

Title: Political Activities Procedure

Adopted: February 10, 2026

Effective: April 22, 2026

Amended/Reviewed: N/A

This procedure must be interpreted, applied, and implemented in ways that uphold Indigenous rights and human rights and responsibilities, promote accessibility, and prevent and address (and do not reinforce) discrimination/discriminatory barriers.

1.0 RATIONALE

This procedure operationalizes the Political Activities Policy by establishing clear, consistent, and practical expectations for political and election-related activities on DDSB property, platforms, and at DDSB events.

DDSB supports civic engagement and non-partisan education about democratic processes. Schools and worksites must remain safe, inclusive, and politically neutral environments. Election periods introduce heightened risks of disruption, perceived bias, misuse of Board resources, and impacts on student learning and school operations. While election periods may heighten risk, this procedure applies at all times and governs Political Activities whenever they intersect with DDSB environments. This procedure provides clear direction to staff, students, community members, and election officials to ensure political and election-related activities are conducted lawfully, equitably, and without compromising Indigenous rights, human rights, accessibility, student learning, or public confidence in public education.

This procedure supports consistent District-wide practices related to campaigning, use of Board resources, Political Activity, polling station access, and use of DDSB school and worksite spaces.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- a. **Political Activities:** For the purposes of this procedure, Political Activities have the same meaning as set out in the Political Activities Policy, and include activities intended to influence, support, or oppose a political party, candidate, or electoral outcome at the municipal, provincial, or federal level when they intersect with DDSB property, platforms, programs, or events, including partisan campaigning and related election activities.

- b. **Election period:**

The legislated campaign period for an election.

- For a municipal election, the election period commences on May 1 of an

- election year and ends on voting day.
 - For a provincial or federal election, the election period commences the day the writ for the election is issued and ends on voting day.
 - For a by-election at the school board, municipal, provincial or federal level, the period commences when the by-election is called and ends on voting day.
- c. **Candidate:** An individual running for municipal, provincial or federal office and candidates for Indigenous and/or organizational governance elections.
- d. **Campaigning:** Any activity intended to support or oppose the election of a candidate or political party, or to influence electors.
- e. **Non-Partisan Educational Activity:** Instructional activities, including recognized programs such as *Student Vote* designed to support learning about public governance systems, elections, and political activities at the municipal, provincial, or federal level, without the intent to influence, support or oppose any political party, candidate, or electoral outcome, and without endorsing any political actor.
- f. **Board resources:** Any DDSB-issued resources, including staff time, duties, and responsibilities, facilities, equipment, supplies, vehicles, IT systems, Board email, phone, websites, social media accounts, logos, branding, and Board-funded services.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

The **Director of Education** is responsible for the implementation, oversight, and monitoring of this procedure and may delegate operational responsibilities as appropriate.

The **Public Affairs Department** provides guidance on political or election-related communications and coordinates system-level messaging where required.

Superintendents and Principals are responsible for implementing this procedure at the school and department level, including approving school-based activities and ensuring compliance during election periods.

All individuals to whom this procedure applies are responsible for complying with its requirements, within their respective roles.

4.0 APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This procedure applies at all times and governs political and election-related activities occurring:

- On DDSB property, including schools, administrative sites, and outdoor spaces
- At DDSB-approved events and activities

- Through DDSB communication platforms, including school newsletters, websites, and social media
- When DDSB facilities are used as polling locations

This procedure applies to:

- All DDSB employees
- Students participating in school programs or activities
- Parents/guardians and community members using DDSB spaces
- External individuals or organizations seeking to conduct political or election-related activities on DDSB property, including municipal, provincial, or federal politicians, incumbents, or candidates
- Political or election-related activities proposed by external individuals or organizations outside of instructional time are subject to the Community Use of Schools Policy and Procedure, including permit approval, conditions of use, and enforcement provisions.

This procedure must be interpreted and applied in ways that uphold Indigenous rights, human rights, accessibility, dignity, and safety, and that protect student learning and school operations.

Trustee conduct related to political activities is governed by the Trustee Code of Conduct and Board Bylaws.

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 At the start of each election period, principals should:

- Review this procedure with staff;
- Confirm whether the school is designated as a polling location;
- Consult Public Affairs as needed.

5.2 General Controls

5.2.1 At all times, DDSB schools, worksites, events, and communication platforms shall operate in a non-partisan manner and remain free from Political Activities, as defined in this procedure.

5.2.2 Non-Partisan Educational Activities, as defined in this procedure, may be permitted where they align with curriculum and Board priorities and do not interfere with student learning, school operations, or staff duties.

5.2.3 Where there is uncertainty as to whether an activity constitutes a Political Activity, or a Non-Partisan Educational Activity. Principals and managers shall consult their superintendent prior to approval.

5.2.4 Restrictions on Board Resources

DDSB resources shall not be used for any campaign-related purpose, including preparation, printing, storage, or distribution of campaign materials.

DDSB logos, branding, official titles, or affiliation shall not appear on campaign

materials.

5.2.5 Use of DDSB Facilities by External Groups

Where DDSB facilities are requested for political or election-related activities by external individuals or organizations outside of instructional time, approval and conditions of use shall be determined in accordance with the Community Use of Schools Policy and Procedure.

