



Carleton Place Public Library

Policy Type: **Governance**

Policy Number: **GOV - 12**

Policy Title: **Library Board Code of Conduct**

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Within the framework of the Carleton Place Public Library Policy GOV-02 Purpose and Duties of the Board, it is the duty of library board members to maintain high ethical standards. This commitment includes the proper use of authority, appropriate decorum in group and individual behavior and respect for others and their contributions to the Library. As such:

Respect

Within the framework of the legislative and policy requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the Workplace Harassment and Discrimination and the Prevention of Workplace Violence Policies, members will fulfill their responsibilities in ensuring that the Library is free from discrimination and harassment. No Member shall:

- a) Speak disrespectfully of any member of the Board, staff or volunteers.
- b) Use offensive words in meetings of the Board or against any Member.
- c) Speak in a manner that is discriminatory in nature based on an individual's age, colour, ancestry, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, disability, family status, marital status, gender identity/expression, sex, or sexual orientation.

Board meetings

With the understanding that Library Board meetings are public and that their behavior affects the image of the Carleton Place Library, Board members shall:

- a) Not speak on any subject other than the subject in debate.
- b) Not disobey the decision of the Chair or of the Board on questions of order or procedure or upon the interpretation of the rules of the Board

Use of Library Property and Resources

Members will only use Library facilities, equipment, supplies, services or other resources for the business of the library.

Privacy and Confidential Information

Members will respect the privacy of others and will not disclose or release by any means to any member of the public, any confidential information acquired by virtue of their position within the library. Members will maintain this obligation even after leaving the Board.



Conflict of Interest

Within the legislative framework of the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, Board members will act in the public interest and not engage in conflicts of interest, either apparent or real. The duties and responsibilities to the Library should not compete with private interests, financial or otherwise and the interests of family, friends or associated organizations.

Members will not accept payments to make referrals or to act as a paid agent before the Board or Board Committee.

Political Neutrality

Members will not use Library facilities, equipment, supplies, services (including staff services) or any other resources for election campaign or campaign-related activities.

Members will not use a position of authority at the Library to compel staff or volunteers to engage in partisan political activities.

Gifts

Members will not accept or provide any gift or benefit where it may be, or perceived to be, in exchange for favour or influence.

Exceptions:

- Small gifts (cards or edibles, such as chocolates or cookies)
- Advertising material (calendars, scratch pads, pens, t-shirts)
- Any hospitality or gift that has a monetary value under \$100

Board, Staff, and Public Relations

Members shall accurately communicate the decisions of the Board even if they disagree with the majority decision of the Board, and by doing so affirm the respect and integrity in the decision-making process of the Board.

Members shall respect that Staff have an obligation to act impartially, and in accordance with all Library policies and procedures.

It is acknowledged that Staff have an obligation to recognize that Board Members have been duly appointed by Town Council to serve the residents of Carleton Place and Beckwith and respect the role of the Board in directing the actions of the Library.

Board Members shall:

- a) Acknowledge and respect the fact that Staff work for the Library as a corporate body, and are charged with making recommendations that reflect their professional expertise and corporate objectives;
- b) Acknowledge and respect the fact that Staff carry out the policies of the Library Board as a whole and administer the policies of the Board, and are required to do so without any undue influence from any individual Board Member or group of Board Members; and
- c) Respect the administration structure and direct any Staff performance concerns through the Library CEO.

No Board Member shall:



- a) Publicly criticize individual Staff in a way that casts aspersions on their professional competence and credibility;
- b) Compel Staff to engage in partisan political activities, or subject Staff to threats or discrimination for refusing to engage in such activities; or
- c) Use their authority or influence to threaten, intimidate, or coerce Staff or improperly interfere in the lawful exercise of the duties of Staff.

The content of any Board Member's communications, regardless of method of communication, shall be accurate, honest and respectful of other persons, including other Members, Staff and the public.

In the use of social media, Board Members shall adhere to the Library's policies and guidelines regarding social media use.

When using social media, Board Members shall not:

- a) Attempt to cover, disguise or mislead as to their identity or status as a member of the Library Board.
- b) Use social media in any way that would violate any policy or procedure, made pursuant to the Occupational Health and Safety Act or the Human Rights Code; or
- c) Publish anything that is dishonest, untrue, offensive, disrespectful, constitutes harassment, is defamatory or misleading in any way.

