

New Bedford Free Public Library

Statement of Policies, Rules and Regulations

2015

Library Mission

The mission of the New Bedford Free Public Library is to provide materials and services to help community residents obtain information meeting their personal, educational, cultural and professional needs. The Library places special emphasis on supporting students at all academic levels and on stimulating young children's interest in and appreciation for reading and learning.

The New Bedford Free Public Library is dedicated to making the City of New Bedford a rewarding, attractive and pleasant place in which to live, visit and work.

To accomplish our mission and the above stated expectations, the Library is responsible for establishing rules of conduct to protect the rights and safety of Library patrons, volunteers and staff and to preserve and protect the Library's materials, equipment, facilities and grounds.

The New Bedford Free Public Library supports the rights of all individuals to:

- Use the library without discrimination
- Receive friendly, courteous and respectful service
- Have free and equal access to information
- Have a clean, comfortable and pleasant environment
- Use the library undisturbed without threat of harm, invasion of property, or interference

Appropriate Library Use Rules and Regulations

The New Bedford Free Public Library has adopted the following rules and regulations to be followed by all patrons on Library premises. Failure to comply with the Library's rules, regulations and policies may result in expulsion from the Library for a period of time and/or in arrest and/or prosecution. Violations may also result in the restriction and/or termination of Library privileges, including the use of Library computers and other equipment.

Patrons shall not:

1. Engage in any activity in violation of Federal, State, local or other applicable law, or Library policy.
2. Consume food in open public areas of the Library except in specific locations where it is authorized by the Library Director.
3. Smoke, chew, or use tobacco on Library premises in violation of M.G.L., Ch. 270, § 22 or the New Bedford Board of Health Regulations. The use of Nicotine Delivery Devices or Products, including, but not limited to, e-cigarettes is prohibited wherever smoking is prohibited per M.G.L. Ch. 270, §22.
4. Sell, use or be under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs.
5. Deface or damage Library materials.

- a. Patrons shall not deface, damage or destroy any Library property, including but not limited to, any books, magazines, newspapers, recordings, items of the Library collection, Library furnishings, walls and machines (including computer hardware and software, printers, copiers, phones and other equipment).
 - b. Patrons are prohibited from sitting on tables and heating units, placing feet on furniture, rearranging furniture, or laying on floors.
 - c. Those who damage or deface library materials or property may be prosecuted under M.G.L., Ch. 266, § 100. Parents can be liable for damage done by a minor child under the age of eighteen (M.G.L., Ch. 231, § 85).
6. Abuse Library computer equipment
 - a. Abuse of equipment includes but is not limited to banging on the keyboard, use of excessive force, misappropriation of hardware or software and attempts to alter the software.
 - b. Abuse that results in damage to library materials or property may be prosecuted under M.G.L., Ch. 266, § 100. Parents can be liable for damage done by a minor child under the age of eighteen (M.G.L., Ch. 231, § 85).
7. Enter the Library without footwear or without a shirt.
8. Enter the Library with offensive body odor or personal hygiene so as to be disruptive to the Library environment.
9. Bring articles into the library with a foul odor, or articles which, alone or in their aggregate, impede the use of the library by others.
10. Bring pets or animals into the Library other than certified service animals and guide dogs. Animals are not permitted on library furniture. No animals will be allowed to annoy, disturb, frighten or otherwise infringe upon the rights of others to use the Library. Unattended animals, whether inside or outside of the Library building, will not be permitted; the Animal Control Officer will be called.
11. Create a disturbance by making noise, talking loudly, or engaging in other disruptive conduct which can reasonably be expected to disturb others. (M.G.L. c. 272, §§ 41,40)
12. Interfere with another person's right to use the Library or with the Library staff's performance of their duties.
13. Engage in gambling and/or group activities that are disruptive to the Library environment.
14. Use the restrooms for bathing, laundering clothes, or other inappropriate use.
15. Use wheeled devices such as skateboards, roller skates, bicycles, motorized or nonmotorized scooters, and commercial shopping carts, etc. in Library buildings or on Library grounds. (Exceptions include: wheelchairs, walkers, strollers and motorized A.D.A. assistive devices).
16. Sleep, lie down or sprawl on furniture or the floor in a manner that is disturbing to other persons.
17. Solicit other patrons and staff for any purpose, including, but not limited to, donations, petitions, or surveys.
18. Verbally or physically act in such manner that serves to threaten or harass library users, volunteers or staff, including but not limited to, stalking, staring at another person with the intent to annoy that person, offensive touching, singing/talking loudly to others or in monologues, participating in obscene acts or behaving in a manner which can reasonably be expected to disturb others.
19. Carry firearms or dangerous weapons of any type (except by law enforcement officers).

