

April 2014
Manitoba School Division Guidelines
Code of Conduct for Parents and Adult Volunteers in Schools

- Respectfully submitted by Manitoba Association of Parent Councils Board of Directors for approval at the 2014 Annual General Meeting.

Background

Every year in Manitoba, thousands of parents and adult volunteers choose to participate in school communities to support children's educational experiences. Adult volunteers in school communities are participating in Parent Advisory Councils and in classrooms, meeting with other parents in family friendly areas, or participating in school community events. While a philosophy honouring parents as partners in school communities exists in Manitoba, written guidelines regarding respectful behaviour in school communities *including* parents and volunteers are often limited.

Introduction

Every school and school division in Manitoba has within its policies a student and staff code of conduct. These guidelines were created to ensure respectful, safe, and caring behaviour towards others and is both understood as well as practiced. Parents and families are often requested to review these codes with their child(ren) on an annual basis.

While it is widely understood that *all adults* are expected to model respectful and caring behaviour in a school community, parents and adult volunteers are not often identified in the code of conduct. The majority of parents and adult volunteers in Manitoba are excited and eager to participate in a meaningful and respectful manner both with each other as well as with school and divisional teams. While respectful behaviour between adults is the expectation within a school community, it is not always the reality. There have been instances where respectful behaviour is lacking during an interaction between adults within a school community, which is often witnessed by students as well as other adults.

Manitoba Labour Standards requires administrators to ensure that school volunteers, in addition to paid employees, are treated in a respectful manner when in the workplace. Administrators are often placed in the difficult position of having to act as mediators between adult volunteers, taking time away from their daily responsibilities. In such instances, the issues are often left unresolved resulting in further impacts on both the school community and meaningful parental participation.

By including parents and community members within school and divisional codes of conduct it can no longer be assumed that this is understood, but referenced when disrespectful behaviours are called into question.

Action Request

Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC) strongly requests all schools and divisional teams in Manitoba to work in consultation with its parents to review, create, and further develop clear and effective divisional guidelines regarding Code of Conduct which identifies parents, adult volunteers, and parent councils within the body of the statement.