

Green Party of Vancouver Code of Conduct

Adopted at the 2016 Annual General Meeting
Board Update - October 13, 2020

I. PREAMBLE

The Objectives of this Code are:

- (a) to establish a standard of conduct consistent with Green Party of Vancouver (GPV) Constitution and Bylaws and Policies;
- (b) to ensure compliance with this Code of Conduct by all members, directors, volunteers, employees, contractors and elected representatives of the GPV; and
- (c) to ensure accountability by representatives of the Party for compliance with this Code of Conduct.

Introduction

The Green Party of Vancouver is committed to doing politics differently. We want to move beyond partisan battle lines to engaging in respectful and professional debate during campaigns, between elections and within local elected bodies (Council, Park Board and School Board). Greens believe debate must focus on issues **rather** than personalities and partisan ideology.

Just as for Greens everywhere, our aim here in Vancouver is nothing less than to change the political culture for the better. Most importantly, it is our mission as a party to ensure that care for the earth, for each other, and for future generations of both human and non-human life are the fundamental ethics underlying all political decision-making. Demonstrating that such a political culture is not only desirable, but possible, requires the participation of all Green Party of Vancouver members, directors and representatives through both our words and actions.

The Green Party of Vancouver Code of Conduct is a clear and simple way to help ensure that all party representatives are polite, courteous, and informed as they represent the party and work to advance its mission during campaigns, in all public discussions, during council and board debates, and in all of their interactions with members and elected officials from all political parties. It also helps ensure that members of the party conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the political culture that the GPV is striving to advance.

A different kind of party discipline

The Green Party of Vancouver Code of Conduct envisions a new kind of party discipline. Rather than enforcing a “toeing of the party line”, it enables self- and group assessment and evaluation against the standards for political behaviour and discourse towards which we strive. And, it provides a mechanism for disciplining Green Party members, candidates and elected officials who repeatedly and deliberately violate the intent and tenets of this Code.

The Green Party of Vancouver Code of Conduct distinguishes the Green Party of Vancouver as a party that is doing politics in a responsible, respectful, and professional manner. The Code is a public document that commits the Green Party of Vancouver to ensuring that all representatives of the party and candidates running for the party will meet a high standard of professional conduct. Through its adoption, the Green Party of Vancouver is demonstrating its commitment to raising the level of political discourse in Vancouver.

II. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Board Board of Directors of the Green Party of Vancouver

Bylaws The Constitution and Bylaws of the Green Party of Vancouver
Code The Green Party of Vancouver Code of Conduct (this document)
Director A member of the Green Party of Vancouver Board of Directors
GPV Green Party of Vancouver

Elected Official A publicly elected official who is part of the Green Party of Vancouver caucus.

Principles (or Values)

Refers to the six core Green Principles as described in the Global Green Charter:

Sustainability, Social Justice, Participatory democracy, Non-violence, Respect for Diversity and Ecological wisdom.

Representative Anyone publicly associated with the Green Party of Vancouver who may be authorized or assumed to represent the Party either in public or in relation to party members.

1. APPLICATION:

This Code of Conduct applies to all Green Party of Vancouver members, volunteers, directors, representatives, candidates, elected officials, employees and contractors.

2. CANDIDATES' AND ELECTED OFFICIALS' UNDERTAKING:

2.1 General Conduct

I understand that I have a general duty to act in the interests of the office for which I am running or to which I am elected. I acknowledge that I also have a special duty to my constituents which I will fulfill to the best of my abilities.

In representing my constituents, I will reflect the values underlying the six core principles of the Green Party of Vancouver, as described in the Global Greens Charter (2001):

Sustainability
Social Justice
Participatory democracy
Non-violence
Respect for Diversity
Ecological wisdom

As an elected official, I will conduct myself in a manner that will maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of City Council/the Park Board/the School Board. I will act at all times with integrity and professionalism and fulfill my Oath of Office.

Except for an endorsed Green Party candidate, I will not endorse other candidates running for public offices, either as independents or being endorsed by other political parties, at all levels of government in Canada, without the explicit approval of the Board.

2.2 Conduct during meetings and debates

I will conduct myself in a professional manner during political and government debate, and focus upon the issues and policies rather than the person or the party. I will prepare for all debates, and I will support good ideas and sound policies that are consistent with our core values and that will benefit all Vancouverites regardless of the political party advancing them.

I will offer constructive comments and opinion on how policies and legislation can be improved to better meet the needs of Vancouverites. Wherever possible, I commit to substantiating my comments and opinion with evidence-based research.

2.3 Decision making

I will make decisions fairly and impartially, considering all available information, legislation, policies and procedures. I will endeavour to inform and consult with constituents.

The Green Party of Vancouver has a policy of free votes on all issues (no “whipping”) as long as the vote taken is consistent with the party’s core principles. My colleagues and constituents have a right to expect that my decisions as an elected official will align with the principles of the Green Party of Vancouver, the platform upon which I sought election, the best interests of my constituents and the greater good. If ever it should feel challenging to align on those four points, I will seek the advice of colleagues and/or constituents before making my decision. Should any of my decisions deviate or appear to deviate from any of the foregoing, I will be prepared to share my reasoning with my constituents. I will not shy away from legitimate questions from constituents.

