



Employee Code of Conduct

Human Resources

Purpose

This policy provides standards to guide conduct of employees in all matters related to the Library. It covers ten (10) aspects of employee conduct, the purpose of which are to provide a positive work environment:

1. Code of Conduct
2. Alcohol & Drugs
3. Gifts and Benefits
4. Cell Phone and Handheld Devices
5. Computer, Internet, E-mail & Social Media Usage
6. Conflict of Interest
7. Dress and Personal Hygiene
8. Nepotism
9. Outside Activities
10. Enforcement

Defined Terms

Throughout this policy, “employee” or “employees” means direct employees of the Brantford Public Library Board, whether full-time, part-time, contract or casual. Volunteers are also expected to follow the conduct expectations included in this policy. “The Library” will also refer to the Brantford Public Library Board.

Policy

Section 1 – Code of Conduct

1. All employees of the Library are expected to:
 - a. behave in a manner which is professional, and which upholds the standards of safety and respect for all.
 - b. conduct the work of the Library collaboratively, sharing pertinent and timely information with each other, and support achievement of common goals through teamwork.
 - c. conduct the business affairs of the Library in good faith, and with honesty, integrity, due diligence, and competence.
 - d. serve the public with respect and dignity.
 - e. protect privacy and confidentiality except as otherwise required by law or as authorized by the CEO/Chief Librarian. No employee will share, copy, reproduce,

- transmit, divulge or otherwise disclose any confidential information related to the Library, including, but not limited to, user information.
- f. refrain from making negative comments, oral or written, that reflect poorly on the Brantford Public Library, the City of Brantford, the Board, management, other employees or services. Negative promotion includes, but is not limited to, verbal interactions, personal social/electronic media posts, written formats, and publications.
 - g. refrain from inappropriate language, oral or written that interferes with a respectful and harmonious working environment. This includes, but is not limited to: swearing, excessive sarcasm, name calling, mocking or vulgar, obscene, insulting or abusive language.
 - h. refrain from participating in workplace rumours and gossip. This includes verbal, written and electronic communication. To combat the spread of workplace gossip and rumours, employees should:
 - i. not speak or insinuate another person's name in an unwelcome or negative manner, when that person is not present unless it is to make reference regarding work matters; and
 - ii. refuse to participate in derogatory or malicious gossip or rumours.
 - i. avoid causing undue distractions in the workplace via excessive noise from conversations, music playing devices, or computers. Employees should respect the work schedules of others when engaging them in conversation, or providing any type of distraction that may remove their focus from work.
 - j. refrain from use or appropriation of Library property for personal use, unless the property is generally available to the public and is being used by the employee in that capacity like any other member of the public (e.g., Library materials).
2. All employees must sign and abide by the Policy Acknowledgement Statement (Appendix A).

Section 2 – Drugs and Alcohol

It is well understood that the use of illicit drugs and other mood altering substances, and the inappropriate use of alcohol, cannabis and medications can limit an employee's ability to perform their job in a safe and productive manner, and can have a serious negative impact on the health and safety of an individual or the safety of any other person.

The following policy statement on alcohol and drugs is intended to ensure employees report and stay mentally and physically fit to perform their assigned tasks safely and reliably. It applies to all Library employees during the course of their employment or while representing or conducting business on behalf of the Library.

1. Employee(s):
 - a. must report for duty fit for work, free from impairment of any substance, including alcohol, illicit drugs and/or other mood altering substances, medications, or prescription drugs.
 - b. must not use, possess, distribute, offer, make available or sell any substance as defined in this standard including but not limited to alcohol, cannabis, illicit drugs or drug paraphernalia.
 - c. must not misuse, distribute, offer, make available or sell prescription drugs.

- d. must not engage in or suffer the continuing effects of the misuse of substances or the unauthorized consumption of any substance while on duty or while conducting business for the Library whether at a Library workplace or elsewhere.
- e. must report to their supervisor any conditions which they feel may impair their job performance or ability to work safely.
- f. must ensure they consult with their health care practitioner to determine if any prescribed medications could result in impaired performance or ability to work safely and inform their supervisor accordingly.
- g. may be required to provide medical documentation to support their ability to be fit for work (subject to the applicable collective agreement clauses).
- h. will only distribute, offer or sell alcohol if they are required to do so as part of their job duties.
- i. when attending a training event/seminar or when otherwise appearing at an event as a representative or ambassador for the Library, will use alcohol and cannabis responsibly, ensuring that they are not impaired.
- j. when attending a business or staff function at which alcohol or cannabis is served, will only consume alcohol or cannabis when the function: does not occur during the hours of the employee's scheduled work shift; is held at a licensed establishment; and, provides for ready access to alternate forms of transportation for employees leaving the event, including taxis or public transit.
- k. must report to their supervisor any contravention of this policy and adhere to the responsibilities set-out in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, including but not limited to the following sections of the Act:

A worker shall report to his employer or supervisor any contravention of this act or the regulations or the existence of any hazard of which he or she knows (Section 28.1.d);

No worker shall use or operate any equipment, machine, device or thing or work in a manner that may endanger himself, herself or any other worker (Section 28.2.b).

