

Procedure Title	<b>Disconnecting from Work</b>		
Date of Issue	May 18, 2022	Related Policy	BP 7240-D
Revision Dates		Related Forms	
Review Date		Originator	Administrative Council
<b>References</b>			
Education Act; Bill 27, Working for Workers Act; Employment Standards Act, 2000; BP/AP 7530-D "Progressive Discipline – Employees"; AP 7515-D "Staff Communication Guidelines – Problem-Solving"			

## 1.0 RATIONALE

- 1.1 Bluewater District School Board is committed to providing a psychologically safe and healthy work environment that promotes and supports its employees' work-life boundaries and balance, enabling our employees to prioritize effectively between their work and personal life.
- 1.2 This procedure provides guidelines and expectations related to Bluewater District School Board employees' rights to disconnect from work outside of their scheduled work hours, scheduled time off, and/or approved leaves of absence.
- 1.3 This procedure shall be applied in accordance with applicable laws/legislation, including, but not limited to, the Education Act, Bill 27, Working for Workers Act, 2021, the Employment Standards Act (ESA), terms and conditions obligations, and collective agreement obligations. In the event of a conflict between this procedure and the terms outlined within legislation, terms and conditions, or collective agreements, the terms and conditions, or collective agreement will prevail.

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **After-hours** refers to the time outside of an employee's working hours, as defined in their contract, terms and conditions, or under their collective agreement.
- 2.2 **Disconnecting from work** is defined by Bill 27, Working for Workers Act, 2021, 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.
- 2.3 **Electronic communication** refers to any form of communication, including emails, mass emails, text, or video messaging, sent by, or received using electronic media such as computers, laptops, cell phones, or other device, either personal or board issued.
- 2.4 **Mass emails** are defined as electronic mail messages sent to a large number of people.
- 2.5 **Telephonic communication** refers to communication using personal or board issued landlines or cellular phones.
- 2.6 **Scheduled time off** refers to time that board employees have scheduled off from their normal work hours, and may include, but is not limited to, sick time, vacation time, floater days, etc.

**3.0 PROCEDURE**

- 3.1 Bluewater District School Board employees have the right to disconnect from work after-hours, during their scheduled time off, or during an approved leave of absence, subject to specific exemptions, including but not limited to, emergencies/significant events, designated on-call, assigned overtime, or with agreement to do so, without fear of reprisal and/or progressive discipline (BP/AP 7530-D "Progressive Discipline – Employees"). Board employees are asked to use their professional judgement when determining whether to send a communication outside of a recipient's working hours, or when determining whether to respond to a communication received after-hours.
- 3.2 Bluewater District School Board employees, along with their principal/manager/supervisor, are expected to make every effort to resolve concerns regarding this procedure together, following AP 7515-D "Staff Communication Guidelines – Problem-Solving".
- 3.2.1 If efforts to resolve concerns have not been successful, board employees/principals/managers/supervisors are invited to contact the Human Resources Services Department for assistance.