

REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD

DECEMBER 4, 2025

SUBJECT: Annual Health and Safety Commitment

PURPOSE: For Approval

PREPARED BY: Betty Holme – Director, HR

PRESENTED BY: Betty Holme

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the London Public Library Board affirm the *Health and Safety Commitment Statement*, and approve the associated policies, as appended.

BACKGROUND

London Public Library, as an employer, operates under the requirements of the *Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.1* (the "Act"), which requires at least an annual review of the institution's health and safety policies.

Each year the Library Board affirms its commitment to providing a safe and healthy environment for its employees, volunteers and patrons through the affirmation of the *Health and Safety Commitment Statement*.

The following policies - associated with the workplace environment - are reviewed annually as required under the Act and the current revised version of each is appended:

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The Library is committed to maintaining a well-developed and responsive health and safety program in the workplace, which includes the various policies, guidelines, procedural documents, job aids and a training program. The Library and CUPE Local 217 work together through the Joint Health & Safety Committee to conduct regular workplace inspections and to monitor and resolve workplace issues. Directors, Managers, supervisors and employees are trained annually in their responsibilities under the Act.

Training programs, procedures and guidelines are available to support employees in these and other areas related to workplace health and safety. Orientation is provided to new employees and ongoing refresher training is provided on a scheduled basis to all staff.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

- Health and Safety Commitment & Policy
 - no changes
- Workplace Harassment and Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy
 - harassment definitions updated to include information and communications technology
- Workplace Violence Prevention Policy
 - Clarification of some terms included in definitions
 - Inclusion of virtual platforms as forms of communication
 - Addition of employee supports to the Violence Prevention Program

NEXT STEPS

As required under the Act, upon approval, the updated Health and Safety Commitment & Policy and associated policies will be posted in all work locations.

The Health and Safety Commitment & Policy and associated policies will be reviewed again in one year.

Appendix A: Health and Safety Commitment & Policy

Effective: December 2025

Next Review: December 2026

PURPOSE:

The Health and Safety Commitment & Policy is a written statement of intention indicating to all employees of the London Public Library (Library) that health and safety is a top priority for the workplace and that it is the shared responsibility of all as per the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and the Internal Responsibility System (IRS) prescribed within.

COMMITMENT:

The Library is committed to promoting a safe, healthy and enjoyable work environment. Health and Safety is the responsibility of all employees, and we will work together to mitigate risk. We are committed to fostering the development of a safety consciousness in all employees and members of the Library community for the purpose of minimizing the risk of injury to persons or the damage to property or facilities.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Library Board and Management Team recognize that the administration of health and safety is paramount to the wellness and protection of Library employees and commit to creating and maintaining safe workplaces and complying with all applicable occupational health and safety legislation and other related federal, provincial and municipal requirements.

All employees of the Library, regardless of their role, must understand their rights and responsibilities under OHSA. This includes identifying and assisting in resolving unsafe situations or activities, using equipment safely, and address their own health and safety by understanding and complying with safe work practices and procedures established by the Library. The Library will provide employees with the necessary training to enable them to protect their health and safety.

The CEO, Directors, Managers and Supervisors will have a full understanding of their responsibilities, will be fully accountable under the Act, and will behave in a manner which sets an example for all staff. The Library will support them in this role.

Working together within the IRS, we will ensure that the health and safety of all employees continues to be an integral part of the Library's culture.

This would include:

- Establishing, implementing and maintaining health and safety policies, programs, procedures, and guidelines, as essential elements of the Occupational Health and Safety Management System
- Communicating to employees their responsibilities within the Occupational

Health and Safety Management System which include an obligation to conduct their activities in a healthy, safe and responsible manner

- Continually improving the Library's health and safety performance by maintaining risk assessments and setting occupational health and safety objectives and targets with the goal of preventing workplace injuries/illnesses, property damage and loss

The Library, as an employer, operates under the requirements of OHSA, which requires at least an annual review of the institution's health and safety policies.

