



North Vancouver District  
Public Library

CONNECTING COMMUNITY. SHARING KNOWLEDGE. INSPIRING STORIES

## NORTH VANCOUVER DISTRICT PUBLIC LIBRARY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BOARD MEMBERS

### Preamble

North Vancouver District Public Library (NVDPL) Board Members understand that Members have been entrusted with caring for one of the District's most cherished institutions. Members will serve and be seen to serve Library users and their community in a conscientious and diligent manner, ensuring its business is conducted with the highest standards of integrity, ethics, honesty and governance, in a fair, honest and open manner.

Members will honour the Board's policies, guidelines, and this Code of Conduct at Board Meetings and when representing the Library. Members understand that Board meetings are public and that Member behaviour affects the image and reputation of the North Vancouver District Public Library.

Thus, members will conduct themselves in the best interests of the Library, and according to the following:

### 1. Mandate of the Library

Board Members will act in accordance with the mandate of the Library. Members will uphold the Library's mission, vision, and values, and will advance the NVDPL's Strategic Priorities.

#### Notes:

The current strategic vision for the Library is outlined in the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan, and summarized below:

**Vision: What we do**

Connecting Community. Sharing Knowledge. Inspiring Stories.

**Mission: Where we're going**

Shaping the District's future by inspiring learning, discovery, creativity, and collaboration.

**Values: Who we are**

Values are the building blocks of human behaviour. They provide a focus for how we approach our work. They can inspire behaviour that creates a dynamic and performance-oriented organization. We will strive to achieve the following in everything we do:

**We believe in**

- Supporting human potential and enabling excellence
- Building community and relationships
- Nurturing innovation while honouring tradition
- Embracing exploration, creativity and fun

**Our guiding principles**

- Intellectual freedom
- Lifelong learning and the love of reading

- Equitable access for all
- Sustainability

#### **Our strengths**

- Welcoming and inclusive place for all
- Diverse collections, programs and services that are responsive to community needs
- Current, relevant and adaptable technology
- Workplace culture of supported and empowered staff

## **Strategic Priorities 2017-2019**

### **EXPAND COMMUNITY LEARNING**

Act as a catalyst to inspire and support a community of learning and culture of reading. We will be the informal learning centre for the District, delighting and engaging our community with incredible content, resources, tools, spaces and programs.

### **TRANSFORM OUR DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT**

Support our community's ability to navigate the digital world by providing programs and resources to nurture digital literacy and creation skills. We will be the voice for increased connectivity, advancing initiatives that support our community to innovate.

### **COLLABORATE WITH OUR COMMUNITY**

Build on a culture of community collaboration. We will be deeply embedded in our community, growing our relationships and championing community-led practices.

## **2. Respect**

Board Members will - respect and be supportive of the personal dignity, self-esteem and well-being, of the Director of Library Services, Staff, Patrons, Volunteers, fellow Board Members, and any other persons with whom they come in contact with during the course of their professional duties.

### **Notes:**

Respect is a requirement of a healthy productive work environment. Lack of respect and bullying in the workplace can create a toxic work environment and can take a toll on employee health, productivity and job satisfaction. Toxic workplaces negatively affect individuals and work productivity, and adversely affect employees' sense of worth. A workplace in which employee contribution is not valued or where employee input is undermined or dismissed is destructive and constitutes a toxic work environment.

Bullying and harassment of one individual impacts all employees. This "ambient bullying" can be a significant catalyst in diminished productivity and high turnover in workplaces.

There is a risk of labelling all negative social behaviour in the workplace as bullying. It is important to differentiate bullying from conflict. The latter is a struggle in which there are incompatible goals or desires. This can arise when the same situation gives rise to different points of view or when individuals cannot reach agreement. However, Members engaged in conflict must always act with integrity and respect toward those with whom they disagree. Personal attacks, ridicule and humiliation are not acceptable or appropriate even in situations of conflict.

This provision complements Board Member obligations under [B.C.'s Workers Compensation Act](#) and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, and the Library's Positive Workplace Environment policy and guidelines. This section is also aligned with the Library's policies: B-HR-01 Fostering a Supported and Empowered Staff, MG-HR-01.0 Employee Code of Conduct, and MG-OP-06.1a Code of Conduct, all of which help foster a welcoming and supportive environment at the Library.

