

Employee Conduct Policy

Policy Type: Human Resources	Policy Number: HR-10
Policy Title: Employee Conduct	Policy Approval Date: October 2024
	Policy Review Date: October 2027

Purpose:

The purpose of the Employee Conduct policy is to set and maintain a standard for acceptable behavior for all employees of the Norfolk County Public Library (NCPL). Employees of the Norfolk County Public Library are required to provide excellent service and be accountable for their actions. The eight (8) sections of employee conduct covered under this policy are intended to provide a positive work environment.

1. Code of Conduct
2. Alcohol & Drug Usage
3. Smoking at the Workplace
4. Food and Drink in Staff Work Areas
5. Gifts and Benefits
6. Cell Phones and Handheld Devices
7. Computer, Internet, Email & Social Media Usage
8. Conflict of Interest

Section 1: 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) Under the direction of the NCPL CEO, all employees are expected to work as a team to maintain and uphold the directives as stated in the NCPL Strategic Plan.
 - c) Conduct the business affairs of the library in good faith, and with honesty, integrity, due diligence, and competence.
 - d) Serve the public with transparency, dignity and respect.
 - e) Protect privacy and confidentiality of both employees and patrons as required by law. 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) As representatives of the NCPL, library staff are expected to uphold a positive image of NCPL at all times, whether during or outside of regular business hours. This includes but not limited to refraining from making negative remarks or communicating in any written format that may reflect unfavorably on the on the NCPL, its Board, CEO, employees or services. Negative promotion encompasses verbal interactions, personal social media posts, written materials and publications. Any negative communications to 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. It 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 Review and Sign off** form and the **Undertaking to Ensure Confidentiality** form. These agreements endure in the event of termination of employment from the Norfolk County Public Library.

Section 2: Alcohol & Drug Usage

We recognize 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.

The library's statement on alcohol & drugs is intended to:

- foster a safe and healthy workplace, free from the negative effects of substance use;
- protect employees and others from unnecessary risks of harm;
- ensure employees have appropriate treatments when warranted.

Impairment in the workplace is unacceptable.

The use, distribution, storage, sale and/or possession of illicit drugs and/or alcohol by an employee on NCPL property, is strictly prohibited.

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.

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. Transportation will be provided. Employees will not be paid for lost time. An employee who fails to adhere to this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Section 3: Smoking at the Workplace

Employees shall not smoke or carry lighted tobacco or other plant products or electronic cigarettes on the library property.

Section 4: Food and Drink in Staff Work Areas

In staff only work areas, food and drinks are permitted as long as they are not:

- disturbing other staff
- a risk to electronic equipment
- on desks or in areas where library materials are kept or handled, including processing, repairs, and check-in

In staff and public service areas, including the circulation desk, beverages may be consumed discreetly; but food is not permitted.

Section 5: Gifts and Benefits

Employees are required to refuse any gifts, favors, or perks that could potentially impact their decision-making or impartiality. Employees should not accept any gifts or benefits beyond customary tokens of a value of no more than \$50.00. However, tokens of gratitude from patrons without substantial monetary value can be accepted on behalf of library staff.

Section 6: Cell Phones and Handheld Devices

All library employees are expected to ensure the safe and appropriate use of cell phones and other hand-held wireless communication devices.

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 personal cell phones without first obtaining permission from other employees or the Library CEO.
- d) Employees are encouraged to keep their devices on them when working alone or out of sightline of other library employees.

Section 7: Computer, Internet, Email & Social Media Usage

The NCPL Library Board recognizes the importance of computers, the internet and social media as work tools and sources of information. NCPL 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.

Section 7 sets NCPL 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 channels 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.

A) 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 email 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.
2. Computer resources **cannot** 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 their supervisors before downloading files or software.

B) General Use of NCPL Electronic 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. All communication conducted via NCPL or Norfolk County email, TEAMS, Zoom or any other electronic medium must adhere to professional standards and comply with the guidelines outlined in HR-07 – Workplace Harassment and Discrimination Policy and HR-10 – Employee Conduct Policy.
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, or their designate, 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.

C) 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. As representatives of NCPL, library staff are expected to uphold a positive image of NCPL at all times, whether during or outside of regular business hours. This includes but is not limited to refraining from making negative remarks or communicating in any written form that may reflect unfavorably on the NCPL, its Board, CEO, employees or services. Negative promotion encompasses verbal interactions, personal and social media posts, written materials and publications. Any negative communications to the public through any medium will not be tolerated and may result in dismissal.

D) 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 users and the community.

2. While the NCPL Library 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 or delegate.
 - b) 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 email address from the library's domain must be used for registration. A record of the logins/passwords is maintained centrally by the Library CEO and/or designate. 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.
 - e) postings must:
 - exercise good judgment and common sense.
 - provide worthwhile, accurate information and perspective.
 - maintain copyright permissions.
 - f) all opinions expressed should reflect the opinions of the library and be respectful of others and their opinions.

3. Responsibility for monitoring social media communication falls to the NCPL CEO or designate. In this context, the Library CEO or designate will:
 - a) receive reports from library staff on inappropriate behaviour, such as a malicious post on the library Facebook account.
 - 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.
 - c) remove postings from external contributors to the library's social media channels when the content of the posting 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 a timely and appropriate fashion.

Section 8: Conflict of Interest

1. As a public sector employer, the NCPL 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 an employee's personal interest and their role with the library as a publicly funded employee. 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 an employee or their family 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 Library 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 shall 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.

Any employee who fails to follow the guidelines set out in this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Related Documents:

Norfolk County Public Library OP-04 – Code of Conduct (Public) Policy

Norfolk County Public Library OP-16 – The Library and Political Elections Policy

Norfolk County Public Library HR-07 – Workplace Harassment and Discrimination Policy

Norfolk County Public Library HR-11 – Professional Development, Performance & Discipline Policy

Norfolk County Policy HR-10 – Employee Conduct Policy