

## RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE POLICY

The Blandinsville-Hire Library District recognizes its responsibility to build and maintain a diverse, respectful workplace, where all employees and patrons enjoy an environment in which the dignity and self-respect of every person is valued and which is free of offensive remarks, material, or behavior.

We recognize that workplace conflict and disrespectful behavior can jeopardize an individual's dignity, self-esteem and well-being and undermine work relationships, friendships, and productivity.

A truly respectful workplace requires the cooperation and support from each and every employee in the organization. Everyone has a responsibility to set a positive example and to behave in a manner that will not offend, embarrass, or humiliate others, whether deliberately or unintentionally.

The principle of fair and respectful treatment is a fundamental one that the Library District commits to uphold for its employees and members of the public. This same commitment must come from our employees, who are personally responsible at all times for their behavior and conduct. Together we can ensure that every individual is treated respectfully and courteously.

Every employee can expect to be treated respectfully in the workplace. Every employee has the responsibility to refrain from participating in behavior that is or could reasonably be perceived to be disrespectful in nature.

Treating employees in a disrespectful manner must not be confused with the normal exercise of the employer's managerial rights, in particular, the right to assign tasks and the right to reprimand or impose disciplinary sanctions. When the employer exercises these rights in a nonabusive manner, these actions do not constitute disrespectful behavior.

### A. Definitions

1. A respectful workplace is one that values:
  - a. Diversity and the human rights of others regardless of their race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, any physical or mental disability, and sexual orientation.
  - b. The dignity of the person.
  - c. Courteous conduct
  - d. Mutual respect, fairness, and equality.
  - e. Positive communication between people.
  - f. Collaborative working relationships, regardless of the job classifications or the seniority of the employees.
2. Disrespectful behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Offensive or inappropriate remarks, gestures, material, or behavior.
  - b. Inappropriate jokes or cartoons, including racial or ethnic slurs.

- c. Grouping or isolating (example: on race or ethnic origin).
- d. Yelling
- e. Belittling
- f. Reprimanding in the presence of others.
- g. Aggressive or patronizing behavior.
- h. Embarrassing or humiliating behavior.
- i. Discrimination as defined under human rights legislation.
- j. Sexual harassment.
- k. Harmful rumors.
- l. Unwarranted physical contact.
- m. Inappropriately withholding information.

This policy applies to all employees including regular, temporary, volunteer, students, and contract employees. It applies to the workplace itself as well as to activities connected with the workplace such as travel, conferences, work-related social gatherings, a patron's home, or a patron's work site. It applies to relationships and interactions between employees and patrons/general public.

#### B. Responsibilities

Employees are responsible for exhibiting the following behavior:

1. Treating others with respect.
2. Setting an example by respecting the dignity and human rights of all employees and members of the public.
3. Recognizing and refraining from actions that offend, embarrass, or humiliate others, whether deliberate or unintentional.
4. Raising the subject of disrespectful conduct with the employee displaying it or with a person in authority as soon as possible.
5. Not making any frivolous or vindictive allegations of disrespectful behavior.
6. Making every effort to resolve respectful workplace issues, whenever possible in an informal manner.

## C. Procedures

If you are accused of disrespectful behavior,

1. Attempt to resolve the situation by listening to and trying to understand the concern.
2. Be open to the other person's perspective. For example, something that you consider to be humorous might be offensive to someone else.
3. Consider the impact of your actions on the other person.
4. Be willing to make reasonable changes that could make a difference. Often a sincere apology and a commitment to refrain from disrespectful behavior are sufficient to resolve the situation in an informal manner.
5. If a formal investigation is underway, cooperate with the person(s) conducting the investigation. Remember that the same care and consideration would be given to you if you had reported an issue.
6. If necessary, seek support or assistance from the library director.
7. Exercise discretion and be cautious about the persons with whom you discuss the complaint.

If you are treated in a disrespectful manner:

Every situation is unique, but whenever possible, informal resolution of an issue as soon as possible is preferable. Employees are advised to follow this process as outlined to try to resolve a problem under the Respectful Workplace Policy.

### **Informal Resolution Process – Level 1 to 3**

#### **Level 1**

Be proactive. Try to resolve the problem on your own. Do not wait until a recurrence or assume the problem will go away. Approach the employee who made you feel uncomfortable, explain how it affected you, and ask her or him to stop. Do this calmly, respectfully, and in confidence. Often, an employee may not be aware that her or his behavior is offensive, and most will change the behavior once she or he is aware of the problem. If another employee approaches you regarding an issue of respect, listening carefully and discussing the issue respectfully and honestly will often lead to a resolution.

#### **Level 2**

If you have attempted to resolve the problem without success or if you are not comfortable addressing the problem on your own, discuss the problem and possible solutions with the Library Director. Confidentiality considerations should be discussed.

### **Level 3**

If for any reason you are unable to discuss the problem with the Library Director, you may contact the Board of Library Trustees. The importance of confidentiality will be addressed.

Whether a formal or informal process is used, employees are advised to keep notes, which reflect, as accurately and completely as possible, the dates, times, nature of the behavior, any witnesses, and what was done. These notes will be useful for anyone assisting in resolving the problem. In addition, you may be asked to file a formal written report or complaint with a person in authority. The Library Director is required to document their involvement in all resolution processes, formal or informal.

The Respectful Workplace Policy is not intended to discourage or prevent the complainant from exercising any other legal right pursuant to any law, including filing a complaint with the Illinois Department of Human Rights. Not every complaint of disrespectful behavior warrants a formal investigation. In fact, it is hoped that most complaints can be resolved between the parties involved, with subsequent monitoring by management to ensure that there is no recurrence. However, in situations where allegations are denied or where discipline is likely, an investigation may be required and the Library Director would head the investigation. A formal investigation should be conducted as expeditiously as possible.

#### **Formal Resolution Process**

An investigation generally includes the following:

1. Interviewing the employee who has raised the concern. A support person may accompany the employee.
2. Interviewing witnesses.
3. Meeting with the employee alleged to have acted disrespectfully along with her or his representative to present the complaint and hear the response.
4. Determining the facts.
5. Stressing the need for confidentiality on the part of everyone involved.
6. Providing findings to the Library Board of Trustees.
7. Recommending an appropriate response to the Board of Trustees, which may include disciplinary action.

During the course of an investigation, the Library Director conducting the investigation will do the following when communicating with the individual raising the concern:

1. Listen carefully and take the issue seriously.
2. Advise the individual of the process to be followed.
3. Recommend that the individual keep the matter confidential.

4. Inform and support the individual throughout the investigation.
5. Inform the individual of action taken or to be taken.
6. Ensure the situation is documented appropriately using the Disrespectful Behavior Complaint Form.

During the course of an investigation, the Library Director conducting the investigation will do the following when communicating with the person alleged to have committed the disrespectful behavior:

1. Inform the person of the complaint.
2. Advise the person of the right to representation.
3. Give the person an opportunity to respond to the allegations.
4. Advise the individual of the process to be followed.
5. Recommend the person be cautious about disclosing information about the complaint.
6. Inform the person throughout the process.
7. Inform the person of action taken or to be taken.

The Library Director and the Board of Trustees will keep the details of a complaint confidential to the best of their ability, but the confidentiality of any complaint cannot be guaranteed. Because witnesses may be involved, confidentiality does not mean anonymity.

These limitations on confidentiality should not discourage employees from making a complaint. Many complaints are resolved without a formal investigation. Issues should be raised at an early stage to facilitate a mutual resolution.

If the investigation proves that the complaint was deliberately made for frivolous or vindictive reasons, the employee making the false allegation is subject to discipline.