



Disconnecting from Work

Human Resources

Purpose

Brantford Public Library understands that due to work-related pressures, the current landscape of work, or the working environment, employees may feel obligated to perform their job duties outside their normal working hours. Work-related pressure and feeling an inability to disconnect from the job can lead to stress and deterioration of mental and physical health. This policy has been established to support employee wellness and work-life balance, minimize excessive sources of stress, and recognize the right of an employee to disconnect from work outside of regular working hours.

Defined Terms

“Disconnecting from work” means not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending or reviewing of other messages, including text messages, so as to be free from the performance of work.

“Employee” means a person who works at the Brantford Public Library, either part-time or full-time.

Policy

Application

1. The Right to Disconnect

The right to disconnect means that employees:

- a. Can and should stop performing their job duties and work-related tasks when they are not scheduled to work.
- b. Are not required to take work home with them to complete outside of regularly scheduled hours of work.
- c. Are not expected or required to respond to work-related communications outside their regular working hours, while on break, or during any paid or unpaid time off.
- d. Should take and use all their scheduled breaks (including meal breaks) and time-off entitlements (including vacation time) for non-work-related activities.
- e. Will not face repercussions or be penalized for not communicating outside of their regularly scheduled hours of work.

2. Ability to Disconnect from Work

Although the Brantford Public Library will take reasonable steps to ensure that employees are able to disconnect from work at appropriate times, an employee's ability to disconnect from work depends on the Library's operational needs and the specific duties and obligations of the employee's position. An employee's ability to disconnect from work will be subject to an employee's contract, applicable collective agreement, Library policies and/or their minimum statutory entitlements under the ESA.

This Policy does not preclude contacting employees outside of normally scheduled working hours when necessary, including but not limited to the following situations:

- a. Checking availability for additional shifts such as to fill in at short notice for a sick employee.
- b. Where unforeseeable circumstances require contact out of normally scheduled working hours such as inclement weather.
- c. Where an emergency may arise.
- d. Employees on leave may be contacted for limited information related to their return to work.
- e. For any reason as described in the employee's job description or employment contract which requires them to be contacted outside of regular work hours, for example, for on-call operational responsibilities. In these cases, employees will be compensated as outlined in the relevant collective agreement or policy.

3. Workload and Productivity

- a. The Library understands that employees may want or need to work outside their normal scheduled hours of work to meet a time-sensitive deadline, to attend to an urgent matter, or due to unforeseen circumstances, however, employees should not regularly or frequently work outside their scheduled hours of work to complete or catch up on work.
- b. Employees who cannot manage their workload during their regularly scheduled hours should meet with their direct supervisor to evaluate their current workload, priorities, and deadlines.

4. Breaks and Time Off

- a. Breaks are provided in accordance with employment standards and are intended to provide employees with time to recharge and enable them to work productively during regular working hours. Employees should take any scheduled or company-provided breaks during their shift and use that time to disconnect from work.
- b. Brantford Public Library understands the importance for our employees to have personal time off. Employees are encouraged to use their accrued paid vacation time in full every year and should take the time for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits. Employees will not be obligated to complete work-related activities during scheduled time off. Knowing that, time management is the responsibility of employees and scheduled time off should not interfere with deadlines. Managers will work with employees to delegate job-specific duties that must be completed while the employee is on vacation to maintain workflow and productivity. Employees should not be reluctant to take vacation due to workload, unless there are limitations or restrictions because of a due date, project priority, scheduling

conflict, or unforeseen circumstance that prevent an employee from taking a vacation at a specific time, in which case managers will assist in determining appropriate actions to take to meet deadlines and accommodate time off requests whenever possible.

5. Communication

- a. The Library may send general communications to employees, including those who are not presently at work. Employees should not feel obligated to respond, nor are they expected to respond, to any communication when not at work, apart from unforeseen circumstances, such as an emergency situation. Employees on vacation or leave will only be expected to respond upon their return to work.

6. Employees who do not reply to work-related communications outside of normal scheduled working hours will not face repercussions or be penalized.

Responsibility

1. The Library CEO is responsible for implementing the appropriate procedures in accordance with this policy.
2. It is the responsibility of the Library CEO to ensure that a copy of this policy is given to new employees within 30 days of being hired and given to all employees within 30 days of any changes being made.
3. Employees are responsible for ensuring that they have read and understand this policy as it relates to their own work and that of other employees.

History

Supersedes: Not applicable

Background documents, related policies: *Ontario Employment Standards Act 2000, Part VII.0.1*

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