

Massachusetts Association of School Committees Code of Ethics

The acceptance of a code of ethics implies the understanding of the basic organization of school committees under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The oath of office of a school committee member binds the individual member to adhere to those State laws which apply to school committees since school committees are agencies of the State.

This code of ethics delineates three areas of responsibility of school committee members:

1. Community responsibility.
 2. Responsibility to the school administration.
 3. Relationship to fellow committee members.
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1. A school committee member in their relations with the community should:
 - a. Realize that their primary responsibility is to the children.
 - b. Recognize that their basic function is to be policymaking and not administrative.
 - c. Remember that they are one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all committee decisions once they are made.
 - d. Be well-informed concerning the duties of a committee member on both a local and state level.
 - e. Remember that they represent the entire community at all times.
 - f. Accept the office as a committee member as a means of unselfish service with no intent to “play politics” in any sense of the word, or to benefit personally from committee activities.
 2. A School Committee member in their relations with the school administration should:
 - a. Endeavor to establish sound, clearly defined policies with which to direct and support the administration.
 - b. Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration.
 - c. Act only on the recommendations of the chief administrator in all matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel.
 - d. Give the chief administrator full responsibility for discharging his/her professional duties and hold him/her responsible for acceptable results.
 - e. Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at committee meetings if such solutions fail.

3. A School Committee member in their relations with fellow committee members should:
 - a. Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that they alone cannot bind the committee outside of such meetings.
 - b. Realize that statements or promises should not be made regarding how they will vote on matters that will come before the committee.
 - c. Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communication that exists in executive sessions.
 - d. Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of their own committee or from members of other committees who may be seeking help and information on school problems.
 - e. Make decisions only after all the facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

Westford Public Schools Policy References:
P7109 – New Member Orientation

Policy Adopted: April 9, 2001
Policy Reviewed:
Policy Revised:

WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Westford, Massachusetts 01886