5.3 Staff Expectations

The expectations set out in this section apply at all times and reflect the ongoing duty of political neutrality owed by DDSB employees when acting in the course of their employment. These expectations are of particular importance during election periods.

5.3.1 DDSB employees may participate in lawful Political Activities only in their personal capacity, outside of work hours, off DDSB property, and without the use of DDSB resources.

5.3.2 While performing their duties, staff shall conduct themselves in a non-partisan manner and shall not:

- Use their professional role, instructional time, or work activities to promote, endorse, or oppose a political party, candidate, or electoral outcome;
- Distribute, display, or wear campaign materials on DDSB property; or
- Use DDSB email, devices, or systems for political or election-related purposes.

5.3.3 Staff shall not assist candidates or campaigns by providing DDSB-owned photographs, videos, data, or other materials.

5.4 Student Participation and Learning

5.4.1 Students may participate in non-partisan, curriculum-aligned educational activities related to municipal, provincial, and federal processes, including simulations and recognized programs such as Student Vote.

5.4.2 Students shall not be used to distribute campaign materials, promote candidates, or engage in political or election-related advocacy during instructional time or school activities.

5.5 Civic Learning and Instructional Activities

5.5.1 During instructional time and DDSB-approved school programs, Non-Partisan Educational Activities, as defined in this procedure, may be permitted where they are curriculum-aligned and facilitated by DDSB educators or school administrators.

5.5.2 Schools may invite registered candidates to participate in instructional activities, including classroom discussions or student forums, only where, in the professional judgment of the Principal, such participation supports curriculum expectations and does not reasonably undermine student safety, dignity, well-being, accessibility, or the Board's human rights obligations.

5.5.3 Where a school determines that candidate participation is appropriate under section 5.5.2, the instructional activity must constitute a Non-Partisan Educational Activity, and:

- The activity supports curriculum expectations and student learning;
- All registered candidates who meet the criteria for participation are invited and treated equitably;
- The activity is facilitated by DDSB educators or administrators;
- No political advocacy, campaigning, promotion, or distribution of campaign materials occurs; and
- Student dignity, safety, accessibility, and well-being are protected.

5.5.4 For clarity, Political Activities, including political advocacy, campaigning, or promotion, are not permitted during instructional time or during DDSB-sponsored instructional activities.

5.6 Use of Schools as Polling Locations

5.6.1 DDSB shall collaborate with municipalities, Indigenous communities, Elections Ontario, and Elections Canada where schools are designated as polling locations.

5.6.2 When a school is used as a polling station, Principals shall:

- Work with Facilities, Security, and the relevant election authority to ensure safe and controlled access;
- Ensure polling activities are clearly separated from instructional areas where feasible;
- Implement measures to protect student and staff safety and privacy; and
- The use of DDSB facilities as polling locations is subject to applicable agreements and legislation and, where relevant, the Community Use of Schools Policy and Procedure.

5.6.3 Where operationally feasible and consistent with Ministry requirements, DDSB may consider scheduling Professional Activity (PD) Days on municipal election days, in alignment with system planning processes.

5.7 Communications Related to Political Activities

5.7.1 DDSB and school communication platforms may share neutral, factual information related to political or election-related activities (e.g., notice of a civic learning activity or polling station use) but shall not include commentary, endorsement, or amplification of campaign messaging.

5.7.2 DDSB platforms shall not be used to share candidate platforms, campaign materials, or political opinions.

5.8 Indigenous Rights, Human Rights, and Dignity

5.8.1 Political and election-related activities shall uphold the dignity, safety, and rights of all individuals and communities, including Indigenous Peoples, and shall be consistent with:

- The Ontario Human Rights Code;
- The Constitution Act, 1982;
- The United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP); and
- DDSB Indigenous Education and Human Rights policies.

5.8.2 Where political or election-related activities intersect with Indigenous communities, Indigenous rights, or Indigenous governance, schools and departments shall engage Indigenous Education staff early for guidance.

5.8.3 Political or election-related activities will not be permitted where they:

- Discriminate against, dehumanize, demean, or deny the existence or rights of individuals or groups based on protected grounds or Indigenous identity; or
- Promote or perpetuate harmful stereotypes, bias, stigma, or hate.

5.8.4 These expectations apply regardless of whether an activity is framed as debate, dialogue, community engagement, or political discussion.

5.9 Monitoring and Compliance

5.9.1 Principals, Managers, and Superintendents are responsible for monitoring compliance with this procedure within their areas of responsibility.

5.9.2 Where inadvertent or minor non-compliance occurs, corrective guidance and education will be provided.

5.9.3 Concerns or incidents related to election activities shall be reported to the appropriate Superintendent and, where required, to Public Affairs or Legal Services.

5.9.4 Monitoring findings shall inform future reviews of the Political Activities Policy and this procedure.

6.0 APPENDICES

N/A

7.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- DDSB Political Activities Policy
- DDSB Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
- Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- Indigenous Education Policy
- DDSB Community Use of Schools Policy
- DDSB Community Use of Schools Procedure