- 2. Where employees self-report or disclose a substance use disorder:
 - a. they may be required to participate in a professional assessment, treatment, rehabilitative or follow-up program(s) for their disorder in order to maintain their employment.
 - b. the Library will provide suitable workplace accommodations, if feasible, while the employee is participating in any professional assessment, treatment plan, rehabilitation program and/or follow-up program(s).

Section 3 – Gifts and Benefits

There may be occasions where Library employees are presented with gifts, hospitality, or are paid a fee by an outside agency for services related to their position. This policy clarifies the expectations that the Library has of employees when faced with these situations.

- 1. Employees may not accept or solicit gifts, entertainment, or other benefits from any individuals or from any profit making or non-profit organizations or associations which have any type of business relationship with the Library.
- 2. This rule in (1) above is subject to the following exceptions:
 - a. Infrequent business meals, if the meal is necessary for the completion of some task, and it would be impractical or socially awkward for the Library employee to pay for their meal separately;

- b. Infrequent attendance or participation in social or sporting events in the company of a business contact, if approval is granted in advance by the applicable manager (where the employee works within a department supervised by the manager) or the CEO/Chief Librarian (where the employee reports directly to the CEO);
 - c. Donations toward charitable events or causes, including Library projects and other municipal undertakings;
 - d. Business gifts having a value less than fifty dollars (\$50.00 CAD) which are given as promotional items to individuals or project teams, provided the gifts do not include money, cash or negotiable instruments;
 - e. The gift has absolutely no relationship with the status of the recipient as a Library employee (i.e. there is another relationship between the donor and recipient which caused the gift to be made);
 - f. The gift is a randomly distributed gift such as a door prize which is won by the employee attending a conference, training session or other event on behalf of the Library; or
 - g. The gift is an honorarium or other gift given in recognition for representing the Library at a seminar, conference, symposium, or a similar event, and is appropriate for such an event.
3. Unless the circumstances in (e) above apply, if an employee receives gifts, entertainment and benefits having value over fifty dollars (\$50.00 CAD), the gifts, entertainment or benefits must be disclosed to the immediate manager of the employee in writing. Such disclosure shall occur within one week following the receipt of the gift, entertainment or benefit, with a copy to the CEO/Chief Librarian.
 4. An employee who contacts a vendor selling goods or services to the Library requesting Library pricing for a personal purchase by the employee shall be deemed to have contravened (1) above, however the foregoing shall not prohibit an employee from partaking in the benefit of promotional pricing or other special pricing if that pricing is already available to the Library or other government employees as a class.
 5. The fifty-dollar (\$50.00 CAD) limit may be re-examined from time to time as part of a periodic review, and the CEO/Chief Librarian may recommend to the Board to amend the Library's policy if necessary.
 6. In the event that a gift, an opportunity for the receipt of entertainment (such as a ticket), or some other benefit that contravenes this policy is delivered to an employee, the employee should refuse it at the time of delivery or return it to the donor, if practical. If it is not practical, the employee's manager will make arrangements for it to be given to a charity or raffled off, with the proceeds of the raffle given to charity.

Section 4 – Cell phone and hand-held devices

1. All Library employees are expected to ensure the safe and appropriate use of cell phones and other wireless communication devices.
2. Cell phones can be a distraction in the workplace. Employees are expected to exercise discretion in using personal cell phones and other personal electronic communication devices.
3. Making and receiving personal calls and/or texting during work time is to be avoided and completed during breaks and lunch periods.
4. Personal cell phones and other electronic communication devices should be out of sight and on silent or vibrate mode during working hours, unless otherwise approved by the applicable manager.

5. As per the Library's Rules of Conduct, individuals are prohibited from taking photographs within the Library on their cell phone without first obtaining verbal consent from persons appearing in the images prior to photographing or filming.

Section 5 – Computer, Internet, E-mail & Social Media Usage

I. Personal Use of Library Computer Equipment

1. While working in the Library, employees may make reasonable personal use of the Library's computer equipment, access to the internet and e-mail on their own time, and provided it does not adversely affect their work or the work of others.
2. Computer resources cannot be used for private financial gain or commercial purposes.
3. Making copies of software is prohibited.
4. Downloading software or attachments onto a work computer increases the risk of a virus throughout the network. Employees should consult with their supervisors before downloading files or software.

