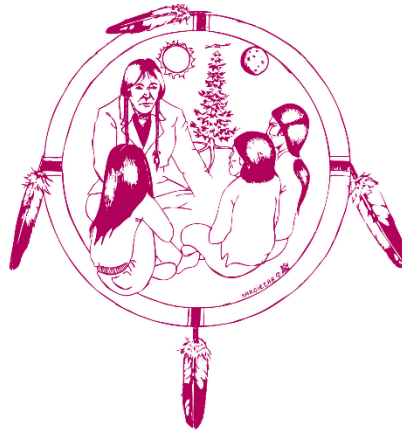


# *Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Board of Education*



## **POLICY 104**

### **AMBE Communication Policy**

#### **Please Note:**

AMBE policies are governance documents that state the Board's decision related to an area of operation by stating purpose, guiding principles, basic procedures, and key responsibilities.

AMBE senior management is accountable for implementing Board policies and expected to exercise good judgment when implementing the policies in the context of day-to-day operations. Where appropriate, senior management may decide to develop specific guidelines and procedures, Administrative Frameworks, to ensure the appropriate implementation of Board policy.

This policy was adopted for the first time by the Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Board of Education (AMBE) on:

June 17, 2020

Subsequent amendments:

April 23, 2024

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of *Policy 104: Communication Policy for Student Progress and Communication with Internal/External Partners*, is to recognize that thoughtful communication is essential for building valuable school-student-family-community partnerships. These internal and external partnerships are essential for meaningful student progress and Communication between all partners in education. Internal and external communication is an opportunity to be used wisely to promote our unique identity, culture, language, celebrate our heritage, as well as share our principles, values, ethics, knowledge, and ways of being with each other.

## 2. Definitions

|     |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2.1 | Active Listening | Active listening is the ability to focus completely on a speaker's message, comprehend the information, interpret their intent, and respond thoughtfully.                                                                                                                                                    |
| 2.2 | Board Members    | Includes both Trustees ( <i>Elected Members</i> ) and Ex-officio Members ( <i>Portfolio Chiefs and the Director of Education</i> ).                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 2.3 | Culture          | Culture is a way of being that defines and distinguishes a people or nation, as expressed through their customs, language, art ( <i>stories, music, dance, visual arts, crafts</i> ), cuisine, social institutions, achievements, and interaction with other peoples and nations.<br>Culture is composed of: |

|     |                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     |                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Non-material aspects</i>, including values, beliefs, customs, traditions, and language, which influences our social norms, rules, and laws that govern our society.</li> <li>• <i>Material aspects</i> are composed of items that we make and use as an expression of our identity, which includes a wide variety of things, from buildings, clothing, stories, music, dance, visual arts, crafts, and many others.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 2.4 | Communication                | <p>An important act of sharing and/or transferring information and knowledge from one place, person, or group to another (<i>the push and pull of messaging</i>). The transmission of the message from sender to recipient is influenced by our emotions, cultural context, medium used to communicate and the accuracy of the message.</p> <p><b>Forms of Communication</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Verbal Communication<br/>Verbal communication includes face to face, telephone, radio, television, and social media.</li> <li>2. Non-Verbal Communication<br/>Non-verbal communication includes body language, tone, timbre, eye contact, actions, attire, positioning in relation to others, and other subtle gestures.</li> <li>3. Written Communication<br/>Written communication includes formal communication from AMBE, such as letters, emails, reports, and school newsletters.</li> <li>4. Visual Communication<br/>Visual communication includes things such as all forms of art, dance, carvings, dress, cultural symbols, ceremonial objects, logos, advertising, infographics, websites, presentation packages, and illustrations.</li> </ol> |
| 2.5 | External Partners            | External partners are those outside of the Akwesasne Community who have a vested interest and contribute to our schools and ultimately our students' success, including but not limited to governments, colleges, universities, consultants, corporations, suppliers, vendors, and media.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2.6 | Internal Partners            | <p>Internal partners fit into two groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who are part of the internal AMBE Community including students, staff, families (parents/guardians), and Board Members; and</li> <li>• Those who are part of the larger Akwesasne community, including Knowledge Keepers, Elders, community members, and the MCA.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2.7 | Knowledge Keepers and Elders | It is recognized that among the Mohawks of Akwesasne there are individuals like Eminent Leaders and Elders, language and culture experts, Clan Mothers, Faith Keepers, etc., who possess unique and specific knowledge of <i>Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language</i> , whose knowledge should be preserved, revitalized, promoted, and protected, and will be required in the development of curriculum.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 2.8 | Progress                     | <p>Any path of learning and/or meaningful action that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves probability for student academic and professional success;</li> <li>• Contributes towards Communication among all partners in education; and/or</li> <li>• Increases leadership opportunities within the global community.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 2.9 | Social Capital               | Social capital is the network of relationships that enables the AMBE to function effectively. For example, a high degree of social capital includes access to diverse academic and professional networks required for students to increase their potential for academic and professional success.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

|      |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2.10 | Communication | When the result of interaction and/or cooperation between internal/external partners is greater as a whole. For example, when students, the school/centre team, families, and community work together the combined result is greater than the individual effort.                                                                                                |
| 2.11 | Timbre        | We each have a unique voice reflected through its <i>timbre</i> . It is one of the most important components of our identity. It carries the emotional content of our message, through subtle changes expressing intent and mood. For example, stress creates tension that affects the muscles that directly impact the voice, usually causing it to go higher. |

