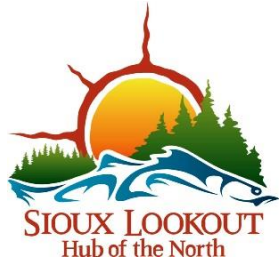


# Conflict Resolution



## The Municipality of Sioux Lookout Human Resources Policy

<b>Section:</b>	Personnel	<b>Date:</b>	April 20, 2026
<b>Policy No:</b>	2026-HR-03	<b>Repeal:</b>	
<b>Approved by:</b>	CAO		

### Purpose

This Conflict Resolution Policy exists to support a respectful, collaborative, and productive workplace at the Municipality of Sioux Lookout. Workplace conflict is normal, and when addressed early and constructively, it can strengthen working relationships, surface better ideas, and improve outcomes for our staff and the community we serve.

This policy establishes a fair, consistent, and transparent framework for raising and resolving conflicts promptly, at the lowest appropriate level, and in a manner that respects the dignity of everyone involved.

### Policy Statement

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout is committed to a workplace in which disagreements are addressed openly, respectfully, and without fear of reprisal. All covered persons are expected to engage in conflict resolution in good faith and to follow the process set out in this policy.

This policy works alongside — and does not replace — the grievance and dispute resolution procedures contained in any applicable collective agreement, the Municipality's Harassment and Bullying Policy, the Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy, and the Council Code of Conduct.

### Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees (full-time, part-time, casual, temporary, contract, and student)
- Supervisors, managers, and senior leadership
- Volunteers and co-op placements
- Consultants, vendors, and contractors
- Any other persons acting on behalf of the Municipality

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For any questions or further clarification regarding this policy, employees are encouraged to contact the Human Resources Department.

This policy also provides guidance for managing conflicts involving Members of Council, members of the public, and external parties, where they intersect with the workplace.

The policy applies in all work-related contexts, including municipal property, remote and virtual work, off-site events, training, travel, and digital communications.

## Definitions

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Conflict	Any disagreement, dispute, or tension between individuals, groups, or departments that negatively affects working relationships, productivity, wellbeing, or service delivery. Conflict may arise from differing views, roles, styles, interests, or values.
Resolution	An agreed-upon outcome, understanding, or commitment that addresses the conflict and supports a return to productive working relationships.
Mediation	A structured, voluntary, and confidential process in which a neutral person helps those involved in a conflict to communicate, explore options, and reach their own resolution.
Mediator	A neutral individual — such as a manager not involved in the conflict, an HR representative, or a qualified external third party — who facilitates communication to help resolve a conflict.
Harassment	As defined in the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act: engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Allegations of harassment are addressed under the Harassment and Bullying Policy, not this policy.
Unionized Employee	An employee covered under a collective agreement whose rights under that agreement — including grievance and representation rights — must be respected throughout any conflict resolution process.

Term	Meaning
Retaliation	Any adverse action taken against a person for raising a concern, participating in conflict resolution, or supporting someone who has done so, in good faith.

## Guiding Principles

The following principles guide how conflicts are addressed under this policy:

- Conflicts should be addressed early and at the lowest appropriate level.
- All participants are expected to engage respectfully and in good faith.
- Processes will be fair, impartial, and timely.
- Confidentiality will be maintained to the greatest extent possible, subject to legal, safety, and operational obligations.
- Participation in an informal resolution process is voluntary; no one will be compelled to participate in mediation.
- Retaliation against anyone who raises or participates in resolving a conflict is strictly prohibited.
- The rights of unionized employees under their collective agreement will be respected at every stage.

## When to Use this Policy

This policy is intended for workplace conflict such as interpersonal disagreements, communication breakdowns, role or responsibility disputes, and similar issues that affect working relationships.

This policy is not the correct starting point for matters such as:

- Allegations of workplace harassment, discrimination, or bullying — see the Harassment and Bullying Policy and the Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy.
- Workplace violence, threats, or safety concerns — follow the Violence Free Workplace Policy and, where urgent, contact emergency services.
- Grievances arising under a collective agreement — follow the grievance procedure in the applicable collective agreement.
- Complaints involving Members of Council — follow the Council Code of Conduct and any Integrity Commissioner process established under the Municipal Act, 2001.

Human Resources can help determine the most appropriate process where the correct route is unclear.

## Conflict Resolution Steps

Conflicts should generally progress through the following steps. Not every step will apply to every situation; Human Resources may support or coordinate the process at any stage.

