

POLICY ON FOSTERING A RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT
of the
TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

POLICY: 115A

Approved by: 13 January 2025

Motion#: 25-009

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To assist Council in fostering an environment that is respectful and free from all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment and discrimination.
- 1.2 To ensure that councillors do not, by virtue of the clothing or personal items, communicate messages that are hateful, destructive, disruptive or disrespectful towards people on Council, the Town of Bridgewater, or its citizens.
- 1.3 Section 19(3) of the **Code** states that a Council member must not engage in any discriminatory or harassing action or conduct, verbal or non-verbal, directed at one or more individuals or groups that creates a poisoned environment.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **“Code”** means the Code of Conduct for Elected Officials of the Town of Bridgewater.
- 2.2 **“Personal items”** includes items such as, but not limited to: pins, hats, coffee mugs, stickers, computers, and vehicles.
- 2.3 **“Poisoned environment”** means an environment where harassing or discriminatory conduct causes significant and unreasonable interference with a person’s work environment.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 Council members shall not wear clothing or display personal items that contain profane language, use racist, homophobic, anti-Semitic, or other hate speech in the form of written words, logos, or other imagery that reflects negatively on Council as a whole, individual councillors, the Town of Bridgewater, or its citizens.

- 3.2 Council members are expected to place municipal interests and priorities over private, personal, or individual interest.
- 3.3 The Mayor, or their delegate, has the discretion to remove a councillor from the meeting or proceedings for wearing clothing or personal items that do not comply with this policy.
- 3.4 The Mayor, or their delegate, may excuse a councillor from complying with this policy upon receiving a satisfactory explanation from the councillor.

4.0 APPLICATION

- 4.1 This policy operates together with the Regulation N.S. Reg. 219/2024, effective October 20, 2024, under Section 520 of the *Municipal Government Act*, and the Town of Bridgewater's Code of Conduct, effective November 25, 2024.
- 4.2 All Council members are required to comply with this policy when carrying out their functions as elected representatives.
- 4.3 Nothing in this policy precludes a member of Council from asking Council to make an allowance or exception for clothing or clothing accessories that are deemed by Council to be in the best interest of the Council or Town of Bridgewater.

5.0 SCOPE

5.1 In Scope

- 5.1.1 The wearing of clothing or display of personal items that contain written words, logos, symbols, images, or pictures that could be perceived as offensive, disrespectful, promotes hate or otherwise reflects negatively on Council as a whole, individual councillors, the Town of Bridgewater, or its citizens are prohibited.

5.2 Out of Scope

- 5.2.1 This policy does not apply to clothing or personal items that support an inclusive community such as, but not limited to: 2SLGBTQI+ community, orange shirts on National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, or the wearing of poppies.
- 5.2.2 This policy has no bearing on items of clothing that are related to an individual's religion, faith, or heritage. Examples include, but are not limited to a: crucifix, kippah, yarmulke, hijab, niqab, tarboosh(feز) or a turban.
- 5.2.3 Employee expectations are governed through the Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual.