

Violence and Harassment Policy

Section 7.3

The Airdrie Library Board is committed to maintaining an environment in which all people behave with respect for one another. Any act of violence or harassment committed by or against any individuals within this organization is unacceptable conduct and will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- Individuals are aware of and understand that acts of violence or harassment are considered a serious offence for which necessary action will be taken
- Those subjected to acts of violence or harassment are encouraged to access any assistance they may require in order to pursue a complaint
- Individuals are advised of available recourse if they are subjected to, or become aware of, situations involving violence or harassment

7.3.1. Definitions and guidelines

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

- threatening behavior, such as shaking fists, destroying property or throwing objects
- verbal or written threats, and any expression of an intent to inflict harm
- harassment such as any behavior that demeans, embarrasses, humiliates, annoys, alarms or verbally abuses a person and that is known or would be expected to be unwelcome. This includes words, gestures, intimidation, bullying, or other inappropriate actions
- verbal abuse such as swearing, insults or condescending language
- physical attacks such as hitting, shoving, pushing or kicking

b) Acts of violence and harassment destroy individual dignity, lower morale, engender fear, and break down work unit cohesiveness. These consequences may result from behavior that is unintentionally abusive. Consideration must be given to whether a reasonable person knows or ought to have known that the behavior would be considered unwelcome or offensive by the recipient.

7.3.2. Definitions and guidelines

a) Library employees engaging in acts of violence or harassment may be subject to disciplinary action commensurate with the incident, up to and including dismissal.

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

7.3.3. Definitions and guidelines

- a) All incidents involving violence, harassment and abusive behavior occurring in or on the Library site will be reported to the Library Director
- b) When the complaint is against a Library employee, the Director will assess the situation against the criteria of intent, and attempt to achieve a reconciliation between the Complainant, and the alleged offender.

If the issue is not resolved at this time, the Director will inform the Library Board's Executive Committee of the situation, and ensure appropriate documentation is filed in the Library personnel files. Action may be taken as stated in Section 7.3.2. of this policy.

- c) When the complaint is against an individual outside of this organization, the Director will be informed at the earliest opportunity, and a formal report will be forwarded to the Library Board's Executive Committee. Action may be taken as stated in Section 7.3.2 of this policy.

Library employees faced with an urgent situation involving violent behavior or threats of violence, where there is reasonable belief that the safety of individuals may be threatened, should contact the police immediately by calling 911 or taking any other appropriate action. At no time should an employee physically attempt to deal with a potentially harmful situation.