

School-based Activity During an Election Period

Background

This Policy and Information release is intended to ensure a non-partisan learning environment during an election period, specifically,

- the management of candidate or elected officials' visits to schools during an election campaign, and
- the expectations for school staff.

Federal, provincial, and municipal elections provide an important opportunity for schools to encourage students to be aware of, and involved in, the political process as part of their public education experience. Schools are a non-partisan place of learning and should support activities that teach students how to become active and informed citizens in their community.

Approved Visits

Candidates and/or political party representatives who are invited, or who wish to visit a school during an election period may do so with the approval of the Principal/administrator and in accordance with the following conditions:

- All candidates for that district/riding must be invited to participate in the visit;
- The purpose of the visit is educational, non-partisan, and not for the purpose of campaigning or soliciting votes.
- The *Provincial School Code of Conduct Policy* states that all members of a school community, including volunteers, have a shared responsibility to create "a positive and inclusive school climate where all students are supported to develop healthy relationships, make good choices, and achieve success in their learning." If a visitor does not adhere to this principle, the school principal may ask them to leave.

Election Campaigning Restrictions

At no time are political visitors to school property during the instructional day permitted to solicit for votes, either verbally or through signs, pamphlets, brochures, posters, or by any other means.

Authority

The Principal of the school is responsible for granting permission for visits by political candidates and must ensure:

- No signs, brochures, posters or other graphic material will be displayed or distributed;
- Any requests by candidates/parties for the contact information of teachers, staff, students or their parents will not be granted;
- School security measures must be adhered to; and
- Any violation of these restrictions may, at the Principal's discretion, result in a candidate's immediate removal from school premises.

Professional Stance in Political Discourse

While on school premises, principals, teachers, and staff must ensure the learning environment is free from the display of political bias. Staff must refrain from engaging in activities which could be considered political in nature while at school, such as wearing campaign paraphernalia or displaying or sharing campaign materials such as brochures, pamphlets, or posters for non-education related reasons.