

Midland Public Library

Policy Type: **Communication**

Policy Number: **CO - 01**

Policy Title: **Communication & Public Relations Policy**

Initial Policy Approval Date: April 2016
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Year of next review: 2021

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Midland Public Library (MPL) external communications are:

- accessible, engaging and professional
- well-managed, and
- consistent with the Library's Purpose Statement and core values;
 - MPL provides useful, accurate and understandable information;
 - Communication strategies and requirements are an essential part of the Library's community consultation and collaboration;
 - Library Board Members, Employees and Volunteers understand how to meet the legislative requirements that govern communications and content, including the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), and other legislation and related Library policies; and
 - Library Board Members, Employees and Volunteers understand what is expected of them when using Library communications channels.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to external communications about or on behalf of Midland Public Library including:

- Communication by MPL Board Members, employees and Volunteers; and
- All forms of communications, including all electronic forms of communication including website, email and social media.

This policy is based upon the Library's *Guideline for Communication Regarding Personnel Matters and Guideline for Social Media Communications*.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Midland Public Library values the role that communications plays in:

- Engaging and consulting with the community and members of the public;
- Sharing information about the Library;
- Enhancing the value MPL brings to the community; and
- Providing transparency about how the Library operates.

The Library's communications will:

- Reflect the Library's values and its commitment to responsive public service;
- Be delivered clearly and effectively in a respectful and positive manner;
- Support intellectual freedom while protecting privacy rights;
- Represent the diverse nature of the community in a fair and inclusive manner;
- Reflect the value of accessibility and comply with accessibility legislation and standards;
- Provide information in different formats using various means of communication to efficiently reach the audiences; and
- Be delivered in a proactive manner rather than reactive.

CONTENT

Corporate Identity

MPL shall ensure that a clear and consistent corporate identity is maintained to help the public recognize and understand Library policies and use library programs and services.

Corporate identity matters include how the Library is governed as well as legal, financial and personnel matters.

Intellectual Property

All intellectual content about the Library and its services, programs and initiatives created by the Library, or its board, or its Employees while employed by the Library is owned by and the property of the Library and the Library is the copyright holder. It includes content in all formats and content posted on MPL website and social media channels.

MPL content may be reproduced by others with prior written consent and shall include appropriate acknowledgement of MPL, and used in accordance with Canadian copyright law. Questions regarding use and acknowledgement of content will be handled by the CEO.

Inappropriate Content

Inappropriate content, as determined by the Library, shall not be communicated or shared using the Library's communications channels, platforms or equipment. Examples of inappropriate content are: information that identifies individuals without their permission, producing copies of copyrighted materials, negative comments about the Library or its Board Members, Employees or Volunteers, hate propaganda, discriminatory or profane language, harassing language and behaviours or any communications regarding personnel matters.

Non-Partisan

One of MPL's core values is to be open and welcoming to all. We strive to be non-partisan in our services, spaces and communications.

To accomplish this Midland Public Library will be non-partisan in its communications and will not:

- Support, endorse, or advocate the viewpoints or beliefs of any one candidate, political party, organization or group;
- Allow the posting or distribution of election or campaign material in or around library facilities or on the website; or
- Participate in, or lend support to, partisan events organized for political party purposes.

Advertising

- MPL will advertise its programs, services and initiatives in the Library as well as non-library communications channels and publications; and
- MPL may, at its own discretion, publish advertisements in its print or digital publications from a public sector, non-profit, private-sector or non-government source.

ACCESSIBILITY

MPL works to provide “universal access” to library services for all people to the greatest extent possible. Where possible, the Library will provide access without the need for adaptation or specialized design in order to integrate services to persons with disabilities. In accordance with MPL’s values and its Accessibility for Users with Disabilities Policy, the Library will:

- Communicate in ways that are accessible to persons with disabilities when requested;
- Comply with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* and regulations; and
- Provide emergency procedures, plans or public safety information in an accessible format

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy

Access to and communication of information held by the Library is governed by privacy legislation and the MPL Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Policy.

The Library will protect the privacy of all individuals’ personal information in its custody or control and will comply with the access and privacy provisions of the MFIPPA and other applicable legislation.

Technological Innovation and New Media/Social Media

MPL will implement strategies to ensure that technology and new media/social media are used to enhance the Library’s ability to connect with the public in efficient and practical ways.

