

1. Purpose

Northern Lights Library System (NLLS) is committed to open, respectful, and effective workplace communication. This policy provides guidance on internal communication expectations, issue escalation, and formal complaint procedures.

For formal complaints or concerns, employees should refer to:

- Grievance Policy (Sec 1, 3Q) for disputes related to workplace conflicts, decisions, or policies.
 - Whistleblower Policy (Sec 1, 3R) for reporting misconduct, illegal activity, or ethical violations.
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2. General Communication Expectations

- Employees should communicate clearly, professionally, and respectfully at all times.
 - Communication should follow established channels, but flexibility and collaboration are encouraged.
 - Employees should feel comfortable discussing routine matters informally before escalating through formal channels.
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3. Escalation Guidelines – When to Bring Issues to Leadership

Employees should escalate concerns if:

- A problem remains unresolved after an initial discussion with a colleague or supervisor.
- An issue affects multiple teams or departments and requires leadership input.
- The matter is urgent, impacts operations, or requires immediate attention.

Escalation Process:

1. Discuss concerns with immediate supervisor or department manager.
2. If unresolved, escalate to the Executive Director.
3. If necessary, formal grievances should be handled through the Grievance Policy (Sec 1, 3Q).

For concerns involving misconduct, illegal activity, or ethical violations, employees should report through the Whistleblower Policy (Sec 1, 3R).

4. Interdepartmental Communication & Collaboration

- Employees are encouraged to communicate directly with colleagues in other departments when working on collaborative projects.
 - Department managers should be informed of cross-team communication when relevant to project outcomes.
 - Cross-departmental meetings should be coordinated as needed to facilitate effective collaboration.
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5. Digital & Remote Communication Guidelines

- Email should be used for formal requests, documentation, and follow-ups.
 - Chat platforms (if available) may be used for quick updates and informal discussions.
 - Video calls or scheduled meetings should be used for complex discussions, decision-making, or team collaboration.
 - Employees should use professional and respectful communication in all formats, ensuring digital messages are clear and concise.
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6. Compliance & Accountability

- All employees are responsible for maintaining a respectful and professional workplace culture through effective communication.
- Supervisors and managers are responsible for ensuring open, transparent, and fair communication within their teams.
- Violations of this policy may be addressed through performance management, conflict resolution, or formal grievance procedures.

NLLS Executive Board Chair

Date of Approval