

**JAMES BAY LOWLANDS  
SECONDARY SCHOOL  
BOARD**

<b>PROTOCOL DISCONNECTING FROM WORK</b>	
Effective	May 25, 2022
Last Revised	

## DISCONNECTING FROM WORK

**PURPOSE**

The health and wellbeing of employees is of the utmost importance. The James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board encourages and supports employees in prioritizing their own wellbeing.

Disconnecting from work is important for an individual’s wellbeing, and helps employees achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life balance. Disconnecting from work means to not engage 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.

To encourage and support employees in balancing their working and personal lives, whether working traditional hours in the workplace, or remotely, JBLSSB has implemented this Disconnecting-from-Work procedure to encourage employees to disconnect from work outside of their normal working hours in accordance with and subject to this procedure.

**DEFINITIONS**

**After-Hours:** refers to any time between the hours of 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m., Monday to Friday, all day Saturday, Sunday, statutory holidays, and (if applicable) any other Board-designated non-working days.

The above definition may be varied depending on specific agreements with employees, as to employee work hours or requiring an employee to be available for After-Hour emergencies.

**Disconnect from Work:** means not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls, or the sending or reviewing other messages, so as to be free from the performance of work.

**Mass e-mails:** refer to electronic mail messages sent to a large number of employees.

## 1. General Expectations

- 1.1 Employees are advised to Disconnect from Work After-Hours, unless the matter can reasonably be constituted as an emergency or a significant event that calls for immediate action.
- 1.2 Mass e-mails produced for the purpose of providing information as to current or upcoming matters related to the James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board, should not be circulated After-Hours. Such e-mails should be delivered during business hours only, to ensure that employees' non-work hours, vacation time, and personal and family life be respected. There may be unique situations where critical information of an urgent nature must be provided through Mass e-mails delivered After-Hours.
- 1.3 This procedure provides employees with the opportunity for proper balance between work and lifestyle which ought to positively impact employee wellness.
- 1.4 A copy of this procedure copy shall be shared with all James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board employees before June 1, 2022. A copy of this procedure will be shared with all new employees on their first day of joining the James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board.

## 2. Application

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all employees, whether working remotely, or in the workplace.
- 2.2 In the ordinary course of business, there will be situations when it is necessary to contact colleagues / clients / customers outside of an employee's normal working hours, including but not limited to:
  - a) checking availability for scheduling;
  - b) to fill in on short notice for a colleague who has called in sick or is unavailable for work;
  - c) where unforeseeable circumstances may arise;
  - d) where an emergency may arise;
  - e) where employees voluntarily wish to communicate with one another for work-related purposes outside of their normal working hours; or
  - f) other business or operational reasons that require contact outside of an employee's normal working hours.
- 2.3 Nothing in this procedure precludes the employer or other employees of the Board from contacting colleagues, clients/customers, or other employees outside their normal working hours for circumstances as outlined above, or as otherwise required to meet business needs, subject to any rights or other entitlements the receiving colleague or employee may have under the Ontario Employment Standards Act, 2000 (the "ESA").

**Supervisor / Manager Responsibilities**

Supervisors / Managers will take steps to ensure that employees are:

- a) informed of what their normal working hours are reasonably expected to be;
- b) able to take applicable meal, rest periods and hours free from work as required by law, Terms & Conditions of Employment, employment contract, and/or Collective Agreement;
- c) able to take vacation or other leave entitlements as required by law, Terms & Conditions of Employment, employment contract, and/or Collective Agreement and not be asked to perform work during this time subject to section 2.2 of this procedure;
- d) able to work in a healthy and safe working environment.

**Employee Responsibilities**

James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board expects all employees to comply with the following in the course of their work. Employees must:

- a) ensure that they manage their own working time and consider their obligation as an employee, while working, to take reasonable care to protect their health and safety and that of their colleagues;
- b) co-operate fully with any appropriate and/or reasonable mechanism utilized by the Board to record working time or update their working status (e.g., out-of-office messages), including when working remotely;
- c) be mindful of colleagues', customers/clients' working hours (e.g., by not routinely emailing or calling outside of normal working hours or expecting answers or responses outside of normal working hours);
- d) notify their supervisor or manager in writing of any meal, rest, break or hours- free-from-work period which they are entitled to but were unable to use due to performing work for the company on a particular occasion, and why this occurred;
- e) speak with their supervisor or manager if they feel their workload is preventing them from being able to take a meal, rest, break or hours-free-from-work periods that they are entitled to.

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS*****Legal:***

*Employment Standards Act 2000, as amended by the Working for Workers Act 2021*  
*Education Act: Subsection 283 (2) Chief Executive Officer: Maintain an effective organization*  
*Ontario Human Rights Code*  
*Occupational Health and Safety Act*  
*Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*  
*Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Act*  
*Worker's Compensation Act*

***Board:***

Board Policy GOV-01 Values, Vision, and Mission  
Board Policy GOV-02 Role of the Corporate Board  
Board Policy GOV-03 Role of the Supervisory Officer  
Board Policy GOV-09 Board Communications  
Board Policy GOV-24 Health and Safety Committee