Administrative Procedure 414
Right to Disconnect from Work

Limestone District School Board is committed to promoting and nurturing the health and well-being of our employees. The evolving nature of work coupled with the expansive use of technology, creates the potential for expectations that staff be readily available beyond the hours of their regular workday. It is therefore important that employees are encouraged and supported to prioritize their own well-being. Disconnecting from work, outside of regular working hours is important for sustainable work-life balance and personal well-being.

1. Application and Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, whether staff are working in the workplace, working remotely, or a combination thereof.

2. Definition

Disconnecting from work refers to a period in which employees are not expected to be conducting work on behalf of the Board, including not being available for related communications such as receiving phone calls, emails, or texts. The right to disconnect means that every employee is entitled to "switch off" outside of their regular working hours and enjoy their free time away from work without being disturbed, unless there is an emergency or agreement to do so, for example while "on call".

There may be occasions when it is necessary to share time sensitive information and/or contact employees, colleagues, students and/or families outside of regular working hours, including but not limited to emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances that require a response/immediate attention. Although all employees are asked to be mindful of the right to disconnect, it is important that employees are also mindful that there will be situations that arise where it is not possible to deal with matters solely during regular working hours.

3. Responsibilities

The Board is responsible for maintaining compliance with all statutory duties and

obligations under the Employment Standards Act, as amended, as well as the relevant Collective Agreement provisions and/or Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Responsibilities of management include:

- Respecting an employee's right to disconnect from work outside of regular work hours
- Ensuring no reprisals against any employee who exercises their right under this procedure

Employees are responsible for:

- Ensuring they manage their work-related responsibilities during regular working hours, and outside of working hours, as required
- Respecting fellow colleagues' right to disconnect (e.g., by not routinely emailing or calling outside normal working hours)

4. Hours of Work

Regular working hours for employees, including break periods, are established by the terms and conditions of employment as detailed in respective Personal Service Contracts, Collective Agreements, Terms & Conditions of Employment, the Education Act, and the Employment Standards Act. Given that staff across the district work different schedules, it is important to note all employees have the right to disconnect in the context of their regular hours of work. Generally speaking, employees can expect to be free to disconnect after 6pm for those who work during the day. Employees whose regular schedule begins in the afternoon/evening can expect to disconnect outside of their regularly scheduled shift(s).

5. Communications

Where possible, emails should be checked or sent only during regular working hours. Due to differing/non-standard patterns of work in the organization, some employees may send

communications at times which are inopportune for other employees, such as evenings. The sender should give due consideration to the timing of their communication and potential for disturbance, and the recipient should understand that they will not be expected to respond until the next business day, unless it is an emergency.

Employees are not expected to respond to social communications from colleagues outside of their working hours and it is entirely up to them if they choose to do so.

6. System Communications

Employees should continue to expect system communications / automated alerts from Information Technology Services to be delivered outside of regular work hours, such as the COVID screener, emails that are quarantined, etc. These messages do not require a response from employees and therefore employees may read them during regular working hours. Similarly, schools may send out routine communications outside of regular working hours, such as staff updates and newsletters. As these communications do not require a response from employees, they too can be read during regular working hours.

7. Administration of Procedure

Should an employee have any issues in exercising their right to disconnect, they should raise their concern with their immediate supervisor, their Union/Federation and/or Human Resources, in order that the matter may be addressed.

Legal References

Working for Workers Act
Education Act, as amended
Employment Standards Act, as amended