II. General Use of Library Computer Equipment

1. Use of the internet by employees is permitted and encouraged where such use supports the goals and objectives of the Library. The Library's computers, network and access are not to be used to undertake deliberate activities that waste employee time or networked resources. Refer to the Library's Social Media Policy for standards relating to authorized social media authors, employees and volunteers of the Library, when using social media to discuss, share or make comments regarding the Library.
2. The Library's computers, network and access to the internet are not to be used to:
 - a. propagate viruses, or send or download materials which may impact the operating efficiency of the system;
 - b. visit internet sites that contain obscene, hateful, pornographic or illegal material;
 - c. perpetrate any form of fraud, including software, film or music piracy;
 - d. attempt unauthorized access to systems, information processes or products; or
 - e. send offensive or harassing material.
3. Electronic records stored in Library computer systems or equipment are the property of the Brantford Public Library Board. The employer asserts the right to access and monitor Library computers and devices and records in electronic format.
4. Any correspondence sent from a Library's email address, or when an employee is identified as a member of the staff of the Library, should be treated as a professional document.
5. Employees must observe the Library's standard of confidentiality, including all privacy legislation, when communicating electronically.
6. Passwords and access codes must not be disclosed to unauthorized employees or the public.
7. The CEO/Chief Librarian or designate, will investigate any suspected misuse of resources. Any inappropriate, excessive or abusive usage may result in an employee's access privileges being limited or revoked and the employee may be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including termination.

III. Personal Use of Social Media

1. Personal use of social media should be respectful of the Library, colleagues, Library users, the City of Brantford, and the community. When engaging in social media or online forums outside of work, staff must be aware of their role in the organization and the potential impact of communications on the brand, reputation and values of the Library, and act appropriately and with good judgement.
2. Employees who are interested in engaging with Brantford Public Library social media posts using their personal social media accounts are encouraged to share, like and comment on Library posts to promote Brantford Public Library. Staff are not required to use personal social media accounts for work-related purposes and activities, however. Any questions posted by the public through Library channels should only be answered by an authorized social media author.

Section 6 – Conflict of Interest

1. It is recognized that sound, ethical standards of conduct promote public confidence and the attainment of Library goals. The Library is committed to avoiding any situations in which the existence of simultaneous, conflicting interests may call into question the integrity of the management or operation of the Library. As such, employees will not make decisions on behalf of the Library, make recommendations to the Library, use their position with the Library, or take any action on behalf of the Library in respect of matters in which they have a conflict of interest.
2. Conflict of interest is defined as a conflict between an employee's personal interest and their role with the Library as a publicly funded employee. It can be noted that:
 - a. Conflict generally arises when an employee could possibly influence decisions in ways that might lead to personal benefit or advantage.
 - b. Conflict of interest may exist when a monetary gain has been, or may be, conferred on an employee and includes both actual and perceived conflicts. Direct monetary interest is one in which an employee or their family could benefit financially from a decision while a larger group of people could not.
 - c. Conflict includes any social, professional, personal or organizational affiliation that is so substantial as to interfere or appear to interfere with an employee's responsibility to the Library.
3. Employees are required to provide disclosure to the CEO/Chief Librarian in writing circumstances that may represent an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest, including disclosure of financial interests in any entity known to have business, directly or indirectly, with the Library.
4. Having identified an apparent conflict of interest at the Library, the CEO/Chief Librarian shall consult with the employee involved to resolve the apparent conflict in a manner consistent with the best interests of the Library and the rights of the employee, while maintaining the highest ethical standards. Provided that the disclosure has been full and frank, any employee who complies with the direction given pursuant to this process will be safe from discipline or criticism and will be able to rely upon the direction as a complete answer to any future disciplinary or other action by the Library against the employee in respect of the conflict of interest.

Section 7 – Dress and Personal Hygiene

Brantford Public Library expects all employees to present themselves in a professional manner, with regard to attire, personal hygiene and appearance, in order to portray a positive image to

the public, facilitate employee identification, and to comply with health and safety regulations, policies, and procedures.

