



## **LIBRARY POLICY**

**Policy Title: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE**

**Policy Type: Board**

Renewed annually

**Approved: 17 February 2026**

**Policy Number: BPL006**

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This policy addresses the prevention of workplace violence as part of the Belleville Public Library Board's responsibility for worker health and safety under the ***Occupational Health and Safety Act***.

Violent behaviour in the workplace is unacceptable from anyone including staff, Board Trustees, volunteers, clients, customers, and others who do business with the Library. Individuals who violate this policy may be removed from Library property, and in the case of employees, are subject to disciplinary action including termination. Criminal charges may be applied where appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Library Board and CEO and posted electronically and in print form for staff reference.

### **Policy Objective**

To ensure that Belleville Public Library & John M. Parrott Art Gallery takes all practical and reasonable measures to prevent violence and protect employees, volunteers and visitors to the Library from acts of violence in the workplace. The Library will take immediate action in accordance with this policy should an incident occur.

### **Underlying Principles**

Belleville Public Library & John M. Parrott Art Gallery protects employee and visitor safety by diligently applying health and safety legislation and Library policies and procedures, such as the Rules of Conduct Policy and the Health and Safety Policy. The Library further protects employee and visitor safety by such means as security-conscious design, safe behaviour training and video surveillance.

The Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Policy addresses the prevention and response to any threat or act of violence involving or affecting employees, volunteers or visitors to the Library. The Library's Discrimination and Harassment Policy (under review) should be consulted in cases of personal harassment and harassment related to discrimination concerning employees in their relations to each other and, between all such employees.

## Policy Statement

Belleville Public Library & John M. Parrott Art Gallery is committed to working to provide a safe work environment. The Library will not tolerate any threats or acts of violence and will take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent violence and protect employees, volunteers and visitors from acts of violence. Appropriate remedial, disciplinary, and/or legal action will be taken according to the circumstances, and in accordance with Library policies, the Collective Agreement and the Library's Rules of Conduct.

Acts of reprisal are prohibited against individuals who, acting in good faith, report incidents of workplace violence or act as witnesses.

## Application

This Policy applies to:

- All employees of the Library while conducting authorized business on behalf of the Library;
- Library Board Trustees;
- Volunteers;
- Any person engaged in business with the Library; and
- All visitors to the premises of the Belleville Public Library & John M. Parrott Art Gallery.

The Belleville Public Library & John M. Parrott Art Gallery's, Discrimination and Harassment Policy addresses workplace violence in the context of harassment or intimidation (e.g., inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining an individual's right to dignity at work).

## Scope

This Policy applies to the Belleville Public Library & John M. Parrott Art Gallery property and to all situations involving acts of harassment, intimidation, abusive behaviour, assaults, threats, or acts of violence engaged in by employees or visitors to the Library. This Policy also applies to any situation or location involving Library employees or Board members where Library business takes place (i.e. training sessions or conferences).

### Violence in the workplace may include:

- Verbally threatening to attack a worker
- Leaving threatening notes or sending threatening emails to the workplace
- Shaking a fist in a worker's face
- Hitting or trying to hit a worker
- Throwing or kicking an object
- Sexual aggression against a worker
- Aggressive behaviour

Violence in the Library or on Library property also includes:

- Intentionally or recklessly damaging the property of another person
- Intentionally causing alarm
- Creating a hazardous condition or danger by engaging in conduct which creates a risk of serious physical injury (i.e. fighting)
- Intentionally placing or attempting to place another person in fear of physical injury
- Intentionally causing mischief
- Wielding a weapon

**Specific Directives**

The Library will have a Violence Prevention and Response Program with the following mandate:

1. Prevention

- a) Provide employees and volunteers with training in the prevention, de-escalation and response to violent incidents and incidents with a potential to lead to violence.
- b) Conduct workplace violence hazard assessments to determine whether the nature of the work or the work environment places, or may place, employees at risk of violence;
- c) Review workplace violence hazard assessments periodically, and revise them as needed; and
- d) Inform employees of the results of violence hazard assessments and determined risks of violence.
- e) Provide employees and volunteers with periodic training workshops addressing violence prevention and concerns such as “dealing with difficult people”.
- f) Take all reasonable and practical measures to minimize or eliminate risks identified through workplace violence hazard assessments, workplace inspections, and the occurrence of incidents.

