

# **The Book Publishers Association of Alberta Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy**

## **1. The Book Publishers Association of Alberta's Commitment**

The Book Publishers Association of Alberta (BPAA) is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination and harassment, where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, can contribute fully and have equal opportunities.

By law, every person has the right to be free from harassment and discrimination. Harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated, condoned, or ignored at the BPAA. If a claim of harassment or discrimination is proven, disciplinary measures will be applied, up to and including termination of employment or contract of engagement.

The BPAA is committed to a comprehensive strategy to address harassment and discrimination, including:

- Providing training and education to make sure everyone knows their rights and responsibilities
- Regularly monitoring organizational systems for barriers relating to prohibited grounds of discrimination
- Providing an effective and fair complaints procedure
- Promoting appropriate standards of conduct at all time.

## **2. Policy Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Make sure that management, staff, and all who are engaged by the BPAA to work, whether for pay or on a voluntary basis (hereinafter, "BPAA Personnel"), are aware that harassment and discrimination are unacceptable practices and are incompatible with the standards of this organization, as well as being a violation of the law.
- Set out the types of behavior that may be considered offensive and are prohibited by this policy.

## **3. Applying the Policy**

The right to freedom from discrimination and harassment extends to all BPAA Personnel.

It is also unacceptable for BPAA Personnel to engage in harassment or discrimination when dealing with publishers and their staff members, and those with whom they have professional dealings or the public.

This policy applies at every level of the BPAA, and to every aspect of the workplace environment and working relationship, including recruitment, selection, promotion, transfers, training, remuneration and termination.

This policy also applies to events that occur outside of the physical workplace, such as during business meetings, trips, parties or entertaining.

#### **4. Prohibited Grounds of Discrimination**

This policy prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following grounds, and any combination of these grounds:

- Age
- Religion
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Gender expression
- Family status
- Marital status
- Disability
- Race
- Ancestry
- Place of origin
- Ethnic origin
- Citizenship
- Colour
- Association or relationship with a person identified by one of the above grounds
- Perception that one of the above grounds applies.

#### **5. Definitions:**

The following behavior is prohibited:

**Discrimination:** means any form of unequal treatment based on a prohibited ground of discrimination, whether imposing extra burdens or denying benefits. It may be intentional or unintentional. It may involve direct actions that are discriminatory on their face, or it may involve rules, practices, or procedures that appear neutral, but disadvantage certain groups of people. Discrimination may take obvious forms, or it may happen in very subtle ways. Even if there are many factors affecting a decision or action, if discrimination is one factor, that is a violation of this policy.

**Harassment:** means a course of comments or actions that are known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome. It can involve words or actions that are known or should be known to be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, demeaning, or unwelcome, based on a ground of discrimination identified by this policy. Harassment can occur based on any of the grounds of discrimination.

Reasonable action taken by the employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the workplace is not workplace harassment.

Examples of harassment include:

- Epithets, remarks, jokes, or innuendos related to a person's race, gender identity, gender expression, sex, disability, sexual orientation, creed, age or any other ground
- Posting or circulating offensive pictures, graffiti, or materials, whether in print form or via email or other electronic means
- Singling out a person for humiliating or demeaning "teasing" or jokes because they are a member of a group defined by a ground of discrimination
- Comments ridiculing a person because of characteristics that are related to a ground of discrimination. For example, this could include comments about a person's dress, speech, or other practices that may be related to their sex, race, gender identity or creed.

**Sexual and gender-based harassment:** Workplace sexual harassment means

- a. engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace because of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, where the course of comment or conduct is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, or
- b. making a sexual solicitation or advance where the person making the solicitation or advance is in a position to confer, grant or deny a benefit or advancement to the worker and the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the solicitation or advance is unwelcome.

Examples of sexual and gender-based harassment can include, without limitation:

- Gender-related comments about a person's physical characteristics or mannerisms
- Paternalism based on gender which a person feels undermines his or her self-respect or position of responsibility
- Unwelcome physical contact
- Suggestive or offensive remarks or innuendoes about members of a specific gender
- Propositions of physical intimacy
- Gender-related verbal abuse, threats or taunting
- Leering or inappropriate staring
- Bragging about sexual prowess or questions or discussion about sexual activities
- Offensive jokes or comments of a sexual nature about another individual
- Rough or vulgar humour or language related to gender
- Display of sexually offensive pictures, graffiti, or other materials including through electronic means
- Unwelcome demands for dates or sexual favours.

**Sexual Solicitation:** This policy prohibits sexual solicitations or advances by any person who is in a position to deny a benefit to the recipient of the solicitation or advance. This includes all BPAA Personnel where one person is in a position to grant or deny a benefit to the other.

**Poisoned Environment:** A poisoned environment is created by comments or conduct (including comments or conduct that are condoned or allowed to continue when brought to the attention of management) that create a discriminatory work or editorial environment. The comments or conduct need not be directed at a specific person, and may be from any person, regardless of position or status. A single comment or action, if sufficiently serious, may create a poisoned environment.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities:**

All BPAA Personnel are expected to uphold and abide by this policy, by refraining from any form of harassment or discrimination, by cooperating fully in any investigation of a harassment or discrimination complaint, and by bringing any form of harassment or discriminatory behaviour of which they become aware to the immediate attention of management. Personnel are not to be penalized or disciplined for reporting an incident or for participating in an investigation involving workplace harassment.

The Executive Director is responsible for creating and maintaining a harassment and discrimination-free environment, and should wherever possible address potential problems before they become serious. The Executive Director will investigate and deal with all complaints or incidents of workplace harassment in a fair, respectful and timely manner. Information provided about an incident or about a complaint will not be disclosed except as necessary to protect staff, to investigate the complaint or incident, to take corrective action or as otherwise required by law.

We encourage anyone who has a complaint against a BPAA staff member, executive, contractor, or consultant at any time to please contact Kieran Leblanc, Executive Director, kleblanc@bookpublishers.ab.ca. If Kieran Leblanc has a personal interest in the matter to be discussed, the report should be made to Alexander Finbow, Board President, alexander@renegademail.com.

Other available resources are available online:

[Alberta Human Rights Act](#)  
[Work Safe Alberta Anti-Harassment Guide](#)

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