Each year the Library Board affirms its commitment to providing a safe and healthy environment for its employees, volunteers and patrons through the affirmation of the *Health and Safety Policy* and an annual review of related policies and procedures as required under OHSA.

Directors, Managers and Supervisors must ensure that all workplace hazards are identified, controlled and monitored, and that employees work in compliance with legislation, policies, programs, procedures and guidelines.

Employee participation is critical to the IRS. They must protect their own and each other's health and safety by reporting hazards to their Manager/Supervisor and/or Joint Health and Safety Committee, participate in training, and working in compliance with legislation, policies, programs, procedures, and guidelines.

Appendix B: Workplace Harassment and Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy

Effective: December 2025

Next Review: December 2026

PURPOSE:

To establish a framework for preventing/mitigating the occurrence of Workplace Harassment and Workplace Sexual Harassment.

This policy articulates the London Public Library's (Library) commitment to fostering a workplace that is safe and inclusive, where the diversity, dignity, and perspectives of all individuals are valued and respected. The Library will not tolerate or condone harassment, Workplace Discrimination or reprisals and will take active steps to promote a psychologically safe, inclusive and respectful workplace in accordance with the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) and the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (OHSA).

This Policy applies to all Library Employees, Board Members, Volunteers, any person having business with the Library, and members of the public. Contractors, visitors and other individuals conducting business on Library's property are also expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this Policy.

Allegations of significant breaches of this Policy, including human rights violations by such individuals will be dealt with by the Library and, if substantiated, may be considered a breach of the individual's contract with the Library or affect the person's right to be present on Library property or participate in any of its activities. Patron conduct is covered in the Library's *Charter of Library Use* and *Rules of Conduct* policies.

DEFINITIONS:

Employee means a person who is employed by the Library and includes all Employees, including Page and Casual staff.

Volunteer means a person who voluntarily extends his or her services to actively support the Library, and who does so without remuneration.

While Library Board Members Volunteer their time and do not receive remuneration, for the purposes of this Policy they will be referred to as Board Members where they have roles and responsibilities that are different from those of other Volunteers.

Poisoned Work Environment: Unwelcome comments or conduct can poison someone's working environment, making it a hostile or uncomfortable place to work even if the person is not being directly targeted. This is known as a **poisoned (toxic) working environment**, and it is a form of Workplace Harassment.

Workplace means in or on the property of the Library or away from Library property if the Employee or Volunteer is engaged in work-related activities. This includes all facilities, worksites and vehicles.

Workplace Discrimination: Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to employment without discrimination based on the protected grounds of discrimination: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, transgender identity and expression, age, record of offences, marital status, same-sex partnership status, family status or disability.

Workplace Harassment: Is a protected health and safety issue covered under the OHSa and is defined as engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace, including virtually through the use of information and communications technology, that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. The OHSa also states that a reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the workplace is not Workplace Harassment.

Workplace Sexual Harassment: is defined as engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace, including virtually through the use of information and communications technology, because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, or making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Library is committed to the prevention of Workplace Harassment and Workplace Sexual Harassment and will make every effort to:

- Promote a positive, harassment-free Workplace; and build a psychological safe and inclusive workplace which depends on treating each other with civility and respect;
- Develop practices and programs to prevent Workplace Harassment and Workplace Sexual Harassment;
- Develop procedures for reporting, investigating and taking action as appropriate, and
- Comply with legislation governing Workplace violence in Ontario, including the OHSa, the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#).

Workplace Harassment includes but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome and/or insulting remarks, jokes, innuendoes, or taunting about a person's gender, disability, racial or ethnic background, colour, place of birth, citizenship or ancestry;
- Displaying of racist, derogatory, or offensive pictures or material;
- Refusal to work with or share facilities with an Employee or Volunteer or refusing to serve a patron of the Library because of their disability or racial, religious or ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression;
- Unwelcome, inappropriate or insulting gestures based on disability, religion or racial or ethnic grounds which cause embarrassment or awkwardness; and
- Harassment by one Employee or Volunteer against another, which occurs outside the Workplace or hours of work but related to the work environment, may also be considered as Workplace Harassment.

Disrespectful behaviour can include the above examples of Workplace Discrimination, Workplace Harassment and sexual or gender-based harassment. The examples below may also constitute disrespectful behaviour, Workplace Harassment, or both depending on the context, circumstances, impact, and frequency.

Examples of disrespect include:

- racial and other microaggressions (a microaggression is a comment or action that expresses prejudice against a marginalized group or person)
- speaking in a belittling or condescending tone
- snide, sarcastic, or demeaning comments
- persistently interrupting or speaking over someone
- glaring, finger-pointing, eye-rolling, and other nonverbal gestures of disrespect
- disparaging or making fun of someone, even if it's meant as a joke, as well as referencing their community or culture in a derogatory way
- swearing or using unprofessional language, even if not directed at a particular person and even if those nearby are not personally offended
- passive-aggressive behaviour, such as refusing to directly communicate with someone about an issue and instead complaining behind their back
- embarrassing or humiliating someone
- gossiping, including sharing information that someone would probably want kept secret or speaking about someone behind their back in a negative way
- deliberately ignoring someone
- deliberately interfering with or impeding someone's work

This Policy does not restrict the authority of those charged with responsibilities such as counseling, performance appraisal, employee relations, scheduling, and the implementation of disciplinary actions.

What is NOT Workplace Harassment:

Legitimate, reasonable management actions that are part of the normal work function are not considered Workplace Harassment. This includes:

- enforcing workplace rules and policies
- measures to correct performance deficiencies, such as placing someone on a performance improvement plan
- changes to schedules and work location
- imposing discipline for workplace infractions
- requesting medical documents to support an absence from work
- organizational changes such as restructuring

Workplace Harassment also does not include occasional disagreements or personality conflicts, or stressful events that are part of the normal work duties.

A complaint filed under this Policy does not preclude an Employee from filing a complaint with the *Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario* or pursuing other appropriate avenues under the grievance process or any other applicable policy.

Responsibilities

Employees, Volunteers, and Board Members are responsible for promoting mutual respect and for preventing and resolving incidents of Workplace Harassment and Workplace Sexual Harassment.

Each has the responsibility to:

- Refrain from conduct that is harassing to Employees, Volunteers, Board Members and other individuals;
- Be knowledgeable about Workplace policy and procedures relating to Workplace Harassment and Workplace Sexual Harassment;
- Report and document incidents in which they have been harassed without reprisal or threat of reprisal; and
- Co-operate in the investigation of any Workplace Harassment complaint.

The Supervisor also has the responsibility to:

- Communicate Workplace Harassment and Workplace Sexual Harassment prevention procedures to Employees and Volunteers within the assigned work area;
- Receive and report any Workplace Harassment complaint and take immediate action to report and eliminate Workplace Harassment by taking such action as directed by management to deal with Workplace Harassment within the assigned work area; this would also include disrespect that may not constitute Workplace Harassment, but which

could lead to Workplace Harassment or a Poisoned Work Environment if left unchecked

- Identify and eliminate barriers to a psychologically safe and inclusive workplace;
- Act as role models and champions of a respectful workplace;
- Monitor the workplace and employee behavior; keeping detailed records of any violations of this policy and corrective actions taken;
- Encourage Employees and Volunteers to report incidents of Workplace Harassment, and
- Post this policy in an area readily accessible within the Workplace.

