

Sexual Harassment

The Sherrard Public Library District strongly opposes sexual harassment in any form. Sexual harassment is against Library policy and is a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as well as the Illinois Human Rights Act as amended on January 7, 1993. It is also unlawful to retaliate against a person who has lodged a complaint of sexual harassment.

A. Work Environment

It is the policy of this Board that all employees have a right to work in an environment free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment in the workplace includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term of condition of an individual's employment.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual, or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile,, or offensive work environment.

Any employee who believes that he or she is being subjected to sexual harassment is urged to immediately report such conduct to the Administration in accordance with the Sexual Harassment Reporting Procedure.

B. Library Employee/Patron Relationship

The Board affirms its commitment to ensuring an environment for all patrons free of sexual harassment. The Board views sexual harassment of patrons by Library employees as an abuse of authority and, therefore, such harassment will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment of a patron by a Library employee means:

1. Any sexual advance by an employee toward a patron.
2. Any request by an employee to a patron for sexual favors.
3. Any acceptance by an employee of a sexual advance or request for sexual favors from a patron, or
4. Any conduct of a sexual nature by an employee directed toward a patron when (i) the patron's submission to or rejection of such conduct is either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a patron's participation in any library-sponsored activity, or (ii) such conduct has the purpose or effect on a patron of reasonable sensitivities, of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive library environment for the patron.

Any patron who suspects that she or he has encountered sexual harassment should report the incident to the Director, or if not immediately available, to her as soon as possible. Any

employee who witnesses or has knowledge of sexual harassment by a Library employee against a patron shall immediately report it to the Director or to their immediate supervisor.

C. Examples

Sexual harassment prohibited by the policy includes verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct. The terms “intimidating,” “hostile,” or “offensive” as used above include conduct which has the effect of humiliation, embarrassment, or discomfort.

Examples of verbal sexual harassment include: explicit sexual propositions, sexual innuendo, suggestive comments, foul or obscene language, insults of a sexual nature, and humor or jokes about sex or gender-specific traits.

Examples of non-verbal sexual harassment include: suggestive or insulting sounds, leering, whistling, obscene gestures, display of foul or obscene printed or visual material.

Examples of physical sexual harassment include: sexual touching, patting or pinching of a sexual nature, intentionally brushing the body, coerced sexual intercourse, and sexual assault.

D. Duty to Report Sexual Harassment by Patrons to Fellow Patrons

All Library employees have the affirmative duty to report incidents of sexual harassment perpetrated by patrons upon fellow patrons, whether witnessed firsthand or reported to them. Such incidents must be reported to the Director or to their immediate supervisor.

E. Retaliation

It is a violation of this policy to retaliate or to take reprisal in any way against anyone who has articulated any concern about sexual harassment or discrimination against the person raising the concern or against another individual.

F. Sexual Harassment Reporting Procedure

The following procedure shall be used by any patron or employee who suspects that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment.

Step 1:

a. Reporting by Patrons

Any patron who suspects that he or she is the victim of sexual harassment by a Library employee or a fellow patron should report it to the Director as soon as possible.

b. Reporting by Employees

A complaint by a Library employee that sexual harassment has occurred shall first be presented to either the Director or to the employee’s immediate supervisor. If the Director or supervisor is the subject of the complaint, then the complaint should be presented to the President of the Board of Trustees.

Step 2:

If the alleged perpetrator of sexual harassment is a Library patron, normal disciplinary procedures should be followed. In all other cases, the Director shall meet with the

complainant within three (3) days of receiving the complaint to discuss the allegations. If the complainant chooses to have a representative, then the Director may also have a representative; such meeting, however, shall be informal. The Director shall issue a written decision with five (5) days of the meeting.

Step 3:

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Director's decision, within five (5) days of the date of that decision, an appeal may be taken to the Board President or his designee (hereafter the words "Board President" shall include designee).

The appeal shall be in writing and shall state the reasons for appealing the Director's decision. Within five (5) days of receiving the appeal, the Board President shall meet with the complainant, any representatives, and the Director to resolve the matter. The Board President shall issue a written decision within ten (10) days of this meeting. Any employee found to have sexually harassed a patron or another employee, or retaliated against a patron or employee who alleges sexual harassment, will be subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

Step 4:

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Board President's decision, then within ten (10) days, an appeal of that decision may be made to the entire Board of Library Trustees. Such an appeal shall be instituted by filing with the Secretary of the Board a statement setting forth the reasons for the appeal. Within twenty (20) days of receiving an appeal, the Board or a committee hereof shall meet with the complainant, the Director, and any representatives to discuss the allegations of discrimination. The hearing with the Board, shall be informal, however, the complainant and the administration may present all evidence, call, and cross-examine witnesses. The rules of evidence shall not apply; however, hearsay evidence shall not be presented for proof of any ultimate facts.

Within ten (10) days after the hearing, the Board shall issue its written decision.

All hearings shall be held in private and at times convenient for the parties. In the event that the person designated to hear a complaint is the alleged offender, then the employee may immediately move to the next step of the procedure. At any step, the person hearing the complaint may conduct or direct such investigation as they deem appropriate, including obtaining a response from the alleged offender. There shall be no harassment or retaliation by any person involved in the process for any reason.

G. Legal Recourse, Investigative, and Complaint Process Available Through the Illinois Department of Human Rights and Human Rights Commission.

Any Library Patron or employee may also use the legal recourse, investigative, and complaint process through the Illinois Department of Human Rights and Human Rights Commission.

The address and telephone number are:

Illinois Department of Human Rights

222 S. College, Rm. 101A

Springfield, IL 62700

(217) 785-5100

-- Adopted May, 2010