



# KAWARTHA PINE RIDGE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## POLICY STATEMENT

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**Section: Human Resources**

- **Employee Relations**

**Policy Code: HR-4.6**

**Policy: DISCONNECTING FROM WORK**

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The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board values the health and wellbeing of all employees. Disconnecting from work is vital for individual wellbeing and work-life balance. The Board recognizes the importance of every employee having the ability to disconnect outside of their normal working hours and enjoy free time away from work without being disturbed.

Bill 27, the Working for Workers Act 2021, defines disconnecting from work as not engaging 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.

In order to support and encourage employees to disconnect from work and create a good work-life balance, whether an employee is working traditional hours in the workplace, or has a flexible working arrangement (as approved by the Board in accordance with [Board Policy HR-4.3, Flexible Work Arrangements](#)), the Board developed this policy to support an employee's ability to disconnect from work. This policy should be read alongside the Board's associated policies, collective agreements, individual employment contracts, and any applicable and/or relevant legislation.

### **1. Application**

This policy applies to all employees of the Board who are considered employees under the Ontario Employment Standards Act, 2000.

### **2. Ability to Disconnect from Work:**

The ability of an employee to not routinely perform work outside their normal working hours depends on the Board's operational needs and the duties and obligations of the employee's position, subject to the terms and conditions of employment or applicable collective agreement and/or an employee's minimum statutory entitlements under the Ontario Employment Standards Act, 2000.

This policy does not grant employees a right to disconnect beyond what is within their individual employment contract, applicable collective agreement and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the Ontario Employment Standards Act, 2000.

Naturally, there may be situations when it is necessary to contact colleagues outside of normal working hours in order to meet the needs of the Board, including but not limited to:

- 2.1 To fill in at short notice for a sick colleague;
- 2.2 When unforeseeable circumstances arise;
- 2.3 In case of emergency; and,
- 2.4 For operational reasons that require contact out of normal working hours.

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Nothing in this policy prevents the Board or other employees of the Board from contacting colleagues outside of their normal working hours for circumstances as outlined above or as otherwise required to meet the Board's operational needs and/or the duties of an individual's position, subject to any rights or other entitlements the receiving colleague may have under employment contract, applicable collective agreement language, the Ontario Employment Standards Act, 2000 or otherwise.

### **3. Obligations**

In order to encourage a culture where employees feel they can disconnect from work, it is important that a joint approach is taken and that everyone recognizes their obligations to achieve this. The role of management and employees is contained in Administrative Regulation, HR-4.6.1, Disconnecting from Work.

### **4. Communications**

Where possible, emails, meeting invitations, and other communications from employees should be checked and/or sent during normal working hours, while also appreciating that work hours may vary between employee groups, and some employees may send communications at a time which is inconvenient to another. Where this is the case, the sender should consider the timing of their communication and understand that the recipient should not be expected to respond until their next work day unless a response is otherwise required before then.

Administrative regulations which support this policy include:

HR-4.6.1, Disconnecting from Work

Cross References:

[HR-2.1, Compensation for Employees](#)

[HR-2.1.6, Compensation for Employees, Hours of Work and Work Week](#)

[HR-4.3, Flexible Work Arrangements](#)