Management has the additional responsibility to:

- Provide a work environment free of Workplace Harassment and Workplace Sexual Harassment;
- Inform all Employees and Volunteers, including new hires of this Policy;
- Ensure this Policy is readily accessible to all Employees and Volunteers;
- Assess the Workplace on an annual basis for Workplace Harassment risks;
- Review the Policy annually;
- Provide education and training related to Workplace Harassment and Workplace Sexual Harassment prevention procedures;
- Resolve Workplace Harassment and Workplace Sexual Harassment complaints by investigating and taking appropriate action without delay;
- Take appropriate corrective action, including Employee and Volunteer discipline and management of infractions by the public and others to ensure that such activity, conduct or comment does not continue;
- Monitor any case of Workplace Harassment until there is satisfaction that corrective measures have been implemented; and
- Take necessary action to protect confidentiality of those involved in complaints.

The CEO & Chief Librarian (CEO) also has the additional responsibility to:

- Receive, assess and investigate complaints about Library Directors/Managers or Board Members;
- Consult with external experts, the Library Board Chair, or other Board Executive Member as appropriate;
- Ensure that all appropriate actions based on findings are undertaken; and

- Report to the Board and relay reports from external consultants to the Board when required.

The Library Board also has the additional responsibility to:

- Receive, assess and investigate complaints about the CEO or Board Members;
- Consult with external experts as appropriate; and
- Ensure that all appropriate actions based on findings are undertaken.

Everyone has a role to play in fostering a respectful work environment. If you feel safe doing so, you should speak up and intervene respectfully when you witness Workplace Harassment, Workplace Discrimination, or disrespect. If you don't feel safe speaking up in the moment, you can still take an active role in addressing the disrespect by bringing it to the attention of a supervisor, manager, or Human Resources, and by offering support to the target of the behaviour.

Reprisal

All individuals have a right to be free of reprisal or threat of reprisal as a result of being involved in a complaint of Workplace Harassment or Workplace Sexual Harassment. Reprisal will be deemed to be a form of Workplace Harassment and will be dealt with in accordance with this Policy.

Malicious Complaints

If, as a result of an investigation, it is determined that an otherwise unfounded complaint of Workplace Harassment was intended to be malicious, it will be considered a form of Workplace Harassment and will be dealt with in accordance with this Policy.

Confidentiality

Except where disclosure is required by law or agreed to by consent of the parties, all records relating to a Workplace Harassment complaint will be kept confidential and released only on a need-to-know basis to authorized personnel. Where an Employee or Volunteer has been disciplined because of a substantiated complaint, a record of complaint will be maintained in the Employee or Volunteer's personnel file. When a complaint has been found to be unsubstantiated and the Policy has been used in a vindictive or frivolous manner, a record will be maintained in the complainant's personnel file. Investigative files will be retained permanently, separate from personnel files, with measures to protect confidentiality.

INQUIRIES:

Director, Human Resources

CEO & Chief Librarian

Appendix C: Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

Effective: December 2025

Next Review: December 2026

PURPOSE:

To foster the safety and security of London Public Library (Library) Employees, Volunteers, Board Members and those who attend the Library's work sites, and establish a framework for preventing/mitigating and responding to occurrence of violence in the Workplace.

SCOPE:

This Policy applies to all Library Employees, Volunteers, Board Members, any person having business with the Library, and members of the public.

Contractors, visitors and other individuals conducting business on Library property are also expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this policy. Allegations of Workplace Violence and/or sexual violence by such individuals will be dealt with by the Library and, if substantiated, may be considered a breach of the individual's contract with the Library or affect the person's right to be present on the Library's premises or participate in any of its activities.

DEFINITIONS:

Close Calls are incidents which did not result in actual physical harm but, except for circumstance, had the potential to result in physical harm.

Domestic Violence is a pattern of coercive behaviour that is used by one person to gain power and control over another (e.g. an intimate partner or family member) which may include, but is not limited to, physical violence, sexual, emotional and psychological intimidation, verbal abuse, stalking and use of electronic devices to harass and gain control.

Employee means a person who is employed by the Library and includes all Employees, including Page and Casual staff.

Serious Incident means an incident in which someone was physically harmed (whether requiring medical attention or not), or which continued or escalated after supervisory mediation.

Unacceptable Behaviour means physically or psychologically aggressive behaviours including but not limited to:

- Hitting, kicking, punching, shoving, slapping, pinching, grabbing, biting;
- Carrying or brandishing weapons of any sort;
- Throwing objects at an individual with a view to cause physical injury or fear;
- Destruction of Workplace or co-workers' property;
- Threats or innuendos of violence;
- Sexual violence;
- Threats or innuendos of sexual violence;
- Intimidating behaviour that causes the recipient to have a fear of physical violence; and

- Obscene or harassing telephone calls, e-mails or other forms of communication on any virtual platform such as Teams, Zoom, or Google Meet as well as social media including Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, etc.

Volunteer means a person who voluntarily extends his or her services to actively support the Library, and who does so without remuneration.

While Library Board Members Volunteer their time and do not receive remuneration, for the purposes of this policy they will be referred to as Board Members as they have roles and responsibilities that are different from those of other Volunteers.

Workplace means in or on the property of London Public Library or away from London Public Library property if the Employee is engaged in work-related activities. This includes all facilities and worksites and vehicles.

Workplace Violence is defined as:

- The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a Workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker;
- An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a Workplace, that could cause physical injury to a worker;
- A statement or behaviour that is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a Workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker; and/or
- Sexual violence and/or threats of sexual violence; which is any harmful or unwanted sexual act—or attempt to obtain a sexual act through violence or coercion—or an act directed against a person's sexuality without their consent, by any individual regardless of their relationship to the victim.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Library does not tolerate violence in the Workplace perpetrated by or against Employees, Volunteers, Board Members, the public or other third parties. This includes Domestic Violence and sexual violence acts perpetrated in the Workplace. The Library will comply with the following legislation governing Workplace Violence in Ontario:

- [*The Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act;*](#)
- [*The Criminal Code of Canada;*](#)
- [*The Ontario Human Rights Code;*](#)
- [*The Workplace Safety Insurance Act;*](#) and
- [*The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.*](#)

The Library is committed to the prevention of Workplace Violence and will establish programs and procedures to reduce the risk of violence, sexual violence and Unacceptable Behaviour in the Workplace.

The Violence Prevention Program includes:

- An annual risk assessment process;
- An annual review of policies and procedures;
- Evaluation and implementation of corrective action;
- Assistance and support to employees who are experiencing domestic or workplace violence, taking into account they may vary according to individual needs; this could include EAP and/or debriefing by the Supervisor and/or Human Resources following an incident;
- Instruction to Employees, Volunteers and Board Members;
- Training and education;
- Reporting and investigation process; and
- Taking corrective action and review of policy and procedures after major events.

Violations of this policy may result in corrective action/disciplinary action, which could result in suspension or termination, the issuing of patron banning notices and/or the filing of criminal charges.

A complaint filed under this Policy does not preclude an Employee from filing a complaint with the *Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario* or pursuing other appropriate avenues under the grievance process as laid out in the current *Collective Bargaining Agreement* or any other applicable policy, or action under statute.

Responsibilities

Employees, Volunteers, Supervisors, Management and the Library Board are responsible for promoting and maintaining a work environment free of violence.

Each Employee and Volunteer has the responsibility to:

- Inform their Supervisor of any violence, potential risk of violence or unacceptable behaviour they have experienced or witnessed. This includes issues in the Employee's or Volunteer's non-work life that may impact on the Employee's and Volunteer's or their co-worker's safety;
- Report to their Supervisor any incidents of violence or Close Calls, according to Library procedures;
- Document incidents within the assigned work area; and
- Attend any training or information sessions provided by the Library, as the Employer, to reduce violence or risks of violence and apply the information provided.

An Employee or Volunteer may refuse to work or do particular work where the person has reason to believe that Workplace Violence is likely to endanger them. If this occurs, the Supervisor should proceed with following the Procedure for a Work Refusal.

