

**Fort Edward Free Library  
Policy Manual  
Harassment Policy**

This policy applies to the behavior of patrons and staff of the Library and others on Library business or engaged in activities relating to the Library.

The Fort Edward Free Library is committed to supporting the right of all to work and study in an environment which is free from all forms of harassment including bullying, sexual harassment, racial harassment and other forms of discriminatory harassment. Such behavior can create an intimidating, hostile atmosphere and is unacceptable. It can damage an individual's welfare and can also undermine the mission of the Library.

These guidelines aim to provide guidance for providing such a work and study environment free of harassment, and a framework for dealing effectively with harassment complaints.

### **Responsibility**

All members of the Library community share the responsibility for ensuring an environment that is free from any form of bullying or harassment.

### **Bullying**

Bullying is repeated inappropriate behavior, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity. A single incident of the behavior described in this definition may be an affront to dignity but, as a single incident is not considered to be bullying.

Bullying can take many forms, from open aggression, threats, and shouting to subtle comments or exclusion. It can be verbal, physical or psychological. It is destructive and may have serious consequences. The impact of the behavior on the recipient will be taken into consideration when dealing with cases of bullying.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment includes acts of physical intimacy, or requests for sexual favors or any act or conduct by a perpetrator, including spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material that is unwelcome to the recipient and could reasonably be regarded as sexually offensive, humiliating or intimidating to the recipient. The unwanted nature of sexual harassment distinguishes it from flirtatious or sexual behavior, which is entered into freely and mutually. It is the damaging impact of the unwanted behavior on the recipient, not the intention of the perpetrator, which counts. The impact of sexual harassment is taken into account when cases of sexual harassment are investigated.

### **Racial Harassment**

Racial harassment, which is harassment on the grounds of race, including national or ethnic origins, is defined as unwanted or unwelcome conduct, or incitement to such conduct, based on a person's race, which is offensive to the recipient and which might threaten a person's security or create a stressful,

hostile, or intimidating work or study environment.

### **Other Forms of Harassment**

Any act or conduct by a perpetrator is considered to be harassment if it is unwelcome to the recipient and could reasonably be seen as offensive, humiliating or intimidating to the recipient, in relation to one or more of the following characteristics of the recipient: gender; marital or family status; sexual orientation; religion; age; and disability.

**Reporting an Incident:** A person who feels that she/he is being bullied or harassed may use one or all of the following steps.

**Informal Process:** Make it clear to the perpetrator that the behavior is unwelcome and unacceptable and ask them to stop. If this is not possible or you find it difficult to approach the perpetrator, then you should approach a Library staff member, the Library Director or the President of the Board of Trustees. Keep a record of incidents as they occur.

**Formal Process:** A formal complaint involves providing a written statement to the appropriate contact person listed above.

Adopted March 9, 2016