1. All Library employees must maintain a professional and well-groomed appearance as representatives of the Brantford Public Library, whether working on Library premises or off-site.
2. Job duties, responsibilities, and degree of customer contact will govern the definition of appropriate attire. Individual situations relating to appropriate workplace attire may be addressed on a case-by-case basis. If you have questions about this Policy or a particular position's dress requirements, contact your manager. Guidelines relating to specific duties include:
 - a. Facility maintenance staff must wear CSA approved work shoes or boots, and clothing issued as per the CUPE Collective Agreements.
 - b. Staff working outside for outreach events will wear weather-appropriate clothing.
 - c. Staff working with book trucks or moving heavy materials or equipment are required to wear closed-in footwear (i.e. toes and heels are not exposed).
 - d. Positions that maintain regular, in-person contact with customers are expected to wear smart casual attire (examples: shirts with collars, buttons, cuffs; blouses; sweaters; slacks; jeans with no rips, tears or stains; dresses; skirts, etc.)
3. For all employees, inappropriate attire includes (but is not limited to) the following:
 - a. Clothing bearing offensive language or images that are, or could be seen as, profane or discriminatory in nature
 - b. Sweatshirts, sweatpants and exercise apparel
 - c. Apparel that exposes midriff or underclothes
 - d. Strapless or revealing dresses, skirts and tops
 - e. Any shorts other than Bermuda-style shorts
 - f. Torn, ripped, or frayed clothing
 - g. Beach-style footwear and slippers
 - h. Clothing bearing overtly commercial or political images or messages. Name brand logos and slogans should be inconspicuous and compliment the work environment.
4. Similar to attire, tattoos bearing language or images that are, or could be seen as, profane or discriminatory should not be visible. Employees with tattoos of this nature need to cover them during working hours.
5. Employees must wear, visibly, their Brantford Public Library name tags during working hours.
6. Employees will maintain daily personal cleanliness and oral hygiene practices, and will regularly wash their hands (in particular, following eating, bathroom use, and exposure to germs). Employees will not wear perfumes and heavily scented products in the workplace.
7. As per the Brantford Public Library Health and Safety Policy, managers will ensure employees are provided with appropriate training and protective equipment to be worn as needed, to ensure work can be carried out in a safe and effective manner. Employees will protect their own and each other's health and safety by reporting hazards and unsafe practices, and working in compliance with health and safety legislations and Brantford Public Library's practices and procedures.
8. If an employee is deemed to be wearing inappropriate attire, management may direct an employee to return home and change into appropriate attire without compensation. Continuous or grievous non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

9. Employees may ask for exemptions to this policy based on one or more prohibited grounds of discrimination as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code or for accommodation reasons. Brantford Public Library will evaluate requests for exceptions on a case-by-case basis and will make the appropriate exceptions where a valid need exists. Employees will be notified of the approval or denial of their request, and if necessary, will be provided guidance on how this policy will be applied to them.

Section 8 – Nepotism

The Library makes hiring and employment related decisions based on transparency, equitable opportunity, and an overall emphasis on merit. This policy is intended to ensure that employment related decisions concerning existing or potential Library employees are free from any real or perceived improper influence based on family member relationships. At the same time, it is recognized that existing family member relationships with Library employees and Library Board members should not unduly or unfairly restrict or enhance an individual's opportunity to peruse employment or changes in employment at the Library.

For the purposes of this policy, "relative" means: spouse, same-sex partner, children and grandchildren, parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters. Step- and in-law relatives are included.

1. Relatives of employees and relatives of the Library Board may only be hired by the Library if each of the following conditions are met:
 - a. the hiring of the relative will not result in the situation where an employee will be the direct or indirect supervisor of a relative;
 - b. an application has been received in the normal manner and the standard recruitment and selection process was followed;
 - c. the candidate to be hired is, in the opinion of the interviewers, the best qualified with respect to the requirements of the position;
 - d. there was no undue influence exerted on the interviewers;
 - e. no potential conflicts of interest or other difficulties appear to exist; and
 - f. a relative of the employee to be hired did not take part in the selection process.
2. Where a person would be prohibited from being hired by the Board by reason of this policy, such outcome shall not apply if the Board passes a specific motion authorizing the hiring of that person.
3. In the event that persons become relatives of one another after they have been hired in circumstances where one supervises the other, the circumstances will be reviewed by the CEO/Chief Librarian on a case-by-case basis to determine what action, if any, can be taken to remove the reporting relationship.

