

W.H. Walters Free Public Library

Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Effective Date: January 12, 2026.

Approved by: Library Board of Trustees on January 12, 2026.

Policy Statement

The W.H. Walters Free Public Library is committed to maintaining a respectful, inclusive, and safe environment for all employees, volunteers, patrons, visitors, etc. Discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

This policy applies to all library employees, volunteers, trustees, patrons, vendors, and any individual who interacts with the library in person, via telephone, electronically, or through social media.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to conduct:

- Within the library premises, including the municipal building it is housed in.
- During work-related or library-sponsored events off-site.
- In any communication that affects the work environment or patron services, including but not limited to digital or remote interactions.

Prohibited Conduct

The W.H. Walters Free Public Library prohibits discrimination and harassment based on any protected characteristics under federal or New Jersey law, including but not limited to:

- Race or color
- National origin or ancestry
- Sex, gender identity or expression
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or creed
- Disability or perceived disability
- Age
- Pregnancy or breastfeeding

- Marital or domestic partnership status
- Military or veteran status
- Genetic information

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal conduct such as slurs, offensive jokes, or name-calling.
- Visual conduct such as derogatory posters, cartoons, drawing, or gestures.
- Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking movement, or threats.
- Sexual harassment, including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal/physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Reporting and Complaints

Anyone who believes they have experienced or witnessed discrimination or harassment should report it immediately to:

- The Library Director, or
- The Board President (if the complaint involves the Library Director)

Reports may also be made anonymously, although this may limit the library's ability to investigate. Retaliation for reporting concerns or participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

Complaints will be handled promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially to the extent possible. Investigations may involve cooperation with municipal Human Resources, especially since the library operates within a municipal building and may share services or oversight.

Corrective Action

If a violation of this policy is found to have occurred, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including:

- Counseling or training
- Written warnings
- Suspension or termination (for employees or volunteers)
- Limiting or revoking library privileges (for patrons)

Training and Awareness

All employees or volunteers must undergo periodic anti-harassment and anti-discrimination training, in line with New Jersey state guidance and municipal HR requirements.

Compliance with Law

This policy is in compliance with the New Jersey Against Discrimination (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.) and applicable federal laws. It will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure legal compliance and best practices.

Acknowledgment

All employees and volunteers are required to sign an acknowledgment form confirming that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by this policy.