



PROCEDURE

HR-002

Right to Disconnect

Board Received: June 27, 2022

Review Date: September 2026

Responsibility: Superintendent of Human Resources

Purpose:

The Grand Erie District School Board (“Grand Erie”) encourages and supports employees in prioritizing their own health and well-being. Disconnecting from work is important for an individual’s well-being and helps employees achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life balance.

In accordance with *the Employment Standards Act (“ESA”)* and any *Regulations* made under *the Act*, Grand Erie supports employees with their right to disconnect from work.

1.0 Definitions:

- a) As defined by the *ESA*, “disconnecting from work” means “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”.

2.0 Guiding Principles:

- a) All employees are encouraged to disconnect from work outside of their normal working hours.
- b) To the extent possible, work-related communications via any medium should only be sent, received, and checked during regular working hours. An employee’s normal working hours and any applicable break periods are as set out in their employment contract, applicable collective agreement, terms and conditions of employment, or as identified by law.
- c) There may on occasion be legitimate situations when it is necessary to contact employees after-hours, including but not limited to: notification of staff absences, filling vacant positions, inclement weather, emergency, urgent or unforeseen situations.
- d) Although everyone should be mindful of the right to disconnect, situations can arise where it is not possible to deal with matters during normal working hours. Given that employees across Grand Erie may have differing hours of work, some employees may issue communications after-hours. All employees must give due consideration to this operational reality when sending or receiving communications.
- e) Where an employee is out of the office for an extended period of time (e.g. conferences, lengthy meetings, absences, etc.) they are encouraged to set automatic replies on their voicemail, email and other communication platforms as appropriate. This will provide notification of their absence, forwarding messages and calls to appropriate designates, and set reasonable expectations for response times.
- f) This procedure will be provided to all new employees within 30 days of joining the employ of Grand Erie.

References:

- *Employment Standards Act, 2000*