

Values and Code of Conduct Policy

Policy Number: G-02.02.00	Next Review Date: 2027
Approved by: NSRDDA Board	Approval Date: August 28, 2025

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote ethical, respectful, and responsible conduct among individuals acting on behalf of the NSRDDA. It reflects the Regulator's commitment to fairness, accountability, and public protection in the regulation of the dentistry and dental assisting professions in Nova Scotia.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Board members
- Statutory and Advisory Committee members
- The Registrar
- Staff and contractors

3. Definitions

"Values" are defined as "principles, standards, or qualities considered worthwhile or desirable".¹ They represent "how" the Board members, Committee members, the Registrar and employees are expected to deal with each other in the day-to-day operations of the NSRDDA. They are monitored through the establishment of complaint mechanisms and may be incorporated into stakeholder satisfaction surveys and performance management systems for employees.

"Standards of conduct" are the rules and expectations that guide how individuals or organizations should behave in professional settings. These standards help ensure ethical behaviour, professionalism, and compliance with laws and NSRDDA policies.

4. Policy Statement

(a) Core Values

All individuals subject to this policy must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the following values when engaged in work/activity on behalf of the Regulator, including any interactions with the public or dental professionals:

¹ The Free Dictionary Online, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/values>, March 23, 2007.

Value	Description	Behaviours
Accountability	<i>We take ownership for our actions, decisions, and impacts.</i>	• Follow through on commitments and own the outcomes – good or bad • Provide timely and transparent reporting through the appropriate channels on activities and decisions • Accept responsibility when errors occur and take steps to correct them • Speak up when something is not aligned with policies, values, or the public interest • Respect privacy and confidentiality obligations at all times
Continuous Improvement	<i>We learn, adapt, and innovate to strengthen our effectiveness.</i>	• Seek feedback from colleagues, stakeholders and registrants to improve how we work • Reflect on what's working and what isn't - and adjust accordingly • Embrace changes that enhance public protection and regulatory performance • Share lessons learned across the organization • Take part in ongoing professional development
Results-Focused Leadership	<i>We lead with purpose and deliver outcomes that matter to the public and profession.</i>	• Set goals that align with our regulatory mandate • Support evidence-based decision-making and practical action • Prioritize initiatives that have measurable impact • Recognize and celebrate meaningful progress • Model integrity, fairness, and respect in every interaction
Trust	<i>We build trust through integrity, consistency, and respectful relationships.</i>	• Communicate openly and respectfully • Explain decisions clearly, especially when they impact others

Equity & Respect *We recognize and address barriers to fair treatment and participation.*

- Treat all people with dignity and fairness, regardless of role or background
- Maintain high ethical standards, even when no one is watching
- We consider equity implications in our work and policies
- We strive for inclusive language and accessible communications
- We learn from diverse lived experience and apply that learning

(b) Code of Conduct

All individuals subject to this Code must observe the highest standards of conduct and integrity in the execution of their duties. The communications, behaviours and actions of Individuals must adhere to the following principles:

a. Integrity and Public Interest

- Act with honesty, good faith, and in the best interests of the public and the Regulator at all times.
- Make decisions impartially and independently, free from external influence or private interest.
- Avoid any situation where personal or private interests may conflict—or appear to conflict—with official duties.

b. Accountability and Stewardship

- Be accountable for actions and decisions and act in a manner that upholds public trust.
- Use resources, information, and authority only for official purposes and in a responsible, efficient, and ethical manner.
- Comply with all applicable laws, policies, and directives, including those governing financial management, privacy, and employment.

c. Impartiality and Political Neutrality

- Refrain from political activity that may conflict with or be perceived to conflict with one's role.
- Do not use official roles to promote partisan political interests.
- Avoid engaging in any activity that could compromise, or be seen to compromise, objectivity or neutrality in regulatory matters.

d. Respect and Workplace Behaviour

- Treat others with respect, dignity, and fairness, recognizing that social standards or norms for courtesy and respect may vary across cultural differences

- Contribute to a professional, harassment-free, and safe environment.
- Refrain from behaviour that is discriminatory, bullying, threatening, or otherwise unprofessional.

Examples of respectful behaviour (will be expected):

Type of Interaction	Respectful Behaviour Includes...
<i>General conduct</i>	• <i>Speaking courteously, even when disagreeing</i> • <i>Using a calm, professional tone in emails, calls and meetings</i> • <i>Keeping commitments and notifying others when things change</i>
<i>Meetings</i>	• <i>Listening without interrupting</i> • <i>Acknowledging others' contributions</i> • <i>Critiquing ideas, not people</i>
<i>Equity & inclusion</i>	• <i>Using inclusive language</i> • <i>Being mindful of cultural, gender, and accessibility differences</i> • <i>Adapting communication style when needed</i>
<i>Conflict</i>	• <i>Addressing concerns directly, constructively, and privately when appropriate</i> • <i>Assuming good intent and seeking mutual understanding</i>
<i>Feedback</i>	• <i>Giving feedback that is specific, timely, and focused on behaviour, not personality</i> • <i>Receiving feedback with openness, even when it's difficult</i>
<i>Email and digital communication</i>	• <i>Avoiding sarcasm, ALL CAPS, or excessive exclamation marks</i> • <i>Not copying others unnecessarily to escalate or shame</i> • <i>Allowing time for thoughtful responses</i>

