

This document was approved by the membership on Jan 20, 2004

## **Code of Ethics for Executive and Committee Members of the Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils**

### **Foreword**

This code of ethics to govern parent representatives on the VCPAC Executive was written to provide:

1. Elected or a appointed representatives with guidelines for a minimum standard of conduct;
2. The VCPAC membership and others with a tool to assess the performance of the Members the VCPAC Executive; and
3. A basis for accountability and consultation for VCPAC Executive members.

The purpose of this code of ethics is to guide the conduct of parent representatives who are members of the VCPAC Executive thereby instilling confidence in their work with colleagues on the executive and with the parents that they represent.

### **Statement of understanding**

A parent representative who accepts a position as a member of the VCPAC Executive agrees to:

1. Uphold the constitution, bylaws, policies and procedures of the electing body.
2. Perform his/her duties with honesty and integrity.
3. Work to ensure that the well being of all students is the primary focus of all decisions.
4. Take direction from the members, to provide parents from each school an opportunity to have a voice
5. To encourage and facilitate active participation by the membership in the consultation process.
6. Strive to be informed and only pass on information that is reliable.
7. Support public education.

### **Administration of code of ethics**

It is important that VCPAC Executive members work to be effective and are accountable for their actions. The VCPAC Code of Ethics sets a standard of conduct for volunteers and the Administration of the code provides accountability. It is recognized that VCPAC Executive members are volunteers and that the Code of Ethics, as well as the administration, depends on individual integrity and cooperation. It is important that those assuming VCPAC Executive member roles understand their responsibilities and are willing to be bound by the Code of Ethics.

The following is a process for dealing with a concern that an executive or committee member may have failed to observe the code of ethics. The process is intended to deal with complaints in a positive manner.

- Any person bringing forward a concern will be advised of this process.
- All complaints and related information will be dealt with in an honest and open manner.
- Those directly involved in the complaint will be given access to all relevant information.
- All parties will be dealt with respectfully.
- Any person involved may bring a support person.
- There will be a fair review of the concerns to protect executive and committee members from unfounded and mischievous complaints.

### **Process**

1. Verbal complaints can be brought to any VCPAC Executive member. The person bringing forward the complaint will be encouraged to inform the person in question of their concern and to discuss the problem with the intent of resolution.
2. If resolution is not achieved by step 1 above, a written complaint can be submitted to the VCPAC Executive and a complaints subcommittee of 3 or more people authorized by the VCPAC Executive will be formed.
3. For the purpose of this process, the person acting on the complaint is named Chairperson.

4. Upon receiving the complaint, the Chairperson will work to clarify the complaint, determine if and how the Code of ethics was breached and facilitate the complaints process. The chairperson is responsible for keeping complete notes of the process. The notes should include names of all involved, details of all meetings and the specifics of any resolutions.
5. Every attempt will be made to resolve the concern in a timely manner.
6. If resolution is not reached between parties, the Chairperson will enter the discussion, with the intent to facilitate a positive resolution.
7. The Chairperson may request the participation of other executive members in the process.
8. If the parties cannot agree on resolution, the Chairperson makes a recommendation to the parties. The recommendation may be that the matter be closed or warrants the removal of the parent representative.
9. Should the chairperson recommend the removal of a parent representative. 2/3 of the Executive members support that recommendation for the member to be removed.
10. Either Party may appeal the decision of the Chairperson. The appeal must be made in writing to the VCPAC Executive members within 30 days of being notified of the decision.

## **Conflict of interest and perceived bias**

**Conflict of interest** refers to a situation, which an individual could benefit monetarily from a decision of the VCPAC Executive, which that individual can influence, or vote upon.

**Perception of bias** refers to a situation, which may exist if an individual who represents the VCPAC Executive has the appearance of not speaking solely in the interests of students or parents as this may diminish the power of what was said.

## **Policy**

### **A. Conflict of interest**

Individual's refrain from discussing, influencing and voting upon any matter before the VCPAC Executive in which they may or their families have a financial interest.

### **B. Perceived bias**

That a VCPAC Executive member, when giving opinions in public, clearly state whether the opinion is being given personally or as a representative of VCPAC. The voice of the VCPAC Executive must clearly be, and must be perceived to be, in the best interest of the students and reflect the wishes of the membership.

### **C. Concerns**

Members who have concerns regarding conflict of interest or perceived bias refer those to the complaints sub committee.