2. Response

- a) Anyone experiencing or witnessing imminent danger or actual violence involving personal injury should call the police.
- b) Workplace violence should be reported immediately to the most senior staff member available and, when appropriate, to the police.
- c) Employees should be encouraged to report behaviour that they reasonably believe poses a potential for violence as described above.
- d) Employees will respond to all reports of violence promptly, documenting known incidents of violence and investigating and responding to them in accordance with Library policies and procedures, the Collective Agreement and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

- e) Take all reasonable and practical measures to protect employees, acting in good faith, who report workplace violence or act as witnesses, from reprisal or further violence.
- f) The Belleville Public Library, at the request of an employee, or at its own discretion, may prohibit members of the public, including family members, from seeing an employee on Library property in cases where the employee suspects that an act of violence will result from an encounter with said individual(s).

### 3. Follow-Up

- a) Provide support and information to those involved in violent incidents;
- b) Review and evaluate the effectiveness of crisis response; and
- c) Based on crisis response evaluation, make recommendations that contribute to the implementation of preventive efforts.

## **Accountability**

### 1. All employees are responsible for:

- a) Maintaining a safe work environment, whenever possible;
- b) Not engaging in or ignoring violent, threatening, intimidating or other disruptive behaviours; and
- c) Reporting promptly to their supervisor any incident where the employee is subjected to, witnesses, or has knowledge of workplace violence, or has reason to believe that workplace violence may occur.

### 2. Management/Supervisors are responsible for:

- a) Communicating this Policy and its procedures to all employees; and
- b) Developing and monitoring the Crisis Prevention and Response Program, with processes for reporting, investigating, documenting and debriefing incidents of violence;
- c) Participating in the Crisis Prevention and Response Program as required;
- d) Conducting workplace violence hazard assessments periodically and whenever there are significant changes in the work environment and developing practical steps to minimize or eliminate identified risks with the Joint Health & Safety Committee;
- e) Ensuring workplace violence prevention and response training is provided;
- f) Investigating promptly perceived risks of workplace violence according to Library policies and procedures and the Collective Agreement.

3. The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) is responsible for:

- a) Participating in conducting workplace violence hazard assessments and providing recommendations to management to reduce or eliminate the risk of violence;
- b) Participating in the investigation of critical injuries (e.g., incidents that place life in jeopardy, result in substantial blood loss, fracture of leg or arm, etc.);
- c) Recommending corrective measures for the improvement of the health and safety of employees;
- d) Responding to employee concerns related to workplace violence and communicating these to management.

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**Approved by Belleville Public Library Board**

**Signature of Board Chair:**



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**Date: 17 February 2026**

**Signature of Chief Executive Officer:**



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**Date: 17 February 2026**

## **Appendix A – References**

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Criminal Code of Canada (R.S., 1985, c. C-46) as updated.

Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario (R.S.O. 1990, c. 0.1) as updated.

Ontario Human Rights Code (R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19, s. 5 (1)) as updated.

Belleville Public Library & John M. Parrott Art Gallery:

- Collective Agreement as updated;
- Workplace Bullying & Harassment Policy as updated; and
- Rules of Conduct Policy as updated.

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## Appendix B – Definitions

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**Workplace Violence** means:

- a) the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker,
- b) an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker,
- c) a statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause injury to the worker.

**Workplace** means, wherever the worker is performing his or her work duties or is present on behalf of the Belleville Public Library & John M. Parrott Art Gallery. A workplace can include the office, travelling in a vehicle on behalf of the Library, attending a course, seminar or function sanctioned by the Library, or anywhere a worker is required to be in the course of their job.

**Reprisal** means, any act of retaliation, either direct or indirect.

**Critical Incident** means, a traumatic or extraordinary event that is sudden, overwhelming, and often dangerous, affecting an individual or group. It does not have to be an emergency but may cause individuals to feel overwhelmed or affects one's sense of well-being and safety. A critical incident is distinct from a critical injury as defined by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990.

**Critical Injury** means an injury of a serious nature that:

- places life in jeopardy
- produces unconsciousness
- results in substantial loss of blood
- involves the fracture of a leg or arm, but not a finger or toe
- involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand or foot, but not a finger or toe
- consists of burns to a major portion of the body
- causes the loss of sight in an eye

**Harassment:** is defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code as “engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.”

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety definition of harassment is, “any behaviour that demeans, embarrasses, humiliates, annoys, alarms or verbally abuses a person and that is known or would be expected to be unwelcome. This includes words, gestures, intimidation, bullying, or other inappropriate activities.”