### 3. Board and Committee Meetings

Board Members will perform their duties in accordance with policies and procedures established by the Board, and will adhere to Robert's Rules of Order.

Members will prepare themselves for meetings; listen attentively to all discussions before the body; assume positive intent of others; respect the time of others, remain courteous; and focus on the business at hand. They will not interrupt other speakers; make personal comments not germane to the business of the body; or otherwise disturb a meeting.

Board Members will participate in official board discussions and decisions, and recognize that authority rests with the whole Board assembled in public meetings, and will not undermine or interfere with implementation of the final decisions of the Board. Board members will accept, endorse and accurately communicate Board decisions and policies, even if they disagree with them. Official information will normally be communicated by the Board as a whole, by the Board Chair, or by designated staff.

#### Notes:

Board Guideline [BG-GOV-01.1 Operation of the Board](#) states that the Board uses the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order as its parliamentary manual. Robert's Rules of Order and principles are designed to expedite business, maintain order and ensure justice, courtesy, fairness and equal treatment for all members. The consistent application of these rules and principles will help the committee to achieve its meeting objectives.

It is fundamental that the public perceives that all policies and decisions of the Library Board are fairly and impartially determined.

### 4. Conflict of Interest

Board Members will act in the public interest and not engage in conflicts of interest, either perceived or real. Member private interests, financial or otherwise, and the interests of their family, friends or other organizations with which Members are associated, should never compete with their duties and responsibilities to the Library. Member private interests include the prospect or promise of a future benefit or advantage.

Members will not accept payments or any other personal benefit to:

- a) make referrals to a person, partnership or corporation; or
- b) act as a paid agent before the Board or a Committee of the Board.

#### Notes:

This Code extends the concept to include a Member's non-monetary interests, as well as the interest of a Member's friends and organizations that the Member is associated with, including non-profits.

Private interest does not include matters of Conflict In Common, or a matter "that is of general application" and affects a Board Member as "one of a broad class of the public." For example, a Member is not in a conflict of interest if the Board lowers late fines for all Library users even though Board Members may be library users themselves.

Generally speaking, Members should ask themselves if they, a family member, friend or an organization to which they belong to is receiving a benefit that would impact the Member's decision making. Does the benefit disrupt a level

playing field where all citizens, groups and interests can expect impartial treatment? Would an informed person, viewing the matter realistically and practically and having thought the matter through, think it more likely than not that the Board Member, whether consciously or unconsciously, will be influenced in the performance of his [or her] official duties by considerations having to do with his [or her] private interests?

Board Members are also obligated to abide by the NVDPL Board Policy [B-HR-14 Conflict of Interest](#).

## 5. Improper Use of Influence

Board Members will not use their positions at the Library to improperly influence others for private gain or to gain preferential treatment for their family, friends or organizations with which Members are associated.

### Notes:

Improper influence means pressuring a person to do something they would not otherwise do. When making requests or giving direction to the Director of Library Services or Staff, Board Members should be aware of the authority they have and not exploit it for personal gain. This provision is closely linked to the concept of conflict of interest, however improper use of influence is the proactive leveraging of a Member's position of authority for their own benefit and not for the benefit of the Library.

Improper influence can be unintentional. Due to the position that a Board Member holds, staff may acquiesce to a Member's request even if the request is inappropriate. Therefore, Members should avoid requesting staff to perform activities other than those required in the performance of their duties. This includes asking staff to run personal errands.

## 6. Gifts and Favours

Board Members will remain free from any improper influence, or the appearance of improper influence, in the performance of their duties.

When outside individuals or organizations give Members gifts in connection to their position at the Library, they will only accept gifts that:

- a) are infrequent and the value is reasonable;
- b) arise out of activities or events related to the Member's official duties;
- c) are within the normal standards of courtesy, hospitality or protocol; and
- d) do not compromise or appear to compromise the integrity of the Member or the Library.

Should a Board Member receive a gift or favour that may be deemed unreasonable (e.g. with an approximate retail value in excess of \$25), they will inform the Board Chair and Director of Library Services so that they may be advised as to whether the gift is appropriate.

A Member may participate in Library programs open to the public and may purchase Library goods offered for public sale.

### Notes:

A gift includes a fee, advance, gift or personal benefit that is connected directly or indirectly with their duties as Board Members.