Examples of disrespectful behaviour (will not be tolerated):

Type of Interaction	Disrespectful Behaviour Includes...
<i>Verbal or written tone</i>	• <i>Yelling, condescending speech, sarcasm meant to belittle</i> • <i>Aggressive or passive-aggressive communication</i>
<i>Disregard for others</i>	• <i>Interrupting repeatedly or dominating conversations</i> • <i>Ignoring input from others based on status or role</i>
<i>Exclusion</i>	• <i>Withholding important information</i> • <i>Leaving people out of the discussions without reason</i>
<i>Harassment/bullying</i>	• <i>Personal insults, name-calling, or mockery</i> • <i>Unwelcome jokes, innuendo, or comments about identity (e.g., gender, race, age)</i>
<i>Undermining</i>	• <i>Rolling eyes, sighing, or making dismissive gestures</i> • <i>Gossiping or spreading rumours</i>

Retaliation

- *Punishing someone for raising concerns or offering honest feedback*

e. Confidentiality and Use of Information

- Maintain the confidentiality of all non-public information received through one's role, and use such information only for the purposes for which it was obtained.
- Do not disclose or use confidential information for personal gain or to benefit others.
- Protect the privacy of registrants, complainants, applicants, colleagues, and other individuals in accordance with applicable privacy laws.

f. Conflict of Interest

- Avoid circumstances that could result in actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.
- Declare conflicts promptly in accordance with the **Conflict of Interest Policy** and follow direction provided for managing them.
- Do not participate in decision-making where a conflict exists or may reasonably be perceived.

g. Gifts and Benefits

- Do not accept gifts, hospitality, or other benefits that could influence, or appear to influence, professional judgment or decision-making.
- Modest or customary tokens of appreciation may be accepted only if they are of minimal value and not connected to any decision or obligation.

h. Duty to Uphold the Reputation of the Regulator

- Conduct oneself in a manner that maintains and enhances public confidence in the integrity, impartiality, and competence of the Regulator.
- Avoid public comments or actions that may bring the Regulator into disrepute or damage its credibility.

i. Collective Responsibility and Confidential Deliberation

- Support decisions made collectively, even if one personally disagreed during deliberation
- Respect the confidentiality of in-camera discussions and avoid disclosing differing views expressed during confidential decision-making.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The **Board** is responsible for articulating the values that are important in the operation of the NSRDDA and for ensuring that these values are integrated into selection, orientation and performance management systems at all levels (e.g., Board, Committees, Registrar, employees, etc.). The Board is also responsible to ensure that a complaint mechanism exists to allow issues of concern regarding the organization's adherence to the values to be brought forward and resolved.

The **Board** is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and supports are in place to foster sound ethical decision-making.

The **Registrar** is responsible for ensuring the values are “lived” in the administration of the NSRDDA and for correcting any issues that may arise from time to time. The Registrar is also responsible to bring forward to the Board any ethical issues that may not be addressed in Board policy so that a direction can be established to guide future similar situations.

The **Chair** and the **Registrar** are responsible for promoting a culture of ethical conduct.

Committee Chairs must model and reinforce respectful, compliant, and professional behaviour.

6. Reporting and Addressing Breaches

Anyone with a concern about whether or not the Board members, Committee members, Registrar or staff have adhered to the values and ethics set out in the Policy may submit a written complaint to the Registrar, with a copy to the Board Chair. The Registrar will investigate the complaint and, together with the Board Chair, will determine the appropriate corrective action or response to the complaint.

Where concerns relating to compliance with this Policy involve the Registrar, a written complaint may be submitted directly to the Board Chair who will investigate the complaint and, together with the Vice-Chair (or the full Board depending upon the severity of the matter), will determine the appropriate corrective action or response to the complaint.

All complaints will be investigated and dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

7. Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in corrective action, including:

- Removal from a Board or Committee role in accordance with the *Act*, regulations or bylaws.
- Disciplinary action for employees, up to and including termination.
- Termination of contract for any contractors or external advisors.
- Reporting to appointing or external authorities, as required by law.

8. Monitoring and Policy Review

Individuals must review and acknowledge this policy upon appointment or hire and at regular intervals (e.g., annually).

The Chair of the Governance and Human Resources Committee will ensure that this policy is reviewed in accordance with the Board’s policy review cycle or as required by significant operational or environmental changes.

9. Accountability

The Board Chair and the Registrar are accountable for ensuring compliance with this policy.