For every decision that comes before me in public office, I will put the public interest and principles of fairness first, not partisan nor personal, family, friends’ or business interests.

I acknowledge that neither I nor any other elected official or body is infallible; we all make mistakes. I am prepared to acknowledge and take responsibility for my mistakes.

2.4 Behaviour towards others

I will treat everyone, including other candidates, elected officials, staff and professional advisors with respect, courtesy, honesty and fairness, and have proper regard for their interests, rights, safety and welfare. I will not use insulting, harassing, bullying or otherwise offensive language or behaviour.

I will not intentionally misrepresent the stated purposes, values, or policies of other candidates for office, elected officials or parties.

2.5 Accessibility

I will be accessible to my constituents and I will respond as promptly as possible to their requests.

I will maintain a high level of attendance as an elected official; and as a candidate, I will participate as fully as possible in campaign activities.

2.6 Transparency and Accountability

I will ensure the responsible use of publicly funded resources, which may include office facilities and equipment, vehicles and other expenses. I will publicly and voluntarily disclose expenses that I charge to the public purse as a result of my activities as an elected official.

I will respect the confidentiality and privacy of others' personal information that may come to my knowledge during the course of seeking or serving in elected office.

2.7 Resolving internal differences and disputes

If I have differences or difficulties with a member of the Green Party of Vancouver, I will work to resolve those issues by talking directly with that person. If unsuccessful, I will ask the Board of Directors to assign a mediator to assist in resolving the issues. When dealing with interpersonal conflict and personality differences, I will avoid the use of email, social media and other internet-based media as means of communication.

At no time will I allow internal party difficulties or conflicts with other members of the Green Party of Vancouver to interfere with my ability to undertake my duties as an elected official.

3. ACCEPTANCE BY CANDIDATES AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

3.1 Each candidate or elected official shall, upon his or her nomination, endorsement, or association with the GPV, execute and deliver to the GPV Chair or Secretary a Candidate Endorsement Agreement.

4. DIRECTORS' AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES' UNDERTAKING

4.1 General Conduct

I recognize that as a director, official representative or employee of the Green Party of Vancouver, I have a special responsibility to carry out my duties and to represent the Party in a manner consistent with the party's values, the Constitution and Bylaws and duly adopted Policies of the GPV, and with this Code of Conduct.

In carrying out my duties and representing the GPV, I will demonstrate the values underlying the six core principles of the Green Party of Vancouver, as described in the Global Greens Charter (2001):

- Sustainability
- Social Justice
- Participatory democracy
- Non-violence
- Respect for Diversity
- Ecological wisdom

I will conduct myself in a manner that will maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the the GPV, its representatives and elected officials. I will never undertake any action that would bring the Party, or its members generally, into disrepute, nor work against the party's electoral success and the election of its duly nominated candidates.

I will act with integrity and professionalism and submit myself to the highest level of scrutiny appropriate to my position.

I will not use insulting, harassing, bullying or otherwise offensive language or behaviour.

4.2 Conduct at Meetings and during Decision Making

I will be constructive in my contributions to discussion and debate, always striving to arrive at the best policies and decisions while bearing in mind that greater wisdom comes from groups engaged in constructive and respectful dialogue than from any single individual.

I will avoid conflict between personal, family, friends' or business interests and the interest of the Party and resolve any conflict between the two or recuse myself from making decisions or public statements on matters where such conflict exists.

4.3 Publicly Representing the Green Party of Vancouver

I will inform and consult with other directors and representatives of the Green Party of

Vancouver and work to resolve differences of opinion prior to taking actions or making public statements that may reflect on the entire party or cause confusion with respect to official party policies and positions.

I will not speak on behalf of the Board or the Party generally except with regards to matters where I am authorized to do so. If in doubt, I will seek explicit authorization from the Board.

I will not intentionally misrepresent the stated purposes, values, or policies of other parties, their candidates for office or elected officials.

I will treat members and representatives of other parties, and indeed all people, with respect, courtesy, honesty and fairness.

Except for an endorsed Green Party candidate, I will not endorse other candidates running for public offices, either as independents or being endorsed by other political parties, at all levels of government in Canada, without the explicit approval of the Board.

4.4 Responsibilities towards Members

I will be accessible to GPV members, and I will respond as promptly as possible to their requests.

As a director of the GPV, I will ensure the responsible and transparent use of party resources.

I will respect the confidentiality and privacy of all information as it pertains to individuals.

4.5 Resolving internal differences and disputes

If I have differences or difficulties with a member of the Green Party of Vancouver, I will work to resolve those issues by talking directly with that person. If unsuccessful, I will ask the Board of Directors to appoint a mediator to assist in resolving the issues. When dealing with interpersonal conflict and personality differences, I will avoid the use of email, social media and other internet-based media.

5. ACCEPTANCE BY DIRECTORS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES

5.1 Each director or representative of the Green Party of Vancouver shall, upon election or appointment to his or her role, execute and deliver to the Board Secretary Directors Agreement.

