

Employee Conduct

Policy Number: **HR-04**

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Year of Next Review: **2026**

This policy provides a standard to guide conduct of employees in all matters related to the library. It covers eight aspects of employee conduct, the purpose of which are to provide a positive work environment:

1. Code of conduct
2. Alcohol and drug policy
3. Smoking at the workplace
4. Gifts and benefits
5. Cell phone and handheld devices
6. Computer, internet, email and social media usage
7. Conflict of interest
8. Dress code

Section 1: Adoption of the Municipality's Human Resources Policies

1. The Port Colborne Public Library Board has adopted the current Human Resources policies of the Corporation of the City of Port Colborne. (See HR-01: Human Resources Policies and Management).
2. Areas covered in the City's Human Resources policies regarding employee conduct include but are not limited to:
 - alcohol and drugs
 - fit for duty
 - smoking at the workplace
 - gifts and benefits
 - customer service
 - off-duty conduct
 - personal cell phones
 - computer, internet, email and social media messages
 - conflict of interest

3. The board reserves the right to establish additional Human Resources policies and to modify the City's policies in order to satisfy the Board's specific legal duties and responsibilities.
4. The board may adopt policies of the municipality with the understanding that those policies must also apply to and satisfy the specific legal obligations of the Board in terms of its governance structure, its duties and responsibilities to its employees, library operations, and the public library building.
5. Additions, modifications, or exclusions to any policy adopted from the City will be stated in the board policy (See Appendix B).
6. The board shall be notified of any amendments to the City's Human Resources policies that may occur in the future.
7. The City shall ensure that policies are reviewed and amended according to legislative requirements.
8. This policy and appendices will be reviewed at least annually by the board to ensure compliance with legislation and to accurately reflect current practices.

Section 2: 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 users
 - b) work together to ensure that the work of the library, as communicated by the Library CEO, are implemented. In the spirit of teamwork, employees share goals with each other, make action plans and complete them together
 - 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. 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 library, the board, CEO, other employees, or services. Negative promotion includes, but is not limited to, verbal interactions, personal social/electronic media posts, written formats, and publications. Negative communications to any member of the public through any medium shall not be tolerated and may be grounds for dismissal
 - 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
2. All employees must sign and abide by the **Policy Acknowledgement Statement** and **Confidentiality Statement**. See Appendices A and B. These agreements endure in the event of termination of employment from the Port Colborne Public Library.

Appendix B: Additions, Modifications and Exclusions

Section 1: Reporting Structure – Applies to all Human Resources Policies

- a) All library staff report to the CEO, or **Library Services Manager as designated**
- b) The Library Services Manager reports to the CEO
- c) The CEO reports to the Port Colborne Public Library Board

Section 2: Alcohol and Drug Policy

- 1. The board recognizes that impairment due to alcohol and drug use can adversely affect health, safety, performance, and conduct of employees on the job, and impose hardships on other employees, colleagues, or library patrons.
- 2. The Library's policy statement on alcohol and drugs is intended to:
 - a) foster a safe and healthy workplace, free from the negative effects of substance abuse;
 - b) protect employees and others from unnecessary risks of harm;
 - c) ensure employees have appropriate treatments when warranted.
- 3. **Impairment in the workplace is unacceptable. Employees are expected to report to work fit for duty.** (See: City of Port Colborne. AP-90 - Fitness for Duty Policy).
- 4. The use, distribution, storage, sale and/or possession of illicit drugs and/or alcohol by an employee on library property is strictly prohibited.
- 5. The prescriptive use of prescribed or over the counter drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner and does not endanger other individuals in the workplace.
- 6. An employee who reports for work and is found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be directed to leave the premises and transportation will be provided. Employees will not be paid for time lost. An employee who fails to adhere to this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Section 3: Smoking in the Workplace

1. Employees shall not smoke or carry lighted tobacco or other plant products including electronic cigarettes on the library property. (See: City of Port Colborne. AP-90 - Fitness for Duty Policy).

Section 4: Gifts and Benefits – Clarification to the City Policy

1. Employees must not place themselves in a position where they are under obligation to favour an individual, group, company, organization, firm, or any organized entity. Employees must refrain from accepting gifts and benefits from firms or individuals, taking into consideration there is a role for moderate hospitality.