**Step 1 – Direct Conversation**

- Where it is safe and appropriate, the people involved should meet promptly in a private setting to discuss the issue calmly and respectfully.
- Focus on the facts, the impact of the behaviour or situation, and possible solutions — not on blame or personalities.
- Document any agreements or action steps where helpful.

**Step 2 – Supervisor or Manager Support**

- If direct conversation is not possible or does not resolve the issue, either person may ask a supervisor, manager, or team lead to help facilitate discussion and resolution.
- Supervisors will address the matter promptly, impartially, and confidentially, and will coach the employees on respectful problem solving.
- Where the supervisor is directly involved in the conflict, the employee may bring the concern to the next level of management or to Human Resources.

**Step 3 – Human Resources Support or Mediation**

- If the matter is not resolved at Step 2, or is complex, sensitive, or long-standing, Human Resources will provide support and may facilitate a structured mediation.
- Participation in mediation is voluntary. All participants are expected to engage actively and respectfully.
- For conflicts involving members of the senior management team, or where impartiality cannot otherwise be ensured, a qualified external mediator will be engaged.
- For unionized employees, mediation will be coordinated in a manner consistent with the applicable collective agreement, including any rights to representation.
- The mediator supports the parties to identify solutions but does not impose an outcome.

**Step 4 – Formal Review**

- If the issue is not resolved through mediation, or mediation is declined or not appropriate, Human Resources and the appropriate level of management will conduct a formal review.
- The review will gather relevant information, provide affected parties an opportunity to be heard, and result in written findings and, where appropriate, corrective actions.
- Outcomes may include agreed commitments, coaching, training, changes in working arrangements, or disciplinary action in accordance with the Municipality's disciplinary procedures and any applicable collective agreement.
- Matters that cannot be resolved internally may be escalated in accordance with applicable legislation, collective agreements, or other Municipal policies.

**Step 5 – Follow-Up and Evaluation**

- Human Resources or the responsible manager will follow up with the individuals involved within a reasonable timeframe to confirm that commitments are being met and that working relationships have stabilized.

- Feedback on the process may be collected on a confidential basis to support continuous improvement.

## Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
All Employees & Covered Persons	Address conflicts promptly, respectfully, and constructively; follow the steps in this policy; participate in good faith in any resolution or mediation process.
Supervisors & Managers	Model respectful conduct, support employees in resolving conflicts, respond to concerns promptly and impartially, escalate serious matters to Human Resources, and follow up to ensure resolutions hold.
Human Resources	Provide guidance, coaching, and mediation support; coordinate formal reviews; maintain confidential records; ensure consistent application of this policy; and engage qualified external mediators when required.
Senior Leadership & CAO	Champion a culture of respect and accountability, support timely resolution of conflicts, participate in mediation when required, and provide resources for effective conflict resolution.
Policy Owner (Human Resources)	Maintain and review this policy, communicate updates, and ensure covered persons are aware of their rights and obligations.

## Additional Considerations

### Unionized Employees and Collective Agreements

- This policy does not replace the grievance or dispute resolution procedures of any applicable collective agreement and must be applied consistently with those agreements.
- Nothing in this policy limits an employee's right to union representation or to pursue a grievance.

### **Members of Council and Committees**

- Conflicts involving Members of Council or municipal committees will be managed consistently with the Council Code of Conduct and, where applicable, the Integrity Commissioner process under the Municipal Act, 2001.

### **Public-Facing Conflicts**

- Conflicts involving members of the public, contractors, or external parties will be managed professionally in accordance with Municipal procedures and, where conduct is abusive or unsafe, the Violence Free Workplace Policy.

### **Accommodation**

- The Municipality will accommodate the needs of participants in a conflict resolution process to the point of undue hardship, in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

### **Related Policies and Documents**

- Code of Professional Conduct
- Civility Policy
- Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy / Violence Free Workplace Policy
- Human Rights Policy
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Applicable collective agreements

### **Legislative References**

- Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1
- Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19
- Employment Standards Act, 2000, S.O. 2000, c. 41
- Labour Relations Act, 1995, S.O. 1995, c. 1, Sch. A
- Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25

### **Review and Revision**

This policy will be reviewed every three (3) years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, collective agreements, organizational structure, or operational needs. The Human Resources Department is responsible for initiating and coordinating each review.

All revisions will be approved by the Chief Administrative Officer before taking effect.

Employees and other covered persons will be notified of any material changes.