### 3. Principles and Directives

#### 3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 The Board recognizes the importance of communication as a reflection of our culture, which includes our values, beliefs, customs, traditions, and principles that influences our social norms, rules, and laws that govern our society.
- 3.1.2 The Board encourages the usage of Ahkwesáhsró:non symbols and Kanien'keha language in our internal and external communication; shining a spotlight on our contributions to humanity, where appropriate in order to increase pride and sense of self within local, national, and international communities.
- 3.1.3 The Board acknowledges that:
  - There is a permanence to all written communication (*letters, emails, social media, reports, etc.*), therefore, any written communication should reflect our Ahkwesáhsró:non and Hotinoshon:ni principles of respect and integrity;
  - Communication should be shared in a timely manner with our internal and external partners;
  - Effectively communicating the Board's commitment to providing diverse educational opportunities, from childcare to university, that inspire students to achieve their full potential in a safe and nurturing environment.
  - Increasing awareness of the Board's programs, services, student achievements, and future goals, both internally and externally, to ensure our students and community are well-informed.
  - Creating pathways for meaningful dialogue with high schools, universities, and colleges, opening doors for students to pursue further education and career opportunities.
  - Developing and nurturing partnerships that enhance the social and community networks available to our students, supporting their growth and success across all educational stages. They must provide reasonable levels of human, financial, and material resources necessary for the implementation of this policy.

#### 3.2 Internal/External Partner Communication

- 3.2.1 The Board acknowledges the importance of communication in the development of internal/external partnerships in support of the AMBE's mission, recognizing the value of:
  - Developing Communication with internal and external partners benefits our students' academic progress and future professional success;
  - Engaging in proactive, timely, and transparent communication in order to strengthen relationships between internal and external partners; and
  - Increasing community support by promoting awareness of AMBE activities by highlighting our programs, services, and accomplishments.

- 3.3.2 The Board particularly acknowledges that communication is key to developing family and community partnerships, by ensuring:
- A sense of belonging to the school community, where students, parents, staff, community members have mutual responsibility for our students' education;
  - Community awareness of the Board's programs, services, student achievement, and goals;
  - New forms of communication to improve community relations, making an effort to reach out to all segments of the community to increase engagement; and
  - Efforts to reach out to AMBE community members in times of hardship, offering needed support and assistance.

### **3.3 Knowledge Keeper/Elder Partnership**

- 3.3.1 The Board will engage Knowledge Keepers and Elders, as required, in developing appropriate communication materials to promote our unique identity, culture, language, and to celebrate our heritage, as well as, highlight our principles, values, ethics, knowledge, and ways of being with each other.
- 3.3.2 The Board acknowledges the importance of seeking innovative ways to integrate traditional teachings into contemporary communication.

### **3.4 Risk Management**

- 3.4.1 The Board recognizes that continuity in the AMBE communications and messaging reduces risk.
- 3.4.2 The Board recognizes the link between communication and risk management, and requires that the AMBE management consider how communication addresses issues such as:
- Student wellbeing, including bullying, risky behaviours, and mental health;
  - School safety and student welfare in emergent and emergency situations; and
  - Student and staff welfare related to imminent and emergent health risks.
- 3.4.3 The Board requires that the AMBE management ensure that:
- All online communication is cyber secure;
  - Proper safeguards are in place to protect student information; and
  - Student access to online technology and platforms is properly monitored.

### **3.5 Media & Advertising**

- 3.5.1 The Board recognises that it is important to:
- Establish and maintain positive relationships with media, respond to media requests in a timely manner;
  - Proactively promote programs, services, activities, and initiatives of the Board and its schools;
  - Ensure that information disseminated through AMBE's Website and other diverse social media platforms generate positive community relations; and
  - Find innovative ways to blend traditional and contemporary media in order to reach younger audiences not presently engaged.
- 3.5.2 The Board acknowledges that:
- Community members, organizations, and other non-commercial organizations may wish to advertise or display notices in the school/centre from time to time; and
  - Such notices or advertisements are subject to the Director of Education's approval, and must be of benefit to students and community, be in good taste, and must not detract from the educational climate of the school/centre.