For example, if a Member receives an invitation to attend an event being hosted by a company with which the Library has just entered into a commercial arrangement, and the event is a celebration of the successful collaboration between the Library and the company, the Member may attend. This is a gift or benefit accepted as part of the normal exchange of hospitality and would be a one-time or rare event.

In contrast, if a management consulting firm, that is looking to do business with the Library, invites a Member to an event or activity at no cost to the Member, this invitation should be declined. Accepting the invitation would be inappropriate because a Board member would give the appearance of improper influence if the Library retained the services of the firm at some point in the future during the Member's term.

## 7. Privacy and Confidential Information

Board Members will respect the privacy of others and will not disclose or release by any means to any member of the public, any confidential information acquired by virtue of their role at the Library. Members will maintain this obligation even after Members leave the Board.

Members will only disclose confidential information if required by law, or authorized to do so by the Board.

### Notes:

The following are examples of the types of information that a Member of the Board must keep confidential: items under litigation, negotiation, or personnel matters; information that infringes on the rights of others (e.g., sources of complaints where the identity of a complainant is given in confidence); price schedules in contract tender or Request For Proposal submissions if so specified; and information deemed to be "personal information" under *B.C.'s Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)*.

## 8. Use of Library Property and Resources

Board Members will only use Library services, staff, land, facilities, equipment, supplies, or other resources for the business of the Library. Members will not use a position of authority at the Library to compel staff or volunteers to engage in partisan political activities.

### Notes:

For Members who wish to book community meeting and event space at the Library, or wish to display materials or other information, policies [B-OP-17 Meeting Rooms](#) and [B-OP-08 Community Information](#) apply, as they do for any member of the community.

According to NVDPL policy [B-OP-08 Community Information](#), particular beliefs or views are not to be promoted, nor is the acceptance of any item (for display or distribution purposes) equivalent to Library or Library Board endorsement of the viewpoint expressed therein. The Library does not participate in partisan politics nor take an advocacy role on issues outside the library world.

The Director of Library Services and Library Staff are public servants who have a professional responsibility to implement the decisions of the Board to the best of their ability, regardless of their personal feelings, and while upholding the principles of Intellectual Freedom and political neutrality. The use of Library resources for political purposes undermines this convention of public administration and would damage the perception of the Library as an institution that a) supports intellectual freedom and b) serves all residents equally. Therefore, Members should refrain from using their position to advance a political agenda.

## 9. Public Servants

Board Members will respect the role of the Director of Library Services and of Library staff as public servants who provide professional advice to the Board.

### Notes:

The Board is responsible for overseeing the Director of Library Services, policy-making decisions, strategic planning, and budget approval. Under the direction of the Director of Library Services, Staff serve the Board as a whole based on the resolutions made and directions given at Board meetings.

Board members will not attempt to exercise individual authority over the Library, Director of Library Services, or Library Staff, and Staff should not be subject to undue influence from any individual Member or faction of the Board. Accordingly, Members will not injure the professional or ethical reputation of Director of Library Services or Library Staff. Members will show respect for the professional capacities of the Director of Library Services and Library Staff in the administration of their duties and in their ability to implement Board decisions.

Members will refer any questions, complaints, or feedback received by members of the public directly to the Director of Library Services.

## 10. Accountability

The North Vancouver District Public Library Board is accountable for the implementation of this Code of Conduct; it is intended to be self-enforcing. Members should view the Code as a set of guidelines that express collectively the standards of conduct expected of them. The Code of Conduct, therefore, becomes most effective when members are thoroughly familiar with the Code and embrace its provisions.

For this reason, the Code of Conduct will be provided to prospective trustee candidates. Members appointed to the Board are required to sign the Member Statement affirming that they have read and understood the NVDPL Code of Conduct. In addition, the Board will review annually the Code of Conduct to ensure that Members have a strong familiarity with its contents.

### NVDPL Board Member Code of Conduct

#### MEMBER STATEMENT

As a member of the North Vancouver District Public Library Board, I agree to uphold this Code of Conduct.

***I affirm that I have read and understood the NVDPL Board Member Code of Conduct.***

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**This NVDPL Trustee Code of Conduct was approved and adopted by the NVDPL Board at the June 27, 2019 Board meeting.**