



CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

EASTERN COUNTIES REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD

Approved 2022-04-28

Purpose:

As the governing body for the Eastern Counties Regional Library (ECRL), it is important that ECRL Board Members act in an ethical and professional manner when conducting ECRL business. The purpose of this code is to establish guidelines for the ethical and inter-personal conduct of members of the ECRL Board (“members”).

Standards of Conduct:

Ethical and professional conduct includes, but is not limited to:

1 Teamwork

- 1.1 Act in the best interests of all library users, regardless of their area of residence, and to support ECRL as a whole, over and above other group involvement, or membership on other boards;
- 1.2 Express individual viewpoints but work harmoniously toward consensus as much as possible;
- 1.3 Speak with "one voice" once a decision is reached and a motion is passed by the Board;
- 1.4 Respect Board authority since individuals may not act on behalf of the Board. This includes interactions with the public or the media;
- 1.5 Refrain from individually directing the CEO or staff;

Additional Code of Conduct for the Library Board Chair:

- 1.6 Assume no authority to make decisions outside Board-dictated mandate;
- 1.7 Assume no authority to speak for the Board on issues not yet decided;

2 Professional Accountability

- 2.1 Perform the functions of a Board member, faithfully and impartially to the best of their knowledge and ability in accordance with the following core values:
 - 2.1.1 Integrity – giving ECRL’s interests absolute priority over private individual interests;
 - 2.1.2 Honesty – being truthful and open;
 - 2.1.3 Objectivity – making decisions based on a careful and fair analysis of the facts;
 - 2.1.4 Accountability – being accountable to each other and the public for decisions taken;
 - 2.1.5 Leadership – confronting challenges and providing direction on the issues of the day.
- 2.2 Respect the agenda and abide by decisions on rules of order;

- 2.3 Attend meetings regularly and inform the CEO about expected absences prior to meetings;
- 2.4 Be prepared for all Board and committee meetings;
- 2.5 Members shall treat every person, including other members, ECRL employees, and the public with dignity, understanding and respect and ensure that their work environment is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment. Harassment and/or discrimination includes intentional or unintentional language or action used against an individual or group, that threatens, demeans, excludes, humiliates, provides unequal treatment or causes embarrassment or behaviors as outlined and prohibited within the N.S. Human Rights Code and existing ECRL policies.
- 2.6 Encourage and respect the diversity of viewpoints, skills and expertise;
- 2.7 Respect confidentiality appropriate to issues of a confidential nature;
- 2.8 No member shall disclose or release to any member of the public any confidential information acquired by virtue of their Board appointment, in either oral or written form except when required by law or authorized by the ECRL Board to do so.
- 2.9 Acknowledge in writing that you have read, understand, and agree to the behaviours outlined in this policy;
- 2.10 Take responsibility for professional development through continuing educational opportunities, and participation in library organizations/events;
- 2.11 To be an advocate for the ECRL and its mission wherever, and whenever the opportunity arises.

Additional Code of Conduct for the Board Chair:

- 2.12 Ensure all issues that belong to Board governance are brought to the Board for consideration, and that all relevant material has been disseminated;
- 2.13 Keep deliberation fair, open, thorough, but also efficient, timely, orderly and to the point.

3 Financial Accountability:

- 3.1 Avoid situations where personal advantage or financial benefits may be gained;
- 3.2 Avoid using the position to obtain employment for self, family or friends;
- 3.3 Resign from the Board if seeking employment with the ECRL;

Reporting Breaches:

Persons who have reason to believe that this code has been breached in any way are encouraged to bring their concerns forward in writing to the CEO. No adverse action shall be taken against any Board member, ECRL employee, or member of the public, who, acting in good faith, reports such information.

Reporting process:

All reports will be considered informal unless a complaint form is filed and remitted to the ECRL CEO detailing the concern or issue.

Anonymous complaints that include threats, harassing statements, abusive language or vulgarity will be saved but not considered or tracked.

A complaint form may be obtained from CEO. This form shall be used by members of the public, ECRL staff, or any Board member.

All complaints shall be handled in accordance with provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act unless the person waives the right to confidentiality in writing.

Investigation:

A copy of the signed complaint and a request for an investigation into an alleged breach shall be made in writing to the CEO within a reasonable time after the alleged breach (generally 30 days). The request shall contain the name of the Member who breached the Code of Conduct as well as details of the specific breach.

- The CEO shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint to the complainant in writing within 3 business days.
- The CEO may delegate the inquiry as appropriate, including seeking advice from legal counsel as necessary.
- The CEO or delegate will make every effort to address the issue within 30 business days or provide an estimate of time required if expected to take longer.
- The CEO or delegate will report to the Board in writing for each complaint.

Decisions Reported to the Board:

Where the investigation has found a probable breach, the complaint will be brought to the Board during a public meeting. Only the Board can decide that an actionable breach has occurred. The Board shall rule on penalties to a member within 60 days of the breach if reasonably possible.

Penalties:

The Board may impose penalties with regards to a breach of the CODE of CONDUCT including but not limited to:

- Public reprimand or requirement for public apology.
- Expulsion from one or more meetings for up to 90 days
- Removal from appointments or chair positions
- Expulsion from in-camera meetings
- Any combination of the above