

Independent and Private School Forum Voluntary Code of Ethics

A “Code of Ethics” is the means by which an organization assures the public and its members of its responsibilities and thereby the maintenance of its integrity and reputation. The Independent and Private School Forum (IPSF) is an organization whose members strive for excellence in the quality of the education they deliver. The membership is committed to the highest standards of independent and private school excellence and its members have voluntarily committed themselves to adhere to the following Code of Ethics.

It is the ultimate objective of the IPSF to provide its membership with the stewardship necessary that leads to or confirms their direction toward establishing a school committed to the highest standards of quality in education.

The IPSF’s Code of Ethics forms the tenets of IPSF membership. Members are ultimately responsible to the public, students and their parents through the guidelines and regulations adopted by the Ministry of Education of the Province of Ontario. Violation of the IPSF Code of Ethics does not imply legal liability as such a determination can only be made by legal and judicial proceedings. The purpose of this Code of Ethics is to provide a set of principles to conduct business and maintain high standards in education and is based upon self-monitoring by each member school.

Finally, as the IPSF is a self-governing and self-monitoring body of ethically-minded members, it is ultimately the responsibility of all members to adhere to the code set out below and to self-monitor and make appropriate corrections in behaviour if/when self-monitoring reveals a member is not living up to the Code of Ethics.

The Forum’s roles and responsibilities are to:

Accountability for Student Achievement and Well-being

- Support decisions that reflect the membership focus on student achievement and its philosophy and belief statement that all students can learn.
- Promote a culture of equity to ensure that appropriate educational programs and services are available for all students.
- Approve measures that promote student well-being.

Accountability to the Provincial Government

- Act in accordance with the Education Act, Regulations, and other statutory requirements to ensure the implementation of provincial educational standards and policies.

Accountability to the Community

- Support appropriate decisions that reflect each member's philosophy, belief statements, and strategic plan which represents the best interest of all stakeholders.
- Advocate best practices for all students.

The following set of principles are designed to help our membership conduct business honestly and with integrity, thereby instilling public confidence in the member schools affiliated with the Independent and Private School Forum, and demonstrating to our membership and the public that we are committed to following democratically based ethical guidelines in the course of operating our schools.

This Code of Ethics is divided into two parts. The first is a set of general statements of principle to which the member schools of the IPSF have agreed to adhere. The second is a set of specific statements regarding areas of school organization, management, and conduct to which all member schools of the IPSF are committed.

The Code of Ethics is a fluid document subject to revision as conditions of operation of Independent and Private schools continue to evolve.

Members of the IPSF Forum should, as a condition of membership, continuously adhere to the following Code of Ethics based upon their honest and complete self-monitoring:

Independent and Private School Forum Code of Ethics

Members should:

- Commit to the highest standards of honesty and integrity in the operation of their school and its educational programs.
- Advance and promote the virtues and integrity of the IPSF.
- Be responsible for all aspects of the member school's work consistent with the Private School Guidelines of the Ministry of Education of the Province of Ontario.
- Abide by any new guidelines adopted by the Ministry of Education of the Province of Ontario, and/or the IPSF.
- Ensure that ONSIS reporting is accurate, up-to-date and on-time as per Ministry Requirements.
- Ensure that all applicable laws and regulations are complied with.
- Actively participate with the IPSF when required.
- Engage in ongoing, honest and complete self-monitoring of adherence to this Code of Ethics and be aware that membership in the IPSF may be terminated for breach of this Code of Ethics.
- Adhere to the IPSF Conditions of Membership.

Specifically:

1.0 Advertising

Member should:

- Provide truthful and accurate information about programs, services, and academic expectations.
- Ensure that all marketing materials and websites contain accurate disclosure and strictly avoid publication or posting of claims that may be misleading.
- Ensure all fees, terms and conditions, including the school's refund policy are provided in the school's marketing materials clearly and conspicuously.

2.0 Recruitment

Members should:

- Ensure that all staff or representatives use of any promotional material, reflects accurate information about programs, services, and academic expectations, and strictly avoids making claims or promises that cannot be honoured, substantiated, or may be misleading.
- Ensure all fees, terms and conditions, including the refund policy, are provided in advance of a student application, clearly and conspicuously.
- Honour, without restriction, all representations and agreements set out by the program to students, parents, or guardians or their representatives.
- Refrain from directly targeting students enrolled in another private school, in Ontario.

3.0 Admission/Placement

Members should:

- Ensure the availability of a program that meets the student's needs prior to admitting the student to the school.
- Ensure all terms and conditions of admission are available in advance of a student applying to attend the member's school.
- Ensure the placement of the student is determined on achievement through student records or other similar school based evaluation conducted through the admission process.
- As part of the admission process, honour the requirements for prerequisites in secondary school as determined by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

4.0 Curriculum

Members should:

All Grades:

- Adopt a curriculum consistent with the academic, social, and emotional needs of the student body it represents.

Secondary Specific:

For schools offering credit toward the Ontario Secondary School Diploma:

- Adhere to the existing Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines as amended from time to time by the Ministry of Education, the Education Act, regulations and other statutory requirements to ensure the implementation of provincial and education standards and policies, as set out from time to time by the Ministry of Education.

- Ensure the information regarding curriculum is accurate, as part of the inspection process of the Ministry of Education of Ontario.

5.0 Student Evaluation

Members should:

- Ensure that the principles of “Growing Success” form the basis of student evaluation.
- Ensure that the evaluation of student progress is based primarily on the student’s academic performance.
- Ensure that additional financial consideration does not form part of or otherwise influence student evaluation.
- Ensure student transcripts reflect student achievement.

6.0 Resources

Members should:

- Ensure textbooks are current and comply with the list of textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education of Ontario as found on the “Trillium List”.
- Provide other resources as necessary to complement the textbooks recommended by the Ontario Ministry of Education through the “Trillium List”.
- Provide appropriate information technology resources to complement the delivery of the curriculum in member schools.

7.0 Teaching/Administrative/Staff

Members should:

- Ensure the teacher, in each classroom, is qualified to teach the subject and/or grade level the teacher is expected to teach.
- Ensure the Principal/Head of School is familiar with the Education Act and related legislation and the Private School Guidelines of the Ontario Ministry of Education.
- Ensure that all employees of the school are subject to a vulnerable sector screening check as part of the school hiring process.
- Ensure staff is employed under written contract which provides for adequate compensation, benefits, and working conditions.
- Ensure information regarding staff contracts is transparent and available to a prospective administrator/teacher prior to hiring.
- Ensure that the school has a teacher/principal performance evaluation program in place.
- Ensure that the member school has an established policy for dealing with complaints from staff.
- In the event that a decision is made to dismiss or not to renew the contract of a staff member, the staff member shall be given a fair period of notice and the reason for the school’s decision.

8.0 Professional Development

Members should:

- Provide a professional development program consistent with the needs of the member school and its staff.