Section 5: Cell Phone and Handheld Devices – Clarification to the City Policy

1. All library employees are expected to ensure the safe and appropriate use of cell phones and other hand-held wireless communication devices.
2. Cell phones can be a distraction in the workplace. Employees are expected to exercise discretion in using personal cell phones. Therefore:
 - a) making and receiving personal calls and/or texting during work time is to be avoided and completed during breaks and lunch periods;
 - b) personal cell phones should be out of sight and on silent or vibrate mode during working hours;
 - c) for privacy reasons, employees are prohibited from taking photographs within the library on their cell phone without first obtaining permission from other employees, the CEO, or designate.
3. It may be necessary, in certain circumstances, for library employees to carry a cell phone with them if they are working in isolated areas of the library building such as the basement, supply rooms, or in stairwells. The library has provided a shared cell phone to be used in this case. In the event that the shared phone is unavailable, an employee's personal cell phone may be regarded as a safety device to communicate with other staff or emergency services in the case of an emergency, or if staff feel threatened or are in any way in need of assistance.

Section 6: Computer, Internet, Email and Social Media Usage: Clarification to the City Policy

Port Colborne Public Library

The library board recognizes the importance of computers, the internet and social media as work tools and sources of information. The library provides computers, devices and access to the internet needed by employees to work while recognizing the need to protect its network, systems, resources and the library's image.

This policy sets out requirements and provides guidelines for employees who use the library's computers for personal or business purposes, and who engage in the library's online and social media channel as part of their jobs. In this context, social media means any application, account, or site created or used for online publishing, discussions, file sharing, and social networking.

Part 1: 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, provided it does not adversely affect their work or the work of others, and has minimal effect on the library's resources. (See AP-44: City-Issued Electronic Devices and AP-60: Code of Conduct).
2. Computer resources must not 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 the CEO before downloading files or software.

Part 2: General Use of Library Computer Equipment

1. Employees are encouraged to avail themselves of the internet including using social media for the benefit the library. This may include general research on work-related issues, following social media as part of ongoing professional development, employee or user training, and participating in online forums. However, the library's computers, network and access are not to be used to undertake deliberate activities that waste employee time or networked resources.
2. The library's computers, network and access to the internet are not to be used to:
 - a) introduce any form of malicious software into the network

- 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) hack into unauthorized areas
 - e) send offensive or harassing material
3. 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.
 4. Employees must observe the library's standard of **confidentiality**, including all privacy legislation, when communicating electronically.
 5. Passwords and access codes must not be disclosed to unauthorized employees or the public.
 6. The CEO 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.

Part 3: Personal Use of Social Media

1. Personal use of social media should be respectful of the library, colleagues, library users and the community. While online activity can be a medium of self-expression, actions, writing and content may also reflect the library if one's name and/or areas of social media engagement are linked to the library.
2. When engaging in social media or online forums outside of work, staff should make it clear that the views they express about library and community-related issues are their own and do not necessarily reflect the position of library management or the library board. On personal accounts, social media users must state that their views are their own and not that of their employers. This is a good practice, but it will not negate an employee's responsibility or potential embarrassment.

Part 4: Business Use of Social Media

1. Staff are encouraged to use social media tools for the benefit of the library. This may include:

- a) general research on work-related issues
 - b) following social media as part of ongoing professional development
 - c) participating in social media networks created by organizations, and individuals
 - d) proposing the use of social media applications in library services to improve customer service
 - e) raising awareness within the community of a library service or program
 - f) promoting library services and resources
 - g) developing relationships with library users and community
2. While the Board supports the use of social media, the need to protect the organization's image means that:
- a) any proposal by staff to introduce social media applications to expand or promote library services requires the approval of the CEO.
 - b) staff must realize that the library's social media applications/profiles are the intellectual property of the library and not of the individual tasked with maintaining them.
 - c) when setting up a library account for a social media application, an e-mail address from the library's domain must be used for registration. A record of the logins/passwords is maintained centrally by the CEO and with staff responsible for maintaining password documentation. Staff may not use false screen names or pseudonyms.
 - d) all social media postings by library staff should reflect the mission and values of the library. Postings must exercise good judgment and common sense; provide worthwhile, accurate information and perspective; and maintain copyright permissions.
 - e) all opinions expressed should reflect the opinions of the library and be respectful of others and their opinions.

