

PATRON RELATIONS POLICY

Approved: May 16, 2006; Revised: August 19, 2008

Policy Objective

Staff members are responsible for upholding policies and procedures for the greater good of all library patrons. They are required to use professional friendliness and to treat all patrons equally in a pleasant, helpful manner. Under the B.C. Human Rights Legislation staff members have the right to a safe work environment. Staff members sometimes feel uncertain about how to handle challenging situations with patrons. This document describes standard practices for staff that are dealing with individuals.

In a public place there are occasions when staff members are unsure how to handle challenging situations with patrons. It is impossible to foresee every kind of incident, but the first step in all situations is to remain calm and courteous while firmly maintaining library procedures and policies. Staff are reminded that while it is necessary to treat all patrons as pleasantly as possible, it is also not fair to allow disruptive behaviour to affect the library experience for others.

1. It is appropriate to maintain boundaries by tactfully refusing to engage in unwanted personal conversations.
 - 1.1 Staff can inform patrons that they are being distracted from their work if patrons stand too close or stare.
2. Staff should make an incident report and include the time, date, name of patron if known and a detailed description of any incident and how it was handled. The log should be signed and witnessed by a second person. The log will be kept in a locked file at the director's desk.
3. Any patron exhibiting aggressive behaviour or conversation can be asked in an assertive and calm voice to leave the library. If possible, tell him or her that his or her privileges may be suspended if he or she continues his or her unacceptable behaviour. See the **SERVICES** Policy.
4. If a patron is unwilling to pay library charges for late books, lost or damaged books or other services, begin the discussion by explaining the policies again. If after a short discussion the situation is unresolved, staff can refer the patron to the Director who may resolve this problem at his/her discretion.
5. The police may be called to deal with extremely difficult individuals.

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- 5.1 The telephone number(s) for the police will be posted by the telephone. A brief script to aid in remembering what to say to the police will be posted by the telephone.
6. Avoid physical confrontation.
7. Speak in a calm tone, without raising your voice.
8. In the event of a robbery do as follows:
 - 8.1 Give the robbers the money.
 - 8.2 Do as they instruct.
 - 8.3 Call the police when the criminal has left.

Children in the Library

9. The Trail & District Public Library welcomes children to attend programs and to use the library to the fullest. However, parents and/or caregivers should be aware that the library is a public place and, as such, is open to all members of the community. Library staff cannot assume responsibility for supervising children.

Children under six (6) years of age

- 9.1 Children under six (6) years of age must be accompanied by a parent or caregiver at all times. While story times are on, parents of pre-schoolers are free to browse within the library but should not leave the premises as their child might leave the story time in search of them.

Children six (6) years of age and over

- 9.2 Children six (6) years of age and over may come into the library independently but should not be left unattended for substantial periods of time. If the library staff notices that children are left for extended periods of time, the parents and/or caregivers will be contacted.

Unattended children at closing time

- 9.3 Parents and/or caregivers are expected to make arrangements for their children to be supervised and, when necessary, to have rides home when

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the library closes. Library staff is directed not to assume responsibility for unattended children. If a child is unattended when the library closes and library staff cannot locate a parent and/or caregiver, the library staff is directed to arrange for the police to take responsibility for the child.

Notice to members

9.4 The following sign shall be posted in appropriate locations:

Parents and caregivers are reminded that the library is a public place and that young children should not be left unattended on the premises. The library staff are not responsible for them.

Patron Complaints

10. Any user complaint will be taken seriously. Any complaints that cannot be resolved by staff will be referred to the Library Director, who will speak with the complainant to address the complaint.

Complaints to Board members, unless regarding the Library Director, should be referred to the Library Director.

If the complainant does not feel that the complaint has been adequately addressed - or if the complaint is about the Library Director - the complaint will be brought to the Library board's attention in the following manner:

10.1 Complainant will be asked to complete a complaint form to be submitted to the Board Chair. A signed form (or equivalent letter) must be completed for the complaint to be addressed by the Board.

10.2 The Board Chair will review the complaint. If the complaint is regarding staff or the Library Director, the Personnel Committee will review the complaint and make a recommendation at the next regular scheduled board meeting, unless the Board Chair deems a special meeting is required.

10.3 If the complaint is regarding library services, the matter will be handled at the next scheduled library board meeting, unless the Board Chair deems a special meeting is required.

10.4 The complainant will be informed in writing of the Board's decision and whether further input from the complainant will be necessary.