The Supervisor also has the responsibility to:

- Assess the risk of violence to Employees or Volunteers within their assigned work area, minimizing those risks where necessary or reasonably possible and informing any affected Employee or Volunteer of such risk or potential risk;

- Communicate Workplace Violence prevention procedures to Employees or Volunteers within the assigned work area;
- Provide information, including personal information that is reasonably necessary related to risk of Workplace Violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour to an Employee or Volunteer if the worker can be expected to encounter that person in the course of the person's work and the risk of Workplace Violence is likely to expose the worker to physical injury;
- Respond to any complaint or incidence of violence within the assigned work area;
- Ensure proper medical care is provided for anyone involved in an incident within the assigned work area;
- Secure the safety of Employees or Volunteers, before investigating the incident or taking reports;
- Report and document incidents within the assigned work area;
- Encourage Employees and Volunteers to report incidents of potential violence or unacceptable behaviour; and
- Cooperate with police, Library investigators or other authorities, as required during any investigation related to Workplace Violence.

Management has the additional responsibility to:

- Inform all Employees and Volunteers, including new hires, of this Policy;
- Post this Policy to ensure it is readily accessible to all Employees and Volunteers;
- Review the Policy and related procedures annually;
- Develop and maintain a program to implement the Policy with respect to Workplace Violence, including:
 - Measures, procedures and related policies to control risks identified as likely to expose an Employee or Volunteer to physical injury;
 - Measures and procedures for summoning immediate assistance when Workplace Violence occurs or is likely to occur;
 - Measures and procedures for Employees and Volunteers to report Workplace Violence to the Supervisor and Management; and
 - The process the Library uses to investigate and deal with incidents or complaints of Workplace Violence.
- Assess the risks of Workplace Violence as often as necessary and at least annually;
- Advise the Joint Health & Safety Committee of the results of the assessment and any reassessment;
- Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the Employee or Volunteer, if it becomes aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that Domestic Violence which would likely expose a person to physical injury may occur in the Workplace;
- Provide Employees and Volunteers with education and training related to the Workplace Violence prevention program and procedures;
- Take appropriate corrective action, including discipline and management of infractions by the public and others to ensure that such activity does not continue;
- Monitor any case of violence until there is satisfaction that corrective measures have been implemented;

- Track and monitor all incidents of Workplace Violence, including Close Calls, minor and Serious Incidents.
- Follow the Occupational Health & Safety Act regarding Workplace Violence incident reporting.
- Take necessary action to protect confidentiality of those involved in complaints.

Management will also provide additional crisis follow up/support with personnel in the event of a critical or serious incident.

The Library Board has the additional responsibility to:

- Receive, assess and investigate complaints about the CEO or Board Members;
- Consult with external experts as appropriate; and
- Ensure that all appropriate actions based on findings are undertaken.

Reprisal

All individuals have a right to be free of reprisal or threat of reprisal as a result of being involved in a complaint of Workplace Violence. Reprisal will be deemed to be a form of violence and will be dealt with in accordance with the Library's *Workplace Violence Prevention Policy*.

Malicious Complaints

If, as a result of an investigation, it is determined that an otherwise unfounded complaint of Workplace Violence was intended to be malicious, it will be considered a form of violence and will be dealt with in accordance with the Library's *Workplace Violence Prevention Policy*.

Confidentiality

Except where disclosure is required by law or agreed to by consent of the parties, all records relating to a Workplace Violence complaint will be kept confidential and released only on a need to know basis to authorized personnel. Where an Employee or Volunteer has been disciplined as a result of a substantiated complaint, a record of complaint will be maintained in the Employee's or Volunteer's personnel file. When a complaint has been found to be unsubstantiated and the Policy has been used in a vindictive or frivolous manner, a record will be maintained in the complainant's personnel file. Investigative files will be retained permanently, separate from personnel files, with measures to protect confidentiality.

INQUIRIES:

Director, Human Resources

CEO & Chief Librarian