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The Library's mission requires excellent customer service. Successful customer service involves a knowledgeable, friendly staff team that connects library patrons to what they need, leaving them satisfied, happy, and eager to return.

While at work, each staff member is a representative of the library. The impression we make profoundly affects the library's image and ongoing support. Because every patron interaction is important, being helpful is our highest priority. All other library policies should be interpreted in light of the principles outlined below.

Customer service principles

- Treat every patron with equal respect and every request with equal importance.
- Always be ready and willing to help, making patrons feel valued.
- Provide accurate, friendly and efficient service, and invite patrons to return.
- Do your best to meet patrons' needs and exceed their expectations. Whenever possible, judgment calls should be made in the patron's favor.
- If you are unable to comply with a request, offer an alternative.
- Be well-versed in library policies and be able to explain the rationale behind them.
- Always seek possible improvements to promote service excellence.

Ethics/confidentiality guidelines

- Do not offer personal opinions or advice; refer patrons to authoritative sources instead. Use common sense and diplomacy in discussion of Board decisions and library policies.

- Do not discuss patron interactions in public areas.
- All interactions between a patron and the library are confidential and should be discussed only in a professional context (including but not limited to registration information, patron circulation records, and reference questions).
- Positive operating procedures
- Smile to greet approaching patrons.
- Welcome new borrowers and give them all the time and information they may need. Encourage them to come back often – if there is time for a brief tour and they are interested, give one.
- Wear your name tag at all times, so patrons know who can be approached for help.
- Look up and around periodically while at the desk.

- Be proactive. Approach patrons and offer to help.
- Try not to point. Walk patrons to the shelves or to the proper desk.
- Find ways to say “yes.” Offer options such as interlibrary loan or electronic products if print material is unavailable.
- Invite patrons to return for additional assistance.
- Ask follow-up questions to make sure their needs have been met.
- If you are helping others, acknowledge patrons that are waiting by making eye contact. Explain, if needed, that you are assisting someone else but will be with them as soon as possible.
- Keep your voice low in the library.
- Be friendly, but avoid long conversations with patrons; explain that you need to get back to work.
- Keep conversations with other staff to a minimum in public areas. Even if you are discussing library business, patrons may perceive you are either merely socializing or too busy to help them.
- Answer the telephone in a timely manner.
- Use a friendly tone and identify the library.
- Patrons who are present in the building take precedence over telephone inquiries.
- If you are unable to work on a caller’s request immediately, offer to call them back.
- Avoid personal calls while on duty.
- During all hours of operation, a staff member should be at the service desk.
- Be aware of the visual impact of the library.
- Eliminate clutter and present an organized, neat service area.
- Confine food and drink to staff areas.
- Listen courteously to patron suggestions and encourage them to fill out comment cards.
- If a patron has a complaint, listen attentively in a non-judgmental manner. Refer to the appropriate library policy, and when necessary refer the patron to the Director. If a patron has concerns about an item in the collection, ask them to fill out the appropriate form to begin the review process.
- Strive for patrons to experience a user-friendly, accessible environment that meets their information needs.

Teamwork

- Be punctual; your colleagues will appreciate it.
- Be mutually supportive of other staff. Keep in mind that the quality of your work always impacts that of another. Share resources and expertise.
- Value and respect the skills, abilities, and contributions of your co-workers.
- Be flexible.
- Help each other to be a success.
- If you don’t know the answer, find someone who does. Avoid saying “I don’t know;” use “I can find out!”

- A friendly, helpful attitude ensures a positive experience even when the message you must convey is not a pleasant one.
- Communicate a positive perspective to patrons and co-workers about library policies and procedures.
- Bring forward your good ideas to benefit the library team and patrons.

Our patrons are not an interruption of our work, they are our work.