Part 5: Responsibility

1. Responsibility for monitoring social media communication falls to the CEO or **Library Services Manager**. In this context, the CEO or **Library Services Manager**, will:
- a) receive reports from library staff on inappropriate behaviour, such as malicious posts on the library social media accounts
 - b) monitor the social media communication written by library staff as well as any mentions/discussions of the library in the larger social media environment for a high standard of quality and professionalism

- c) remove posts from external contributors to the library's social media channels when the content of the post is considered malicious or destructive rather than a constructive contribution to a conversation
- d) respond to any questions or queries from outside the library in an appropriate fashion

Section 7: Conflict of Interest

1. As a public sector employer, the Board must ensure that its activities are consistent with public interest. Conflict of interest is a matter of personal responsibility and integrity and should be guided by the principles of service to the public and common sense.
2. Conflict of interest is defined as a conflict between employees' personal interests and their roles with the library as publicly-funded employees. 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 employees or their families 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. As soon as it arises, an employee is required to disclose to the CEO as to the 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 will 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.

Section 8: Dress Code (Clarification to the City's Policy)

1. The library strives to present an approachable and professional image to users and visitors. Employees are requested to dress suitably for the workplace in business or business casual attire that is clean and in good condition. Good grooming, personal hygiene and appropriate attire work hand in hand to ensure a safe, healthy environment, and in establishing a successful public image.
2. Casual/Denim day is Friday only, and entails casual yet tasteful clothing as defined in CAP-57 Dress Code and Guidelines.
3. Library staff may also wear casual clothing for projects (e.g., shelving projects) that require them to work in dusty or dirty areas, handle dusty or dirty boxes, and requires them to do physical work such as shelving or moving. Staff can refer to the CEO for guidance in this matter.

Related Documents:

- Port Colborne Public Library. OP-03: Code of Conduct (Patron)
- Port Colborne Public Library. OP-16: The Library and Political Elections
- City of Port Colborne. CAP-44: City-Issued Electronic Devices
- City of Port Colborne. CAP-51: Whistleblower Policy
- City of Port Colborne. CAP-58: Personal Cell Phones
- City of Port Colborne. CAP-60: Code of Conduct
- City of Port Colborne. CAP-57: Dress Code and Guidelines
- City of Port Colborne. CAP-90 - Fitness for Duty Policy

Appendix A: Policy Acknowledgement Statement and Confidentiality Statement

Part 1: Policy Acknowledgement Statement

1. I have read and understand the **Foundation** documents of Port Colborne Public Library including:
 - FN-01: Mission Statement
 - FN-02: Vision Statement
 - FN-03: Statement of Values
 - FN-04: Statement of Intellectual Freedom
 - FN-05: Respect and Land Acknowledgement Declaration
 - FN-06: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
2. I have read and understand the **Human Resources** policies of the Port Colborne Public Library. These also include policies created by the City and adopted by the Board. (This list will be updated as policies are added.)
 - HR-01: Human Resources Policy and Management
 - HR-02: Health and Safety of Staff
 - HR-03: Prevention of Workplace Violence
 - HR-04: Employee Conduct
 - HR-05: Accessibility and Staff
 - HR-06: Employee Recognition of Service
 - HR-07: COVID-19
 - HR-08: Health and Safety Policy Statement
 - HR-09: Staff Vaccinations
 - HR-10: Disconnecting from Work
 - HR-11: Electronic Monitoring
 - HR-12: Workplace Harassment and Discrimination
 - HR-13: Safety, Security and Emergencies
3. I understand that it is my responsibility to work within the Library's policies and procedures and to ask questions of the CEO if I need clarification.
4. I understand that the CEO will provide electronic notice of any updated policies and/or procedures. I will review these accordingly.

Employee Name

Employee Signature

Date

Part 2: Confidentiality Statement

1. I will not disclose or make improper use of, directly or indirectly, any confidential information that comes to my attention through my position with the Port Colborne Public Library to any person, except in accordance with requirements of the law.
Confidential information is:
 - a) personal information, as defined in subsection 2(1) of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56 (MFIPPA) about library users and/or members of the public;
 - b) personal information, as defined in subsection 2(1) of MFIPPA about library employees;
 - c) information received or discussed in the completion of my work as an employee, including any meeting of the library, unless specifically exempted by the CEO or the Board;
 - d) other information that the library decides is confidential.
2. I agree that section 1 (above) applies while I am an employee of Port Colborne Public Library.
3. I agree that section 1 (above) applies when I am no longer an employee of Port Colborne Public Library.
4. I understand that I am protected by “Whistle-Blower” clauses in legislation and may only breach confidentiality in these cases, and to the appropriate authorities. These situations have been explained to me by the CEO.
5. I understand that a breach of confidentiality will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination, and that I may be personally named in any legal cases which follow.

Employee Name

Employee Signature

Date

Witness Name

Witness Signature

Date