

## Grievance Procedure

**It is the policy of the Westhampton Free Library that employees should have an opportunity to present their work-related complaints and appeal management decisions through a dispute resolution or grievance procedure. The Library will attempt to resolve promptly all grievances that are appropriate for handling under this procedure.**

An appropriate grievance is defined as the employee's expressed dissatisfaction concerning any interpretation or application of a work-related policy by management, supervisors, or other employees. Examples of matters that may be considered appropriate grievances under this policy include:

- 1) A belief that Library policies, practices, rules, regulations, or procedures have been applied in a manner detrimental to an employee.
- 2) Treatment considered unfair by an employee, such as coercion, reprisal, harassment, or intimidation.
- 3) Alleged discrimination because of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, marital status, or disability.
- 4) Improper or unfair administration of employee benefits or conditions of employment such as scheduling, vacations, fringe benefits, promotions, retirement, holidays, performance review, salary, or seniority.

Employees should notify the Library, in a timely fashion, of any grievance considered appropriate for handling under this policy. The grievance procedure is the exclusive remedy for employees with appropriate grievances. As used in the policy, the terms "timely fashion," "reasonable time," and "promptly" generally will mean five workdays.

The grievance procedure has a maximum of three steps, but grievances may be resolved at any step of the process. Grievances are to be fully processed until the employee is satisfied, does not file a timely appeal, or exhausts the right of appeal. A decision becomes binding on all parties whenever an employee does not file a timely appeal or when a decision is made in the final step and the right of appeal no longer exists.

Employees who feel they have an appropriate grievance should proceed as follows:

- 1) Promptly bring the grievance to the attention of the immediate supervisor. If the grievance involves the supervisor, then it is permissible to proceed directly to step two. The supervisor is to investigate the grievance, attempt to resolve it, and give a decision to the employee within a reasonable time. The supervisor should prepare a written and dated summary of the grievance and proposed resolution for file purposes.
- 2) If dissatisfied with the supervisor's decision, appeal the decision to the Director, or initiate procedure with the Director if step one has been bypassed. Such an appeal or initial complaint must be made in a timely fashion in writing. The supervisor's version of the grievance and decision will then be submitted using a

similar written form. The director will, in a timely fashion, confer with the employee, the supervisor, and any others considered appropriate; investigate the issues; and communicate a decision in writing to all the parties involved.

Final decisions on grievances will not be precedent setting or binding on future grievances unless they are officially stated as policy. When appropriate, the decisions will be retroactive to the date of the employee's original grievance.

Information concerning an employee grievance is to be held in confidence. Supervisors and other individuals who investigate a grievance are to discuss it only with those individuals who have a need to know about it or who are needed to supply necessary background information or advice.

Time spent by employees in grievance discussions with management during their normal working hours will be considered hours worked for pay purposes.

Employees are not to be penalized for proper use of the grievance procedure. However, it is not considered proper use if an employee raises grievances in bad faith or solely for the purposes of delay or harassment, or repeatedly raised, unmerited grievances.

Implementation of the grievance procedure by an employee does not limit the right of the Library to proceed with any disciplinary action that is not in retaliation for the use of the grievance procedure.

The Library may, at its discretion, refuse to proceed with any complaint it determines is improper under this policy. Further, this policy does not alter the employment-at-will relationship in any way.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees: January 1997  
Amended: June 2010