

Town of Ancram Code of Conduct

1. Ancram Town Board Commitment

It is the commitment of the Ancram Town Board to ensure an atmosphere of cooperation, collaboration, openness, safety and equality. All members of the Board, committees and community have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. The Committee for Respectful Behavior (CRB) will act without bias, to assess, recommend, advise, and consult the Town in this commitment.

The Town of Ancram prohibits the harassment of or discrimination against any of its employees based on an individual's **race, religion, creed, citizenship, color, national origin, physical or mental disability, marital status, military/veteran status, age, sex, sexual orientation** or other characteristics protected by applicable laws.

All complaints of disrespectful, hostile, or inappropriate workplace behaviors will be taken seriously and followed through to resolution. Those who come forward with complaints in good faith will not suffer retaliation from members of the Board or any other figures involved.

2. Scope

The Code of Conduct is created to provide protection from hostile, aggressive, and inappropriate behaviors. This policy applies to the Town Board and committee members, Town employees, volunteers engaged in Town activities, and members of the Ancram community seeking Town services. The Code of Conduct shall apply to conduct at Town Hall, Town Property, Town facilities, to work performed off-site, as well as interactions at Town-sponsored social events.

It is the responsibility of all Town employees and representatives to provide a healthy workplace environment to peers, co-workers, Town volunteers and Ancram residents where all communication and interactions are marked by dignity and respect.

All citizens of the Ancram community should conduct themselves in accordance with this policy while on Town premises or offsite in attendance at Town-sponsored events.

3. Acceptable and Healthy Workplace Behaviors Defined

Acceptable and healthy workplace behaviors are any behaviors that promote respect, positive interactions and civility when conducting Town business. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Using respectful, professional language in all interactions, no matter the subject of conversation
- Listening with an open mind to others' positions; questioning opposing views politely; conveying your position in a respectful and collaborative manner
- Giving direct, constructive, evidence-based feedback as opposed to personal attacks and criticism
- Expressing appreciation for work well done
- Approaching conflict with willingness to accept the decisions of others

4. Inappropriate and Unacceptable Behaviors Defined

Inappropriate and unacceptable behaviors are defined as hostile and aggressive acts aimed at one or more individuals, which intended or not, cause them to reasonably feel bullied, embarrassed, incompetent, disrespected, or to experience undue mental or emotional duress. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Yelling, overtalking, interrupting, intimidating, repeated emotional outbursts, using a harsh tone of voice
- Talking down to others, using criticizing, degrading, condescending belittling, bullying, or foul language
- Intentionally excluding or ignoring others, silent treatment
- Showing favoritism, inconsistent discipline or punishment
- Undermining another's work by giving unrealistic deadlines or goals, or withholding pertinent work-related information
- Excessive micromanagement
- Gossiping or spreading rumors

- Unjustly manipulating a person's job description and responsibilities
- Any additional malicious behavior a reasonable person would find unprofessional, disturbing or a hindrance to fulfilling their duties to the Town

These types of behaviors are well recognized by experts as having damaging consequences for the targets and/or witnesses of the behavior and the organization as a whole and are therefore not tolerated.

5. Responsibility

All elected Town officials and others in positions of authority, including Town employees and volunteers, have a responsibility to ensure that healthy and appropriate behaviors are being exhibited at all times and that complaints to the contrary are addressed speedily. Elected town officials, supervisors, both paid and volunteer, committee and all board chairs, will:

- Lead by example, treating all with courtesy and respect
- Promote awareness of this policy
- If you see something, say something. Use the incident report to document any behavior in violation of this policy regardless of whether or not a complaint has been made by those involved.
- Explain procedures to be followed if a complaint of inappropriate behavior at work is made
- Show discretion and sensitivity towards all parties involved in a complaint
- Enforce a zero tolerance policy against retaliation

Individuals should report behaviors defined as unacceptable to the CRB. A finding of unacceptable behavior will be dealt with through appropriate disciplinary procedures.

6. Training Programs

As part of its commitment to encouraging positive and healthy behaviors, the Town will establish a required series of training programs that all Town employees, board and committee members and volunteers will be required to attend.

The CRB will source best-in-class training programs in accordance with state mandates and universally recognized behavioral workplace standards. These trainings are provided as a service to the recipients to enhance knowledge, understanding, and professional skill sets.

Trainings may include but are not limited to:

Annual State-mandated Sexual Harassment
Annual State-mandated Workplace Violence
Benefits of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging
Professionalism in the Workplace

7. Process for Investigation of Reports

The aim and objectives of a formal reporting process include a thorough investigation of allegations, written documentation from all parties involved, resolution in a timely manner, and utmost confidentiality.

Formal reports should be filed using the official CRB Incident Report Form found on the Ancram Town Website and in hard copy filed with the Town Clerk at Town Hall. All reports should consist of precise details, including dates, times, locations and any witnesses. The form must be submitted to the Chair of the CRB for review (email to CRBChair@ancramny.org or drop off in a sealed envelope addressed to CRB Chair at Town Hall). In the event that a complaint is submitted directly to a member of the Town Board, they may choose to involve and request assistance from the CRB in addressing the matter.

The person reported against will be notified in writing by the CRB that an allegation has been made against them.

Depending on the nature of the report, the CRB will determine if an outside investigator and/or third party is required. If required, the CRB will escalate to the Town Board to get approval.

If a third party is not needed, reports will be addressed by the CRB Chair and Co-Chair. The CRB has the authority to conduct investigations.

The objective of the investigation is to determine the validity of the report without bias. The process will include interviewing all parties and witnesses to ensure all points of view are fully heard. All interviews will be documented in writing. The investigation will be conducted thoroughly, objectively, with sensitivity and utmost confidentiality, to the extent possible, and with due respect for the rights of both the complainant, any witnesses, and the alleged code violator.

Upon completion of the investigation, the CRB will submit a report with recommendations for resolution to the Town Board. These recommendations may include: no action required, assigned training(s), or disciplinary actions up to and including removal or suspension from Town premises or events, removal from committees, or termination of employment.

The Town Board will decide whether to adopt, reject, or modify the recommendations of the CRB. Any disciplinary action of a Town employee will be conducted in accordance with law, including but not limited to civil service rules and regulations, to the extent applicable.

The Town Board will notify the CRB of its response and the CRB will inform all parties in writing of the resolution.