MEDIA RELATIONS

MPL will operate and respond effectively in a 24-hour media environment. MPL will engage the media using a variety of communication tools, including social media, news conferences, background or technical briefings, news releases, etc.

The CEO, in consultation with the Chair will manage the MPL response to information or interview requests from the media. Media enquiries will be answered promptly, whenever possible, to meet publication deadlines.

COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

Gathering and providing information of importance to the public and other Library stakeholder requires professional tools and resources, and effective, accountable management.

Communication activities shall make responsible use of public funds to obtain maximum value.

External communication requirements will be identified and met by the CEO or Board Chair when planning, managing or reviewing policies, programs, services or initiatives.

Accountability for Communications

The CEO and Board Chair are accountable for communications management and shall ensure that:

- Communications reflect the Library values, policies, and the Policy Statement above; and
- Midland Public Library is compliant with legislation governing communications;

Authorized Spokespersons:

The Chair of the Midland Public Library Board and or the CEO, or a designate, will be the spokesperson when statements on behalf of Midland Public Library are required for such matters as MPL corporate information and Board decisions and shall consult with each other prior to any communication.

The Chair or the CEO may assign other representatives to speak on certain topics as appropriate with the prior consent of the other. Other Board Members and Staff will not act as spokespersons unless designated by the Chair and CEO.

Employees shall communicate openly and on a regular basis with members of the public about programs, services and initiatives with which they are familiar and for which they have direct responsibility. Employees shall not speak on behalf of MPL and /or the board about corporate matters.

Employees may be designated by the CEO, to speak to the media about services and initiatives they are familiar with and for which they have direct responsibility. Such communication will be done in collaboration with the CEO.

Volunteers will not speak on behalf of MPL and /or the Board about corporate or operational matters. Volunteers shall inform the CEO if they are asked for information or to comment on corporate or operational matters.

Partnerships and Collaborative Arrangements

Communication requirements will be taken into account when planning, negotiating or implementing a partnership or other collaborative arrangement.

Joint activities or initiatives will be communicated in a manner that is fair and equitable to all parties.

Agreements governing collaborative arrangements will establish the communication roles and responsibilities of the parties involved.

Environmental Stewardship

MPL will strive to be environmentally responsible by conserving energy and other resources by minimizing the use of paper in the management and delivery of Library communications and the marketing of Library services and initiatives.

Communication Regarding Personnel Matters

The Library Board or individual Board Members may receive communications which contain information about Library employees or Volunteers. This information may meet the definition of personal information.

Employees and Volunteers who receive communications which contain information about Library Employees that would meet the definition of personal information shall refer the communications to the CEO.

Crisis and Emergency Communication

- In the event of a crisis or emergency in which the Library is involved, MPL will communicate during and after the event in order to prevent injury or loss of life, limit damage to Library assets and property, maintain public services, assist in the process of recovery, and maintain or restore public confidence in the Library;
- The Library will support the Town of Midland and its boards and commissions in any crisis or emergency communications, as required; and
- The Chair of the Midland Public Library Board and/or the CEO, assumes the role of spokesperson for crisis or emergency communications. Other Board Members and Staff will not act as spokespersons unless designated by the Chair and CEO.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Board Member** means an individual who has been appointed to the Midland Public Library Board by the Town of Midland Council or Township of Tiny Council.
- **Communications** means the interaction between two or more people or groups where information and other content is provided, sent or received.
- **Communications Channel** means a physical transmission medium, such as print or electronic media, through which information and other content is sent or received.
- **Communications Platform** means a tool that supports back-and-forth communication such as conversations rather than just one-way or broadcast communication.
- **Confidential** means access is permitted only by those who have been authorized. Employee means a person who is employed by the Library and includes all Employees, including Page and Casual Staff.

- **Non-Partisan** is defined as not favoring or promoting any political party, platform or candidate.
- **Personal** Information is defined as information that can be considered confidential could be used to indemnify an individual.
- **Record** means recorded information in any format. These formats can include documents, business records, financial statements, personnel files, minutes, accounts, letters, emails and other forms of correspondence, memoranda, photographs, films.
- **Transparency** means a situation in which business and financial activities are done in an open way without secrets, so that people can trust that they are fair and honest.
- **Volunteer** means a person who voluntarily extends his or her services to actively support the Library, and who does so without remuneration. While Library Board Members volunteer their time and do not receive remuneration, for the purposes of this policy they will be referred to as Board Members as they have roles and responsibilities that are different from those of other volunteers.