

**Town of Hanna Library Board****Violence and Harassment in the Workplace Policy****Background:**

Part 27, section 391, of the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code 2009 states the following:

**Instruction of Workers:**

An employer must ensure that workers are instructed in

- (a) how to recognize workplace violence,
- (b) the policy, procedures and workplace arrangements that effectively minimize or eliminate workplace violence,
- (c) the appropriate response to workplace violence, including how to obtain assistance, and
- (d) procedures for reporting, investigating and documenting incidents of workplace violence.

Because it is related, many employers have added workplace harassment to the policy. The Canadian Human Rights Act gives each of us equal opportunity to work and live without being hindered by discriminatory practices, including harassment.

**Statement of Belief:**

The Hanna Municipal Library promotes an abuse-free environment in which all people behave with respect for one another. Any act of violence or harassment committed by or against any individuals affiliated with this organization is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated.

We are committed to:

1. Investigating reported incidents of violence and harassment in an objective and timely manner
2. Taking necessary action: and
3. Providing appropriate support for victims.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that

1. Individuals are aware of and understand that act of harassment and/or abuse are considered a serious misconduct for which necessary action will be imposed;
2. Those subjected to acts of violence or harassment are encouraged to access any assistance they may require in order to pursue a complaint; and
3. Individuals are advised of available recourse if they are subjected to, or become aware of, situations involving violence or harassment.

**Policy:**

Employees or any other individuals affiliated with this organization shall not subject any other person to workplace violence or allow or create conditions that support workplace violence. No action shall be taken against an individual for making a complaint unless the complaint is made maliciously or without reasonable or probable grounds.

**Guidelines:**

Definitions:

Acts of violence and harassment can take the form of physical contact or non-physical behaviors and can include but would not be limited to:

1. **Harassment:** offensive comments and/or actions which may demean or belittle an individual and/or cause personal humiliation or other acts now or hereafter identified in the Human Rights Act. Includes Sexual Harassment.
  1. **Sexual Harassment:** unwelcome and/or coercive sexual behaviour that has adverse emotional, psychological or physical effects or the potential to cause such effects. Sexual harassment can be expressed in many ways, from very subtle to very obvious, including but not limited to the following: suggestive remarks, sexual jokes or compromising invitations; verbal abuse; visual display of suggestive sexual images; leering or whistling; patting, rubbing or other unwanted physical contact; outright demands for sexual favours; and physical assault or other acts now or hereafter identified in the Human Rights Act.
  2. **Abuse:** physical contact intended to cause bodily harm or words intended to cause emotional harm including but not limited to the use of threats, humiliation, forced social isolation, intimidation, harassment, coercion or restriction from appropriate social contact, or other acts now or hereafter identified in the Human Rights Act.
    1. Threatening behavior – such as shaking fists, destroying property or throwing objects
    2. Verbal or written threats – any expression of intent to inflict harm.
    3. Verbal abuse – swearing, insults or condescending language.
    4. Physical attacks - hitting, shoving, pushing or kicking.
  3. **Discrimination:** unfavourable treatment based on race, ethnicity, religion, colour, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, political affiliation, age, ability, socioeconomic status, ancestry, place of origin, family status, or other acts now or hereafter identified in the Human Rights Act.

**Exclusions:** Discipline: reasonable, justifiable, consistent, and non-discriminatory acts of discipline, provided by an individual who has the authority to provide such discipline, shall not be construed as harassment.

Acts of violence or harassment destroy individual dignity, lower morale, engender fear, and break down work unit cohesiveness.

Staff at every level must be knowledgeable to about and sensitive to the many forms that violence and harassment can take. It may in fact be unintended; the test is whether a reasonable person knows or ought to have known that the behavior would be considered unwelcome or offensive by the recipient.

**Consequences:**

Violations of the policy may be subject to disciplinary action commensurate to the incident, up to and including dismissal.

For acts of violence or harassment by individuals outside of this organization, action taken would be commensurate with the incident up to and including temporary or permanent withdrawal of services or legal action.

**Procedure:**

Volunteers and staff faced with an urgent situation involving threatening or violent conduct, where there is reasonable belief that the safety of persons may be threatened, should contact the police immediately.

**For other incidents:**

1. Discuss the matter with the Director. Prior to filing a formal report of the incident, the person subjected to workplace violence or harassment, with the assistance of the Director, should let their objections to the behavior be known to the alleged offender.
2. If not satisfied at this time, the complainant and/or the Director will document the incident.
3. The Director will inform the Board or its Personnel Committee of serious incidents.
4. If the complainant is not satisfied with the actions taken by the Director, follow the Marigold Regional library system Grievance Procedures Policy.

Management is responsible to ensure confidence is maintained and the victim receives support if necessary.

**Approval Date: June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Date for Review: June 2025**