

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	
Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner	
Subject: OIPC Respectful Conduct Policy	Date Issued: May 3, 2022
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Page 1 of 3	

Policy Statement

The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) is committed to providing exemplary service to the public by addressing privacy and access issues in a timely and efficient manner, and promoting respectful conduct between the OIPC and members of the public.

The OIPC recognizes that many individuals participating in OIPC proceedings are facing difficult circumstances that may cause strong emotions. However, the ability of OIPC staff to provide timely and fair access to OIPC services depends on respectful and reasonable conduct by all parties.

The OIPC has the discretion to control its own procedures subject to any restrictions imposed by FIPPA and the rules of procedural fairness and natural justice. In instances where disrespectful or unreasonable conduct negatively impacts the OIPC's ability to deliver timely and fair service, or the safety and well being of staff and other participants, the OIPC may place restrictions on an individual's access to its services.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all conduct with the OIPC and other participants in OIPC proceedings is courteous and respectful, and that members of the public work reasonably and cooperatively to efficiently address the issues brought to the OIPC.

This policy contributes to the OIPC's objectives of ensuring that the public can access OIPC services in a timely and fair manner while supporting the well being and safety of OIPC staff and participants in OIPC proceedings.

Conduct that may be considered disrespectful or unreasonable includes:

- Excessive demands on the time and resources of OIPC staff including:
 - lengthy and/or frequent phone calls,
 - voluminous and/or frequent correspondence,
 - repeated contacts or inquiries on matters that have previously been responded to conclusively, and/or
 - demanding immediate attention;

- Refusing to answer relevant questions or provide information necessary to analyze or respond to the complaint or inquiry;
- Engaging in any form of aggressive, rude or intimidating behaviour including:
 - the use of abusive, derogatory, discriminatory or threatening language, whether or not the staff is the focus of the language;
 - name calling and personal insults; or
 - an unreasonable fixation on an individual or staff member.
- Unfounded allegations that another party, their representative, or an OIPC staff member is acting in an improper manner;
- Shouting, interruption or incessant speech that prevents staff from carrying out their duties effectively;
- Covertly recording meetings and conversations with staff;
- Loitering, causing a disturbance or acting under the influence of drugs and alcohol while attending OIPC premises.

Application

This policy applies to all forms of communication (including email, faxes, letters, telephone, social media and/or in-person) between the OIPC and members of the public.

When determining whether an individual's conduct is disrespectful or unreasonable, the OIPC will consider all relevant circumstances. The goal is to provide all participants with fair and reasonable access to the OIPC's services, so any restrictions imposed will be only to the extent necessary to prevent or mitigate the effects of the disrespectful or unreasonable conduct.

Before imposing any restrictions, the individual will be given written notice that the OIPC considers their conduct to be disrespectful or unreasonable, in breach of this policy. This notice provides an opportunity for the individual to improve their conduct. In the written notice, the OIPC will set out any restrictions that may be imposed if the disrespectful or unreasonable conduct continues.

Restrictions that may be imposed include:

- Limiting the individual's communication with OIPC staff to a particular format, time, duration, frequency or volume;
- Requiring any face-to-face interactions between the individual and OIPC staff to take place in the presence of another OIPC staff member;
- Requiring the individual to communicate with the OIPC only through a particular OIPC staff member;

- Limiting or regulating the individual's use of OIPC services;
- Refusing the individual access to OIPC premises except by appointment or specific permission;
- Informing the individual that further contact on the matter will not be acknowledged or replied to;
- Declining or discontinuing the complaint and/or review.