

## POLICY

**Policy Type:** Board **Policy Number:** 01-10  
**Policy Title:** Code of Ethics

---

- Code of Ethics:** The St. Thomas Public Library Board exists to develop, promote and monitor library services as a public trust. To this end, Board members should be committed to the Library's code of ethics.
- The primary goal of public library Board members is to ensure that the public has access to the highest quality library services possible.
  - Board members should ensure that each person has access to the most complete Library service possible compatible with equal service for others. Where limitations in service are unavoidable, any inherent inequality of service should favour those residents least able to obtain alternate service.
  - Board members should observe ethical standards with truth, integrity and honour.
  - Board members who have a pecuniary interest must declare that interest in the required manner and remove themselves from closed meetings and from attempting any influence.
  - Board members should distinguish between their personal views and those of the institution by respecting the position of the Board, even though they may disagree. Once the Board speaks, it speaks with one voice.
  - Board members should respect the confidential nature of library records within the framework which allows for the monitoring of material usage and the need for public accounting.
  - Board members should respect the established structure of the library.
  - Board members should attempt to work harmoniously with the Board and ultimately accept its will.
  - Board members should limit their trusteeship role to policy governance and advocacy.

Board members are expected to take responsibility for their personal development through continuing education opportunities and participation in provincial and national library organizations.

Board members should support intellectual freedom in the selection of library materials.

**Confidentiality:** In their decision making process, Board members will have access to information that may be confidential or controversial such as, but not limited to “Closed Session” meetings. Board members owe positive loyalty to the Board which is responsible for governing the St. Thomas Public Library and should never divulge its deliberations and decisions to any outside body or person before they are made known to the staff and public through the agreed-upon channels and public communication.

Confidential information means any information that is of a personal nature to Board employees or clients or information that is not available to the public and that, if disclosed, could result in loss or damage to the Library or could give the person to whom it is disclosed an advantage.

Confidential information includes, but is not limited to the following information:

- disclosed or discussed at a Closed Session meeting of the Board
- that is circulated to Library Board Members and marked “Confidential”
- that is given verbally in confidence in preparation of or following a meeting that is closed to the public and includes, but is not limited to the following types of information:
  - personal matters about an identifiable individual(s);
  - information about suppliers provided for evaluation which might be useful to other suppliers;
  - matters relating to legal affairs of the Board;
  - sources of complaints where the identity of the complainant is given in confidence;
  - items under negotiations;
  - schedules of prices in contract tenders;
  - personal information as defined in the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Library Board members shall not disclose or release by any means to any member of the public either in verbal or written form any confidential information acquired by virtue of their office except when required by law to do so.

All information, documentation or deliberations received, reviewed or taken in closed session of the Board is confidential until the matter ceases to be confidential, as determined by the Board. Board members

shall not permit any person other than those who are entitled thereto to have access to information that is confidential.

Confidential information that is provided to Board members by the Library does not belong to them. It is property that belongs to the Library.

The obligation to keep information confidential is a continuing obligation even if the Board member ceases to be a member of the Library Board.

Board members must accept that decisions are made on a majority basis after due deliberation and that it is the obligation of Board members to abide by and support, rather than undermine them. Equally Board members may not publicly criticize other Board members or St. Thomas Public Library staff.

Approved Date: January 16, 2019  
Supercedes Date: October 15, 2014  
Review Date: October 2022  
Reference: Library Board Meeting, January 16, 2019