## 4. Procedures

- 4.1 Drawing on knowledge, understanding and experiences of Board Members, management, and the community's Knowledge Keepers and Elders, the AMBE will develop and implement:
  - A Communication Plan that preserves, revitalizes, promotes, and protects Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Kanien'keha language;
  - Protocols for appropriate internal and external communication; and
  - Branding that will be used for all communication.
- 4.2 The Board will develop internal and external partnerships leading to two key outcomes:
  - Furthering the academic and professional success of all students, contributing towards the vision, mission, and goals of AMBE; and
  - Developing social networks for all students, necessary for academic and professional success.
- 4.3 In the context of risk management, the Board will ensure that protocols have been developed to address:
  - Student wellbeing, such as bullying, risky behaviours, and mental health;
  - School/Centre safety and student welfare in emergent and emergency situations; and
  - Student and staff welfare related to imminent and emergent health risks.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

### 5.1 Board Members will:

- 5.1.1 Ensure that communication is reflective of Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Hotinoshon:ni traditions;
- 5.1.2 Ensure the development and implementation of a Communication Plan and protocols for internal and external communication;
- 5.1.3 Ensure the implementation of risk management protocols that address:
  - Student wellbeing, such as bullying, risky behaviours, and mental health;
  - School safety and student welfare in emergent and emergency situations; and
  - Student and staff welfare related to imminent and emergent health risks.
- 5.1.4 Ensure the availability of human, financial, and material resources necessary for the implementation of this policy.

### 5.2 Education Director will:

- 5.2.1 Ensure that communication is reflective of Ahkwesáhsró:non culture and Hotinoshon:ni traditions;
- 5.2.2 Direct and support the Communications Officer in the development and implementation of the Communication Plan and protocols for internal and external communication;
- 5.2.3 Identify and connect with internal and external partners that will benefit:
  - Student academic and professional success; and
  - The social network development of our students.
- 5.2.4 Prepare a report at regular intervals highlighting academic and professional success of students and alumni, as well as their contributions to the Akwesasne community;
- 5.2.5 Supervise the implementation of risk management protocols that address:
  - Student wellbeing, such as bullying, risky behaviours, and mental health;
  - School/Centre safety and student welfare in emergent and emergency situations;
  - Student and staff welfare related to imminent and emergent health risks.
- 5.2.6 Review all emergency communication in order to verify its accuracy;

- 5.2.7 Reach out to AMBE community members in times of hardship, offering needed support and assistance; and
- 5.2.8 Approve advertising in schools.

### **5.3 Communication Officer will:**

- 5.3.1 Develop a comprehensive Communication Plan and protocols for internal and external communication;
- 5.3.2 Work in partnership with Knowledge Keepers and Elders, where appropriate:
  - To promote Kanien'keha language, Ahkwesáhsró:non symbols and culture in internal and external communication materials;
  - To shine a spotlight on our contributions to our Akwesasne community, First Nations, and humanity in general locally, nationally, and internationally.
- 5.3.3 Develop and regularly monitor all AMBE related social media content to ensure it is aligned with our Ahkwesáhsró:non and Hotinoshon:ni ethics, values, and principles;
- 5.3.4 Establish and maintain positive relationships with media, responding to media requests in a timely manner;
- 5.3.5 Identify innovative ways to blend traditional and contemporary media in order to reach younger audiences not presently engaged;
- 5.3.6 Be familiar with diverse media platforms used by various sectors;
- 5.3.7 Assist the Director of Education in reaching out to AMBE community members in times of hardship, offering needed support and assistance; and
- 5.3.8 Support the Director of Education's review of advertising requests by:
  - Verifying a request meets the established guidelines prior to presentation;
  - Managing appeals regarding advertising; and
  - Forwarding appeal recommendations to the Director of Education for consideration.

### **5.4 AMBE Senior Management will:**

- 5.4.1 Develop risk management protocols to address:
  - Student wellbeing, such as bullying, risky behaviours, and mental health;
  - School/Centre safety and student welfare in emergent and emergency situations; and
  - Student and staff welfare related to imminent and emergent health risks.
- 5.4.2 Ensure with the assistance from Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, Information Services Department that:
  - All online communication is cyber secure;
  - Proper safeguards are in place to protect student information; and
  - Student access to online technology and platforms is properly monitored.

### **5.5 Director of Operational Services and the Superintendent of Financial Operations will:**

- 5.5.1 Assist as requested the AMBE Senior Management in the implementation of this policy; and
- 5.5.2 Review and monitor our financial budget related to the implementation of this Policy.

## **6. Policy Review and Revision**

### ***Principles and Directives:***

- 6.1.1 It is important for the policies of the Ahkwesáhsne Mohawk Board of Education to remain current and serve the best interest of Akwesasne students and the Akwesasne community.
- 6.1.2 The Board of Trustees recognizes that this policy should be reviewed at a minimum of every 5 years and/or when the legal or regulatory requirements of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne change or the Board must meet new government obligations.

***Procedures:***

- 6.1.3 The Board of Trustees will establish a timeline for the regular review of this policy that requires the policy be reviewed at the minimum 5 years from the date of approval by the Board or as required by new circumstances or obligations.

***Roles and Responsibilities:***

- 6.1.4 Board of Trustees will:
- Establish a timeline for the regular review of this policy and ensure that it is respected; and
  - Ensure that this policy is reviewed at a minimum every 5 years from the date of approval, or when the legal or regulatory requirements of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne change or the Board must meet new government obligations.
- 6.1.5 The Director of Education will:
- Initiate a review of this policy at a minimum every 5 years from the date of approval, or when the legal or regulatory requirements of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne change or the Board must meet new government obligations.