

HR: ER02 – Workplace Harassment

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POLICY:

The Library Board believe in providing and maintaining a work environment in which all employees are free from workplace harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination. Such actions will not be tolerated.

Retaliation or reprisals are prohibited against any employee who has complained under this policy or has provided information regarding a complaint. Any retaliation or reprisals are subject to immediate corrective action, up to and including discharge. Alleged retaliation or reprisals are subject to the same complaint procedures and penalties as complaints of discrimination and harassment.

In recognition of the sensitivity of complaints under this policy; all complaints concerning workplace or sexual harassment or discrimination, as well as the names of parties involved, shall be treated as confidential. The Board's obligation to investigate the alleged complaint may require limited disclosure. No record of the complaint will be maintained on the employee record of the complainant. If there is a finding of improper conduct that results in disciplinary action, it will be reflect only on the file of the person engaged in such conduct, in the same way as any other disciplinary action.

PURPOSE:

This policy outlines the procedures to be followed regarding workplace and sexual harassment and discrimination so that employees reporting alleged incidents will know the matter will be treated confidentially and may be reported without fear of retaliation or reprisal.

Application of this policy applies not only during working time, but to any activities on or off company premises which could reasonably be associated with the workplace (e.g. social or educational events).

RESPONSIBILITY:

1. All employees are responsible for ensuring discrimination and harassment are not tolerated and where possible are addressed.
2. Employees are requested to report promptly when they become aware, hear, or witness alleged actions or complaints of discrimination/harassment.



3. The Library Director is responsible for providing a work environment free from discrimination and harassment. This responsibility includes actively promoting a positive, harassment-free work environment and intervening when problems occur. Additionally, the Library Director is responsible for dealing with inappropriate actions of others, that come to their attention.

DEFINITIONS:

Workplace: any place where business or work-related activities are conducted. It includes, but is not limited to, the physical work premises, work-related social functions, work assignments outside the business offices, work-related travel and work-related conferences and training sessions.

Harassment: means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome. It may include unwelcome, unwanted, offensive, or objectionable conduct that may have the effect of creating any intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; interfering with an individual's work performance; adversely affecting an individual's employment relationship; and/or denying an individual dignity and respect. Harassment may result from one incident or a series of incidents. It may be directed at specific individuals or groups.

Sexual Harassment: is any unsolicited conduct, comment, or physical contact of a sexual nature that is unwelcome by the recipient. It includes, but is not limited to, any unwelcome sexual advances (oral, written or physical), requests for sexual favours, sexual and sexist jokes, racial, homophobic, sexist or ethnic slurs; written or verbal abuse or threats; unwelcome remarks, jokes taunts, or suggestions about a person's body, a person's physical or mental disabilities, attire, or on other prohibited grounds of discrimination; unnecessary physical contact such as patting, touching, pinching, hitting or leering; condescending behaviour, displays of degrading, offensive or derogatory material such as graffiti or pictures; physical or sexual assault.

PROCEDURE:

1. **Self-help:** Employees are encouraged to attempt to resolve their concerns by direct communication(s) with the person engaging in the unwelcome conduct. Where the employee feels confident or comfortable in doing so, communicate disapproval in clear terms to the person(s) whose conduct/comments are offensive. Keep a written record of the date, time, details of the conduct and witnesses, if any.
2. **Supervisory Support and Intervention:** Employees who are not comfortable with Step 1 and who believe they are victims of discrimination, harassment, or become aware of situations where such conduct may be occurring, are encouraged to report these to the Library Director or a member of the Board.



3. **Formal Complaint:** If other informal attempts to resolve the matter are not appropriate or are proving ineffective, a formal complaint may be filed. To file a formal complaint:
- Provide a letter of complaint that contains a brief account of the offensive incident (including when it occurred, the person(s) involved, names of witnesses). The letter should also include any remedy sought and be signed and dated by the person complaining.
 - File the complaint with the Library Director or a member of the Board.
 - Cooperate with those responsible for investigating the complaint.

Formal complaints shall be investigated. The investigation will involve interviews with the complainant, the alleged respondent and any witnesses named by either party. Within 14 working days of the incident or notice thereof, the investigator will prepare a written report of the findings and recommendations for action.

All complaints shall be handled in a confidential manner. Information garnered as a result of a complaint and/or investigation will not be released to anyone not involved in the investigation.

Disciplinary action for violations of this policy will take into account the nature and impact of the violations and may include a range of disciplinary action from verbal warning up to and including dismissal.

False or malicious accusations are of an equally serious nature and will also result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.♦

