

East Lyme Public Library Harassment Policy

The East Lyme Public Library (Library) is committed to providing its employees and patrons with an appropriate environment in which to work and visit. The Library is committed to providing an environment that is free from all types of harassment - sexual, racial or otherwise. Harassment is discriminatory, unlawful and a serious violation of individual rights and institutional values. Harassment including, but not limited to, verbal slurs, stereotyping, overt hostility, lack of personal civility, and the dissemination of written or graphic material designed to attack someone based on their race, color, sex, gender identity, age, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, marital status or sexual orientation is prohibited. Patrons and staff are expected to adhere to all local, state and federal laws pertaining to harassment.

The display of sexually-explicit material on library workstations where others can see it may be construed as creating a hostile environment, a form of sexual harassment prohibited by law. If a library employee witnesses such displays or if a complaint is registered, users will be asked to discontinue displaying material of this nature.

Harassment can occur between patrons and/or staff members. Harassment will not be tolerated.

Patrons or staff members who feel they have experienced or are experiencing harassment are strongly encouraged to report the incident(s) to the Library Director for investigation. The Library will respond to and investigate all claims of harassment, appropriately addressing such behaviors. Retaliation against an individual for filing a harassment complaint or for cooperating in an investigation of a complaint will not be permitted, and furthermore violates existing laws.

Procedure for Harassment Complaints:

Complaint The designated Harassment Grievance Officer is the Library Director. If the employee or patron is uncomfortable contacting the Library Director because he or she believes the Library Director may not receive the complaint impartially, he or she may contact the Chairperson of the Personnel Committee and/or the President of the Board of Trustees. Employees or patrons do not have to go through the regular chain of reporting procedures when reporting harassment.

If any employee or patron believes he or she has been subject to harassment, they should promptly fill out an Incident Report Form available at the Circulation, Reference, Children's desks or in the office of the Director or Assistant Director. The complainant should be aware that the longer the time between the event and the filing, the more difficult it will be to reconstruct what occurred and make a judgement as to the validity of the claim. The Library Director or other designated person receiving the complaint may share the complaint with the Library Board or certain committees within the board.

Investigation. On receiving the complaint, the Library Director or other person to whom the complaint has been made will promptly investigate the matter. Outside investigators may be brought in if it is determined that the investigation is beyond the scope of the library's abilities. If, after the completion of this investigation, it is determined that there is reasonable cause for

finding a violation of this policy, the Library Director or other designated person will notify the complainant and the accused employee or patron in writing. The accused employee or patron will be requested to respond to the complaint.

Decision After the accused employee or patron has responded and the investigation is concluded, the Library Director or other designated person will make a final decision and notify all parties involved. If the investigation substantiates the allegations in the complaint, the Library Director or others handling the matter will proceed with an appropriate plan of action. Any employee violating this policy will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including termination by the Library. Patrons may temporarily or permanently lose library privileges.

Appeal An appeal of the final decision of the investigation or the plan of action decided on can be made to the full Board of Trustees minus any board members that were part of the initial investigation.