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## Carleton Place Public Library

Policy Type: **Operational**

Policy Number: **OP - 20**

Policy Title: **Handling Public Complaints**

Policy Approval Date: November 2016

Policy Review Date: June 2022

Year of Next Review: 2026

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### PART I - PURPOSE

The Handling Public Complaints Policy is intended to provide a consistent and uniform process to respond to program and service delivery concerns raised by members of the public. The policy will assist the Library in continuing to provide excellent service to the public, and will contribute to the continuous improvement of operations.

The following policy establishes guidelines and standards for the efficient handling and resolution of complaints made toward the Library in order to address concerns and to improve services.

### PART II - SCOPE

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction related to a Library program, service, facility, or staff member.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to do something that staff agreed to do;
- A failure of staff or contractors to follow CPPL policies and/or procedures;
- An error made by staff or a person or body acting on behalf of the CPPL that was not rectified;
- Unfair or discourteous actions/statements made by staff or a person or body acting on behalf of the CPPL;
- Issues with access to CPPL services and CPPL facilities;
- Issues involving accessibility as it may relate to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA);
- Service not provided in a manner that meets the quality standard expected.

This policy does not address:

- Library material reconsideration requests
- Inquiries
- Request for service
- Feedback
- Compliments
- Request for accommodation
- Criticisms or anonymous complaints
- Issues addressed by legislation, or an existing Library by-law, policy or procedure
- Internal employee complaints



Matters that are handled by tribunals, courts of law, quasi-judicial boards, etc.

For example, a request made to the Library for a specific service such as the purchase of a specific book or the creation of a specific program does not qualify as a complaint under this policy.

This policy does not apply to closed meeting investigations, or complaints made by employees, contractors, or volunteers working on behalf of the Library.

### PART III - TYPES OF COMPLAINTS

#### Informal Complaints

It is encouraged that individuals and Library staff work to resolve issues or concerns before they become formal complaints. Informal complaints may be made in person, by phone, letter, e-mail or fax.

It is the responsibility of Library staff to attempt to resolve issues or concerns before they become formal complaints and identify opportunities to improve Library services. Every effort should be taken by staff to try to resolve matters informally. However, should the complainant continue to be unsatisfied, the complainant has the option of filing a formal complaint with the CEO. The informal complaint option should be fully exhausted before progressing to the formal complaint process.

#### Formal Complaints

A formal complaint is generated when an informal resolution cannot be successfully achieved. This will result in a file generated, investigation, and a formal decision.

All complaints should be filed in a timely manner.

### PART IV - FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

#### Filing a complaint

The complainant must fill out a complaint form which shall include all of the following information:

- Contact details of the complainant;
- Type of complaint;
- Details of the complaint (location, employee involved, resolution requested, enclosures, date complaint submitted); and
- Signature and date.

Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

#### Acknowledgement

Formal complaints shall be submitted to the CEO. Upon receipt, the complaint will be acknowledged in writing, within 7 calendar days.

The CEO will assess if the complaint falls within this policy as per Part II of this policy.



## Investigation

All formal complaints are to be investigated by the CEO in consultation with the Library Board. Complaints made against the CEO or a member of the Library Board shall be investigated by the Town of Carleton Place CAO or designate.

The designated investigator (staff or other) shall review the issues identified and any relevant legislation, policies or procedures. As part of the investigation, all involved parties (complainant, employee, etc.) may be interviewed by the investigator.

A complaint may be considered vexatious or frivolous if it is pursued in a manner that is reasonably perceived by Library staff or Board to be malicious, intended to embarrass or harass the recipient, or intended to be a nuisance. Where the complaint is considered frivolous and/or vexatious, or there appears to be a pattern of frivolous and/or vexatious requests, the CEO or Library Board may deem the file closed.

## Decision

After the matter has been reviewed by the CEO and the Library Board, the CEO, shall, in a timely manner, provide a written response outlining the results of the investigation into the complaint.

The response shall note whether the complaint was substantiated and shall outline any actions the Library may take as a result of the complaint.

If the designated investigator is unable to provide a timely response, the complainant shall be notified of the delay and provided with an estimate of when a response will be provided.

## Appeal

Once the Library has communicated the decision, there is no appeal process at the Library level.

In the event complaints cannot be resolved through the Library's complaint process, they may be submitted to the Provincial Ombudsman's office in accordance with the provisions of Bill 8 Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014.

## PART V - RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND PRIVACY

All records relating to the complaint shall be maintained in accordance with the Town of Carleton Place record retention schedule. During the complaints process, all Library employees shall adhere to all applicable legislation regarding privacy in accordance with the Library Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). Complainants should be aware that certain circumstances may indirectly identify them during an investigation.