6. MEMBERS' AND VOLUNTEERS' UNDERTAKING

6.1 By becoming a member or volunteer of the Green Party of Vancouver, I agree to uphold the Constitution and Bylaws of the GPV;

6.2 I declare my adherence to the six core principles of the Green Party of Vancouver:

Sustainability
Social Justice
Participatory democracy
Non-violence
Respect for Diversity
Ecological wisdom

6.3 I agree to participate in the advancement of the respectful, democratic political culture described in this Code of Conduct. Therefore, when participating in public political discourse, I will strive to:

- show consideration and respect for people of differing views or political persuasions; ● be constructive in my contributions to political debate and discourse, focussing on the issues and avoiding personal attacks;
- refrain from insulting, harassing, bullying or otherwise offensive language or behaviour.

6.4 I shall not, as a current or former member, volunteer and/or representative of the Green Party of Vancouver, publicly use or invoke my current or former status in the Party in a manner that may cause members of the public to associate or confuse my personal opinions or positions with those of the Party.

6.5 I will never undertake any action that would bring the Party, or its members generally, into disrepute, nor work against the party's electoral success and the election of its duly nominated candidates.

7. ACCEPTANCE BY MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

7.1 Upon adoption of this Code of Conduct, it shall be posted to the GPV website, and its contents or a web link to its contents shall be circulated to all party members. All members who maintain their memberships shall be deemed to have accepted this Code of Conduct.

7.2 All new members shall be deemed to have accepted this Code of Conduct. A link to this Code shall be placed clearly on the Membership page of the Green Party of Vancouver website.

7.3 Volunteers, whether or not they are members of the GPV, are subject to the requirements of this Code. Particularly in circumstances where volunteers are interacting with members of the public as explicit or implied representatives of the GPV, the Volunteer Coordinator is advised to remind volunteers of their responsibilities under the Code by asking them to execute and deliver an Acknowledgment and Undertaking in the Form, attached as Appendix "A".

8. ACCOUNTABILITY:

8.1 The Board of Directors of the Green Party of Vancouver ("the Board") shall have jurisdiction to determine any complaint against a Member or Representative alleging: a) a violation of this Code of Conduct;

b) serious misconduct prohibited by the laws of Canada or British Columbia; or

c) misconduct resulting in severe injustice or irreparable harm to:

i) the GPV,

ii) a member of the GPV; or

iii) any constituted body of the GPV.

(a "Complaint")

8.2 After reviewing a Complaint, the Board or a duly constituted Complaint Committee of the Board shall have authority to:

a. refer the complainant and Member or Representative to mediation;

b. impose an interim suspension of an Officer's or Representative's party function, or in the case of a candidate, their candidacy.

c. impose an appropriate learning or other remedial process

d. recommend that the GPV not support or withdraw support for this person as a representative or spokesperson in the future;

e. require a Representative to issue a written private or public apology;

f. suspend or revoke the authority of a Representative to speak on behalf of or in association with the GPV;

g. require the Representative to cease or suspend any activities within the GPV; h. if the Member or Representative sits on the Board, make a motion to remove the Member from the Board and/or Executive Committee, in accordance with sections 38 and 41 of the Bylaws;

i. in extreme circumstances, move to terminate the Member's membership at a General Meeting in accordance with section 14(d) of the Bylaws.

8.3 The Board shall determine any such complaint promptly and communicate its decision to the persons involved.

9. HEARING AND REVIEW:

9.1 Any person directly affected by a decision of the Board or Complaint Committee shall have

30 days from receiving notice of such decision to seek a hearing and review from the Board as a whole.

9.2 The Board may establish rules, and procedures for hearings and reviews.

9.3 On a hearing and review, the Board may:

- a) make any decision that its Complaint Committee could have made;
- b) remit the complaint back to the Complaint Committee; or
- c) dismiss the complaint.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY:

10.1 Generally, the complaint process is confidential and, until a final decision is made, no person shall disclose any complaint determination or review by the Complaint Committee or the Board, unless the Complaint Committee or the Board otherwise orders.

11. AMENDMENT:

11.1 This Code of Conduct may be amended from time to time by the Board. 11.2 When any part of this Code is amended, the updated Code shall be posted to the website within 30 days. All party officials, representatives, publicly elected officials and candidates shall also be directly informed of the amendments within 30 days of any change.

APPENDIX A - ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND UNDERTAKING TO COMPLY WITH THIS CODE OF CONDUCT:

1.1 I agree to comply with the Green Party of Vancouver Code of Conduct, as amended from time to time.

1.2 I acknowledge and undertake to submit to the jurisdiction of the Complaint Committee/Board, as applicable, in respect of my compliance with the Code of Conduct and the authority of the Complaint Committee/Board, as applicable, to make any order thereunder.

1.3 I acknowledge and accept that I may be subject to discipline from the Green Party of Vancouver in respect of any non-compliance by me with the Code of Conduct, which may, if circumstances warrant, include suspension or termination of my membership.