Otonabee – South Monaghan Public Library

Policy Type: **Operational**
Policy Title: **Community Engagement**

Policy Number: **OP-17**
Initial Policy Approval Date:
Late Review/Revision Date: **February 2025**
Year of Next Review: **February 2029**

Chair Signature:_____ Date: _____

Policy Statement

Otonabee-South Monaghan Public Library (OSMPL) values meaningful, ongoing dialogue with the individuals, families, organizations, and community partners we serve. Community engagement strengthens relationships, deepens understanding of local needs, and ensures that library services reflect the unique character, priorities, and aspirations of Otonabee-South Monaghan.

This policy outlines the Library's commitment to intentional, transparent, and outcomes-focused community engagement. Information gathered through engagement activities informs strategic planning, service development, collections, programs, and decision-making.

Purpose
This policy ensures that OSMPL approaches community engagement in a consistent, coordinated, and thoughtful way. It ensures that:

- Staff have the knowledge, skills, and resources to deliver meaningful engagement.
- Community members understand how their input will be used and how it influences decisions.
- Engagement opportunities are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to local needs.
- Engagement activities support the Library's mission, strategic priorities, and long-term sustainability.
- Engagement processes are documented, evaluated, and continuously improved.

Scope
This policy applies to:
- All OSMPL employees involved in designing or delivering community engagement.
- The CEO.
- The Otonabee–South Monaghan Public Library Board.
- Consultants or external partners conducting engagement on behalf of OSMPL.

Definitions

Community Engagement
Any intentional activity that invites community members to share, experiences, needs, or feedback to inform library decisions.

Engagement Activities
Methods such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, pop-ups, community conversations, advisory groups, digital engagement, or collaborative planning sessions.

1. Policy Guidance
OSMPL is committed to creating the conditions for meaningful community participation. The Library will:
- Build and nurture relationships with community members, partners, and stakeholders.
- Provide clear, accessible opportunities for the community to influence decisions.
- Continuously evaluate and improve engagement practices.
- Honour the full range of voices, perspectives, ideas and the experiences within the Township
- Evaluate engagement efforts and integrate lessons learned into future practice.
- Communicate back to the community about what was heard and how it shaped outcomes.

2. Principles Governing Community Engagement
OSMPL's engagement practices are guided by the following principles:
- OSMPL's engagement practices uphold the principles of intellectual freedom, open access, and democratic participation, as affirmed by the Canadian Federation of Library Associations
- Provide equitable access to engagement opportunities for all community members, without discrimination or barriers based on origin, beliefs, ability or other personal factors
- Welcome and consider the full range of perspectives and input from individuals and groups across the community.
- Engage the community early enough to allow meaningful influence on decisions, while maintaining transparency and accountability in how input is used.
- **Relevance:** Link engagement activities to broader community priorities and partnerships and local context.
- **Flexibility:** Use locations, formats and methods that reflect community habits and preferences.
- **Transparency:** Clearly communicate the purpose, scope, and limitations of engagement activities.
- **Accountability:** Report back on what was heard and how it influenced decisions.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Evaluate engagement processes and outcomes to strengthen future efforts.

   *Not all principles apply to every project, but they guide decision-making.

3. Roles and Responsibilities
Library Board
- Approves the Community Engagement Policy.
- Receives engagement findings that inform strategic direction and governance decisions.

CEO
- Ensures engagement activities align with the Strategic Plan and organizational priorities.
- Provides staff with training, tools, and resources to conduct effective engagement.

- Ensures engagement processes are ethical, transparent, and documented.

Staff
- Design and deliver engagement activities that reflect this policy.
- Ensure engagement is accessible, inclusive, and culturally respectful.
- Document engagement activities and outcomes.
- Report findings to the CEO and, where appropriate, to the Board.

External Partners
- Must follow this policy and any additional guidelines provided by OSMPL.
- Must provide all engagement data, findings, and documentation to the Library.

4. Privacy and Data Handling
- Personal information collected through engagement activities will be handled in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).
- Participation in engagement activities is voluntary.
- Data will be stored securely and used only for the purposes communicated to participants.
- Reports will present aggregated findings and will not identify individuals without explicit consent.

5. Documentation and Reporting
For each engagement initiative, staff will document:
- Purpose and scope of the engagement
- Methods used
- Who was engaged (demographics or stakeholder groups, not personal identifiers)
- Key themes and findings
- How input influenced decisions
- Any limitations or gaps in participation
- Recommendations for future engagement

A summary of engagement activities may be included in annual reports, CEO updates, or strategic planning documents.

6. Evaluation
OSMPL will regularly evaluate engagement activities to ensure they are:
- Effective in reaching intended audiences
- Inclusive and accessible
- Aligned with strategic priorities
- Useful in informing decisions
- Efficient in terms of staff time and resources

Evaluation findings will be used to strengthen future engagement practices.

This will be completed by staff annually or as needed

Related Documents:

    Otonabee–South Monaghan Public Library Strategic Plan
    OSMPL Accessibility in the Library Policy OP-13
    OSMPL Privacy, Access to information & electronic messages under CASL Policy OP-01