

Patron Code of Conduct Policy Update

Public Engagement Report – October 2024

Introduction

Community engagement is integrated into decision-making and planning at the Kingston Frontenac Public Library (KFPL). As part of the Library's commitment to community-informed development, updates to the Patron Code of Conduct are being made to meet the evolving needs of library patrons and staff. Along with other Library policies, it helps ensure the safety, dignity and intellectual freedom of library patrons and staff, as well as the security of library property.

Engagement played an important role in shaping the updates, ensuring diverse perspectives were considered. This report highlights the methods used to engage the community during the second phase of feedback, summarizes the feedback received and outlines how this input influenced the project's outcomes.

Background

Library policies are regularly reviewed, both on a pre-determined schedule, and based on operational need. The Patron Code of Conduct Policy was last reviewed by a staff committee in 2015. Revisions to the Policy were approved by the Library Board in February 2016, but later reversed after a significant amount of community feedback was received in response to changes. The Library Board then formed a [Community Engagement Committee](#) and implemented a [Community Engagement Policy](#) and Toolkit. Public consultation on the Patron Code of Conduct Policy took place in 2018, led by an external consultant. Progress on Policy updates was stalled by staffing changes and the COVID-19 pandemic.

An internal Working Group was formed in Spring 2024, with management and union representatives, including Joint Health and Safety Committee members, tasked with directing the project, making decisions on engagement opportunities and providing overall guidance regarding updates to the Patron Code of Conduct Policy. The Working Group met regularly between May and November 2024. Much of the Working Group's time was devoted to gathering and reviewing internal and external feedback and drafting an updated version of the Policy.

The first stage of engagement was conducted between May and July 2024 and included feedback from key audiences like KFPL staff, Library Board and members of the public.

Over 1,500 people participated and provided suggestions and ideas. The first stage concluded with the release of the draft of the re-named Library Use and Conduct Policy. The Library Board approved the first draft for further engagement at their September 25, 2024 meeting.

Engagement Objectives

The purpose of the second stage of engagement was to collect internal and external feedback on the updated Patron Code of Conduct Policy, now titled Library Use and Conduct Policy, to ensure it aligns with the current needs of staff and library patrons.

Audiences

- ↳ KFPL Staff and Library Board
- ↳ Kingston and Frontenac County communities

Engagement Methods

Engagement activities included two in-person pop-ups at KFPL branches, staff survey and a feedback ad campaign aimed at collecting suggestions via email. These activities were designed to raise awareness of the updated Library Use and Conduct Policy and gather feedback on the updated Policy via email or in person.

Outreach efforts were supported by City of Kingston and Frontenac County staff, who shared the draft policy with their audiences.

To gather a broad range of input, KFPL offered multiple engagement formats:

Survey

- ↳ Staff survey (38 responses)

In-branch engagement pop-ups

- ↳ Two in-branch pop-up sessions at the Central and Isabel Turner Branches provided library users with the opportunity to speak with a member of the Code of Conduct Working Group about the changes to the Policy.

Engagement Ad Campaign

- ↳ The ad campaign ran for thirteen days, between October 7- October 20. The call to action was to review the changes and email KFPL suggestions.
- ↳ The goal was to drive users to the updated Policy and request feedback over email or in-person at one of the pop-ups.
- ↳ The campaign reached 21,934 Meta users and led to 876 link clicks to the [Engage KFPL webpage](#) which included the updated Policy and the Stage 1 Engagement Report.

↳ The ad had 50 reactions, 13 comments and 10 shares.

What We Heard

The engagement process on the draft Library Use and Conduct Policy was valuable in ensuring revisions to the Policy reflect the needs of KFPL's diverse community and promote a safe and welcoming space for all.

The following section of the report summarizes feedback collected during the October engagement activities.

Loitering

↳ 2 patrons wanted to ensure loitering was no longer part of the updated policy.

Noise

↳ 2 patrons who use the library to study were concerned that no provision addresses noise volume.

Intoxication

↳ 1 patron inquired about KFPL's guidelines regarding intoxication on library premises.

Sleeping

↳ 12 patrons had comments about sleeping at the Library (both at the in-branch pop-up, via email and in comments on social media). Concerns ranged from patrons wishing sleeping was allowed and those that felt that it was not appropriate to sleep at the Library.

Hot foods

↳ 1 patron expressed desire to be able to eat hot meals while studying.

Overall clarity

↳ 1 patron provided suggestions to re-organize the order of points in the Policy for greater clarity.

Mobility scooters

↳ 1 library user suggested to re-think the inclusion of 'scooters' as part of the items that must be left outside in designated area. Only including the word 'scooters' might be confusing, as some patrons use scooters as mobility devices.

Recommendations

As a result of feedback received during engagement activities, as well as feedback from the Library's Joint Health and Safety Committee, the Working Group is recommending the following changes:

- ↳ Add line about volume of conversation and tone of voice.
- ↳ Remove ‘scooters’ from list of items that must be left outside the branches, to eliminate confusion between mobility assistive devices and recreational equipment.
- ↳ Add provision about intoxication being prohibited on library premises to the section that deals with illegal substances at the Library.
- ↳ Add the word ‘behaviour’ to the first line to reinforce that it is not just offensive and discriminatory language that is not permitted, but also discriminatory and offensive behaviour or gestures.
- ↳ Reorder the lines so similar items are grouped together.
- ↳ Edit the line about clothing to better communicate expectations.
- ↳ Expand the line about food to clarify what types of foods are allowed and include language regarding patrons being mindful of others.
- ↳ Separate clauses so ‘Keep belongings with you” is its own line.
- ↳ Add provision regarding sitting on the floor.

The Code of Conduct Working Group carefully reviewed all information collected during the engagement process and recommended changes directly supported by the survey data, internal incident reports, library sector best-practices and Health and Safety regulations and considerations. The recommendations aim to ensure the Policy fosters positive experiences for KFPL patrons and staff, complies with health and safety regulations, and upholds the Library’s commitment to being a welcoming space for all.

The Draft Policy refers to a “Procedure on Responding to Library Use and Conduct Policy Violations” in section 5 under Compliance. Banning guidelines will be reviewed and procedures revised as part of the implementation of the new Policy.

Next Steps

The second draft of the Library Use and Conduct Policy will be presented for approval to the Kingston Frontenac Public Library Board at their November 27, 2024 meeting with the recommendation that the Policy and updated banning/suspension guidelines be implemented on March 31, 2025.

Supplementary Materials

2015 Patron Code of Conduct Policy (attached)

2024 Library Use and Conduct Policy 1st Draft (attached)

2024 Library Use and Conduct Policy 2nd Draft (attached)