

Board of Education Ethics Policy Revised

The Kent County Board of Education recently approved revisions to Policy BBF, Ethics Policy. The information on this website is designed to help individuals understand certain provisions of the ethics policy.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Who does the ethics policy apply to?

A. It applies to all employees of Kent County Public Schools (KCPS), the superintendent of schools, school board members, individuals running for a seat on the Board of Education, lobbyists, and persons who file a formal complaint pursuant to the ethics policy.

Q. Are there consequences for violating the ethics policy?

A. Yes; A finding that a Board member, school official, or employee has violated these provisions may constitute grounds for removal from office, discipline, or other personnel action consistent with provisions of the *Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article*, or the policies of the Board.

Q. Who must file a financial disclosure statement and when is the statement due?

A. Board members, candidates for the Board of Education, and certain school officials must complete financial disclosure forms as noted below:

Board Members and Candidates for the Board: Elected Board of Education members must file a financial disclosure form by April 30 for the preceding calendar year. Candidates for the Board of Education must file a financial disclosure in accordance with the timeframes set forth in policy BBF, Ethics Policy. Those individuals appointed to a vacant position on the Board of Education must file a financial disclosure form within 30 days after appointment.

Employees: Employees who meet the following criteria must complete a financial disclosure form by April 30:

- Any official or employee who has responsibility for preparing, approving, or auditing, or who has the authority to commit the school system to rent, purchase, or lease any of the following items with an aggregate value of \$100,000.00 in any fiscal year:
 - Personal service contracts
 - Specifications for materials, supplies, or equipment
 - Requests for proposals or bids
- Any official or employee who, acting alone or as a member or an employee of the Board of Education or school system, having decision-making authority or acting as a principal advisor to a person with that authority in making school system or school board policy or exercising quasi-judicial regulatory, licensing, inspecting, or auditing functions

Q. What type of activity is prohibited under the ethics policy?

A. The following is a list of some activities that are prohibited under the ethics policy:

- Participating in decisions in which the school official or qualified relative (spouse, parent, child, or sibling) has an interest
- Being employed by KCPS and a company that is subject to the authority of the school system, or has negotiated or is negotiating a contract with the school system
- Intentionally using the prestige of office or public position for the private gain of the school official or another person/entity
- Soliciting gifts
- Accepting an unsolicited gift that is more than \$100. In certain circumstances, a gift may not be accepted at all.
- Disclosing confidential information

Q. What should I do if I have a question or concern? What is the role of the Ethics Panel?

A. Some questions or concerns may not fall within the purview of the Ethics Panel, so staff members should first contact their supervisor or leave a message for the Ethics Panel in the Board of Education Office (410-778-7113). The Ethics Panel is the advisory body responsible for interpreting the ethics policy and advising persons subject to this policy regarding its application and matters related to conflict of interest. The responsibilities of the Ethics Panel include:

- Developing, receiving, and maintaining all forms required by the ethics policy
- Providing advisory opinions to persons subject to the ethics regulations
- Reviewing any complaint filed regarding an alleged violation of the ethics policy
- Implementing a public information and education program regarding the purpose and implementation of this policy