. Community members need to support and respect the rules of their local schools. Police investigate incidents in accordance with the protocol developed with the local school board. These protocols are based on a provincial model developed by the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Education.

## Standards of Behaviour

### Respect, civility and responsible citizenship

*All school members must:*

- respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws;
- demonstrate honesty and integrity;
- respect differences in people, their ideas and opinions;
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement;
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability;
- respect the rights of others;
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others;
- take appropriate measures to help those in need;
- respect persons who are in a position of authority;
- respect the need of others to work in an environment of learning and teaching.

## Physical safety

### Weapons

*All school members must:*

- not be in possession of any weapon, including but not limited to firearms;
- not use any object to threaten or intimidate another person;
- not cause injury to any person with an object.

### Alcohol and Drugs

*All school members must:*

- not be in possession of, or under the influence of, or provide others with, alcohol or illegal drugs.

### Physical Aggression

*All school members must:*

- not inflict or encourage others to inflict bodily harm on another person;
- seek staff assistance, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully.

## **Mandatory Consequences**

---

Police will be involved, as indicated by the police/school protocol, and the student will be immediately suspended and proceed to an expulsion hearing for the following:

- possession of a weapon, including, but not limited to firearms;
- trafficking in drugs or weapons;
- robbery;
- use of a weapon to cause bodily harm, or to threaten serious harm;
- physical assault causing bodily harm requiring professional medical treatment;
- sexual assault;
- providing alcohol to minors.

**Immediate Suspension will be the minimum penalty faced by a student for:**

- uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm;
- possession of illegal drugs;
- acts of vandalism causing extensive damage to school property or property located on school premises.

In these instances, police will be involved, as required, and conditions to return to school will be specified in accordance with school board policies.

**A student will be immediately suspended for:**

- swearing at a teacher, or other person in authority;
- being in possession of alcohol;
- being under the influence of alcohol.

This is the Government's policy framework with respect to mandatory consequences. Legislation would be required to give effect to this framework. While it is the intention of the Government to introduce legislation, it does not presume the outcome of the legislative process.

ISBN 0-7778-9547-1  
00-083  
© Queen's Printer, 2000