Section 9 – Outside Activities

1. The Library encourages each employee to be an active participant in their community's civic, charitable, and political life. The Library also recognizes employees may seek additional employment opportunities outside of their role at the Library. As such, employees are free to participate in Outside Activities, whether consisting of employment for profit, or participation in non-profit activities, subject to the following conditions:

- a. Except for union or association business pursuant to a collective agreement or other similar contract, or unless specifically authorized by the supervisor of an employee, the outside activity must not occur during work time. Outside Activities must occur wholly in the Employee's private (non-regular work) time.
 - b. There must be no conflict or conflict of interest with the employee's official duties.
 - c. There must be no adverse effect on the community or the ability of the employee or other staff to perform their duties and functions.
 - d. There must be no advertisement by any employee of the fact that they are a Library employee if such advertisement is for personal gain or for any commercial or political purposes.
 - e. Except for union or association business pursuant to a collective agreement or other similar contract, or unless specifically authorized by the supervisor of an employee, no part of the Outside Activity will be done at the workplace.
 - f. The Outside Activities must not restrict the ability to be on call, or to work irregular hours if irregular hours are a requirement of the position.
2. If the Outside Activity is a business or paid employment or if it consists of an involvement with an organization that has any type of business relationship with the Library, notification of the Outside Activity must be given to the immediate supervisor of the employee with a copy to the CEO/Chief Librarian
 3. Supervisors who receive notifications are required to consider the notices which they have received and to review the notices with the CEO/Chief Librarian, and to take appropriate action in conjunction with the CEO/Chief Librarian to enforce the requirements of this section.
 4. In addition to the requirements of the other rules in this section if the Outside Activity is a political activity which:
 - a. consists of running for elected office, the employee may have certain statutory rights allowing the employee to have a leave of absence. There are other statutory provisions which may disqualify particular employees from running for particular offices. But, subject to the applicable statutory provisions, and the other rules relating to Outside Activities, employees will be generally free to run for any public office.
 - b. consists of working on a political campaign, publicly expressing support for a candidate, or publicly expressing opposition to a candidate, and the employee engaging in the Outside Activity works at or above the level of manager, the candidate must not be a candidate for Mayor or position on City Council.
 5. Despite anything else contained in this policy, the following outside political activities are always allowed and nothing in the section shall be deemed to restrict any of the following: voting; privately discussing and expressing views as concerned citizens; signing petitions; expressing opposition to a municipal initiative; or, making personal contributions to the campaign of any candidate.
 6. Except where contrary to the foregoing, employees may make public statements and generally take the same actions that any other citizen may do, provided that in so doing:
 - a. It is clear that the employee is acting for themselves and not on behalf of the City or Library; and
 - b. The employee will not use any information which they have obtained in the course of working for the Library that is not generally available to all residents of the City.

Section 10 – Enforcement

1. The enforcement of this Policy shall be both proactive and reactive.
2. Proactive enforcement includes the following actions:
 - a. The Library will give a copy of this policy to each new employee at the time of hire and to every member of any Board.
 - b. This policy will be made available on a continuing basis to all staff through electronic means so that every staff has access to it and can read, download, or print a copy.
 - c. Periodic training for staff in the matters covered by this policy will be provided. Failure to receive training will not be an excuse for non-compliance with this policy.
3. Reactive enforcement includes the following actions:
 - a. All managers and supervisors are under a positive obligation to enforce this policy and deal with breaches of the policy that have come to their attention as appropriate in the circumstances. Also, managers and supervisors are required to consult with the CEO/Chief Librarian as necessary to determine what kind of response would be appropriate.
 - b. If any person, including a member of the public, wants to make a complaint that someone has breached this policy, the allegation shall be referred to the CEO/Chief Librarian who will take appropriate action.
 - c. Subject to the requirements of any disciplinary policy of the Library, enforcement may include disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
4. All employees of the Library shall cooperate with any investigations commenced under this policy, and shall provide full and frank disclosure of what they know to any staff performing an investigation under this policy. Failure to provide such cooperation shall be considered a serious breach of this policy.

Appendix A: Policy Acknowledgement Statement

1. I have read and understand the Brantford Public Library Employee Code of Conduct.
2. I agree to adhere to this policy, and will ensure that employees working under my direction adhere to this policy.
3. I understand that if I violate the directions of this policy, I may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
4. I understand it is my responsibility to ask questions of my direct supervisor, manager or CEO/Chief Librarian when I have a question.
5. I understand the CEO/Chief Librarian will provide electronic notice of any updating of policies and/or procedures, and I will review these accordingly.

Employee Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

History

Supersedes: Gifts, Entertainment and Other Benefits; Outside Activities; Hiring of Employees; Dress and Personal Hygiene Policy; Personal Use of Library Board Property; Conflict of Interest

Background documents, related policies: Social Media Policy; Rules of Conduct; *Occupational Health & Safety Act*, R.S.O. 1990; *Human Right Code*, R.S.O. 1190; CUPE Collective Agreements

Approval Date: December 2020

Revision History: Not applicable

Projected Review Period: 3 years

Author: CEO/Chief Librarian; Human Resources Representative – City of Brantford

Approval Level: Brantford Public Library Board