

Purpose: The Medicine Hat Library Board, in its efforts to provide a positive, comfortable, and professional environment, will not tolerate any form of harassment or abuse directed by, or at, any library employee by another employee, Board member, or member of the public. The Board believes in a positive environment for users and employees and is committed to preventing acts of abuse, harassment or discrimination on its premises.

1. Definitions:

- 1.1. Abuse: physical contact intended to cause bodily harm or the use of threats, humiliation, forced social isolation, intimidation, harassment, coercing or restricting from appropriate social contact with the intention of causing emotional harm.
- 1.2. Board: the Medicine Hat Library Board
- 1.3. Collective Agreement: the current collective agreement between the Medicine Hat Library Board and the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 46.
- 1.4. Discrimination: unfavourable treatment based on racial, sexual, political, age, national, religious, or gender prejudice.
- 1.5. Harassment: repeated offensive comments and/or actions which demean and belittle an individual and/or cause personal humiliation. This definition includes sexual harassment.
- 1.6. Union: the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 46, Library Bargaining Unit.

2. For acts of harassment, discrimination, or abuse by a member of the public toward a staff member, the action taken will be commensurate with the incident up to and including temporary or permanent withdrawal of services or legal action.
3. 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.
4. Staff faced with an urgent situation involving the threat of violent conduct, where there is reasonable belief that the safety of themselves or others may be in danger, should contact the police immediately.

For all other incidents:

- 4.1. If an employee believes he/she has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, or abuse, the employee has the responsibility to advise the offender, directly or through a third party, that the action is unacceptable behaviour and unwelcome. It is imperative that the alleged offender is made immediately aware of any behaviour or conduct that is offensive and given the opportunity to cease such behaviour or conduct.
- 4.2. If the behaviour or conduct does not cease, or the severity of the behaviour or conduct warrants it:
 - 4.2.1. The incident(s) of perceived harassment, abuse, or discrimination should be reported by the employee as soon as possible after the alleged occurrence to his/her immediate supervisor or the Chief Librarian, if, through perceived involvement or bias, the employee does not feel able to proceed through his/her supervisor.
 - 4.2.2. The Chief Librarian shall be responsible for ensuring that the complaint is promptly and thoroughly investigated by establishing an investigation team and a process for the investigation.
 - 4.2.3. Any incident involving the Chief Librarian should be reported to the Human Resources Committee. The Human Resources Committee shall coordinate any required investigation.
5. Any employee who experiences a workplace violence incident is advised to consult with a healthcare professional.

6. Investigation process:
 - 6.1. Investigation team members may include, but not be restricted to, the Chief Librarian, the department manager of the complainant, one union representative (where appropriate), and others as deemed to be able to contribute.
 - 6.2. The investigation process shall include
 - 6.2.1. The preparation of a written statement with a specific and clear description of the words or actions complained about, signed by the complainant.
 - 6.2.2. Interviews of the complainant and the alleged offender.
 - 6.2.3. Interviews of any other staff members who may be able to provide additional information.
 - 6.3. If the investigation reveals evidence to support complaint(s) of harassment, abuse or discrimination, appropriate disciplinary action, as outlined in Policy HR.12, will be undertaken.
 - 6.4. If the investigation reveals no evidence to support the complaint(s):
 - 6.4.1. No documentation shall be placed in the accused employee's personnel file;
 - 6.4.2. The employee assistance program shall be made available to the complainant and the accused, where appropriate;
 - 6.4.3. The complainant shall be advised of his/her right to contact the Alberta Human Rights Commission to file a complaint.
 - 6.5. Where disciplinary action is taken and both the offender and complainant remain on staff, a follow-up system will be established to prevent reoccurrence and/or aggravation of the initial incident(s).
 - 6.6. No reference to the complaint will be placed in the complainant's personnel file unless the investigation reveals that the initial complaint was both groundless and motivated by malice. If the complaint was motivated by malice, disciplinary action may be initiated against the complainant.
7. This policy is subject to the Canadian Human Rights Act and to any specific provisions within the Collective Agreement. It is developed and revised through ongoing discussions between the Board and the Union.