Library Board Code of Conduct Complaints and Enforcement

Any individual, including members of the public, staff or another Board Member, who has reasonable grounds to believe that a Board Member has contravened the Code or any other Library Board policy, as well as in the event of disputes between Board Members that interfere with the ability of the Board to carry out its business, may proceed with a complaint and seek remedy by the process outlined below.

All discussions and facilitated meetings will be conducted, without prejudice, be confidential, neutral, impartial and fair.

Complaints pursuant to the Code of Conduct must be submitted within six weeks of the matter becoming known to the individual and no more than six months after the alleged violation occurred. No action will be taken on a complaint received beyond these deadlines, with the exception to incidents concerning Conflict of Interest and the "Respect" section of this policy.

Where a complaint is an allegation that a Board Member has contravened the Conflict of Interest provisions of the Code, the timeframes for submission before a judge shall be in accordance with the provisions set out in the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, Section 8.

Where a complaint is an allegation that a Board Member has contravened the "Respect" provisions of the Code, the timeframes for submission of a complaint shall be in accordance with the provisions of the [Workplace Violence policy and procedures](#).

Complaints are to be made in writing to any one of: the Board Chair, Vice-Chair, or the Trustee appointed to the Board by the Town Council. In the event that the conduct of all three of these Board Members is the subject of the complaint, another Board member will be designated to facilitate the process or an independent mediator shall be appointed by the Town of Carleton Place CAO or designate.

Any notes or written documentation will be handled, filed, and managed in the same manner as the minutes of In Camera Board meetings.



Recognizing that the nature of alleged violations of policy may vary from minor violations to major violations, the Board Member(s) facilitating the process shall select an appropriate approach from the following options. If the initial approach is not successful or additional information about the nature of the alleged violation becomes available, an alternate approach shall be followed:

- a) Conversational – For minor violations, a private conversation between the parties involved and the Trustee facilitating the process may be held to reach an understanding of the situation/issue and decide on a solution/resolution;
- b) Ad Hoc Committee – For non-minor violations, an ad hoc committee shall be formed to manage the complaint process. The committee shall be comprised of the Board Chair (or Vice Chair), Town Council Board Member, and one citizen/community Member. In the event that the conduct of one or all three of these trustees is the subject of the Carleton Place Public Library Board Policy Manual compliant, other Board members will be designed to facilitate the process, or an independent mediator shall be appointed by the Carleton Place CAO or designate. The Library CEO will provide support for the committee. The steps the Ad Hoc committee will take to facilitate a solution/resolution will include, but are not limited to:
 - i) Complainant(s) Explanation of the Situation/Issue: The complainant(s) shall first be provided the opportunity to explain their views of the situation/issue;
 - ii) Responding Party(ies) View of the Situation/Issue: The respondent(s) shall then be given the opportunity to explain their view of the situation/issue;
 - iii) Explore Possible Solutions/Resolutions
 - iv) Agree on a Solution/Resolution: The identification and agreement on a resolution may be a challenging process depending on the nature of the issue. Likewise, the solution/resolution may vary in complexity from a verbal apology to something more involved. The solution/resolution should be specific about what is to be done by whom, where and when. Timelines expectations should be included in the stated solution.

Upon the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee, the agreement reached by Ad Hoc Committee shall be brought to the Board for approval.

The ruling of the Board shall be final. Should the Board Member refuse to abide by the ruling, the Board may table the matter pending determination of disciplinary action. Such action may include formal or informal censure by the Chair (as authorized by the Board) or a request for the Board Member's resignation.

- c) Referral to Independent Mediator – Complaints of a serious nature may be referred to an independent mediator that shall be appointed by the Carleton Place Town CAO or designate, or, if applicable and where required by law, complaints shall follow existing Library Board policy processes (e.g. Workplace Harassment and Discrimination, Human Rights violations, etc.).
- d) Referral to Investigative Authority – Allegations of illegal activity shall be immediately referred to the appropriate law enforcement authorities for investigation. The Board may rule that any Trustee against whom such allegations are made, be requested to take a leave of absence from the Board pending completion of the investigation. The Board will determine on a case by case basis how and by who Code of Conduct complaints will be investigated.