20. Steal library materials, use false identification to obtain a library card, or use another person's library card without permission.
 - a. Failure to abide by this rule may result in prosecution under M.G.L. Ch. 266, §99A.
21. Trespass in nonpublic areas in the Library or on Library premises without permission of an authorized Library employee before or after Library operating hours.
22. Litter on Library premises.
23. Fight or challenge to fight, run, push, shove or throw things. (M.G.L. c. 272, §§ 41,40)
24. Use audible devices without headphones or with headphones set at a volume which can reasonably be expected to disturb others.
25. Use cell phones, pagers and other communication devices in a manner which can reasonably be expected to disturb others.
 - a. All cell phones and pager audible ringers must be turned off/silenced.
26. Engage in activities not associated with the use of the Library.
27. Access the children's areas within the Library facility if they are not a child, caregiver or adult interested in the children's collection. The young adult areas are reserved for teens and those who accompany them. Patrons not included in these categories may be required to leave the children's or young adult areas and instead use other areas of the library.
28. Neglect to provide for proper supervision of children (See Policy on Unattended Children).
29. Block aisles, exits, entrances or stairwells.
30. Due to recurring vandalism, no person shall be permitted on the top step or in the portico area of the main entrance to the New Bedford Free Public Library located at 613 Pleasant Street, New Bedford MA 02740. Violators may be prosecuted for trespass.

Policy on Unattended Children

The safety and well-being of young children left unattended at the library is of serious concern to this library. Young children left alone may become frightened, anxious, bored, restless, or disruptive. Library employees have many public duties and cannot serve as babysitters. We ask for your cooperation in making the library a safe and happy place. The following rules have been adopted for children accessing the New Bedford Free Public Library:

- Parents are responsible for the acts of their children of any age while in the Library.
- Parents or guardians may not leave children under age ten (10) unattended in the children's room when no program is being offered or in any other part of the Library at any time. Parents will be notified if their children are left unattended and require supervision.
- Disruptive children over the age of 9 will be asked to leave the library after receiving one verbal warning. If they become abusive or refuse to leave, the police will be called.
- Children need to be picked up before closing. If no guardian is present, the Library staff will attempt to reach the parents or guardian. At closing the New Bedford Police Department will be called.

Internet Policy

To enhance the fulfillment of our mission, the Library is pleased to provide Internet access. The New Bedford Free Public Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read State of the American Library Association (ALA), and ALA's "Access to Electronic Information, Services, and Networks: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights," consistent with all applicable federal, state, or local laws.

A. Disclaimer

The New Bedford Free Public Library only provides access to the Internet. The Library cannot control and is not able to monitor any information on the Internet for either content or accuracy. The individual user is the ultimate judge of the appropriateness, usefulness and value of all material accessed via the Internet. In the case of minors, this responsibility rests with their parents or legal guardian. In no case does the display of any material on the Library's Internet workstations constitute an endorsement by the Library of the material's content and point of view. The New Bedford Board of Library Trustees, the library staff, and the City of New Bedford are not liable for any negative consequences that may occur as a result of using the Library's Internet connection.

B. Scope

This policy applies to all use of public access workstations located at any of the facilities of the New Bedford Free Public Library. Internet access through the SAILS Library Network, whether on computers located at the New Bedford Free Public Library or through remote access, is also covered by a separate SAILS Internet Use Policy.

(See www.sailsinc.org/internetuse.asp)

C. Confidentiality

Patrons make use of the Library's public access workstations at their own risk.

D. Minor's Use of the Internet

Consistent with registering for a library card to establish borrowing privileges, a person under the age of 18 who wishes to use the Library's public Internet workstations is required to submit a registration form signed by his/her parent or guardian. Parents are strongly encouraged to be involved with their children's use of this equipment.

E. Level of Assistance

Users are encouraged to learn about the Internet by checking out material the Library has on the subject. Staff can assist with basic questions. One-on-one training sessions can be scheduled subject to the staff's availability.

F. Guidelines for Use

Patrons are expressly prohibited from using the library equipment to:

1. access material that is obscene, child pornography, or “harmful to minors”, consistent with any applicable federal, state, or local law.
2. threaten, libel and harass others, including sexual harassment
3. alter, destroy or damage equipment, software or data
4. disrupt or participate in the unauthorized monitoring of electronic communications
5. make unauthorized copies of copyright-protected material
6. participate in the unauthorized use of computer accounts, using access codes and/or network identification assigned to others.
7. use computer communications facilities in ways that unnecessarily impede the computing activities of others
8. tamper with the computer system security
9. intentionally violate software license agreements
10. intentionally violate network use policies.

The Library Board of Trustees is the final authority in determining appropriate use. Violations of the New Bedford Free Public Library Internet Policy will be dealt with in a serious and appropriate manner, which may include loss of privileges and/or prosecution by local, state, or federal authorities. This policy and agreement form is subject to review and change, as deemed necessary by the Trustees.

G. Workstations and Schedule

Public access is permitted only at workstations identified by appropriate signage, and during announced periods of availability.

H. Responsibility of Staff

Library employees are responsible for implementing the Internet use guidelines stated above. Staff is expected to take prompt and appropriate action to enforce the guidelines and is authorized to terminate any session by anyone who fails to comply.

I. User Agreement Required for Internet Access

A completed User’s Agreement Form is required along with either a valid SAILS Library Network card or 1 form of identification. Staff will photocopy the identification and attach it to the completed form. In accordance with Massachusetts state law, all library records are confidential. A person under the age of 18 who wishes to use the Library’s public workstations must submit a registration form signed by his/her parent or guardian. Parents are encouraged to be involved with their children’s use of this equipment.

J. Reservations

1. Patrons may reserve one 60 minute block of Internet time per day.
2. Reservations will be held for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, a computer will then become available for walk in use.
3. Advance telephone reservations are accepted.
4. Workstations may be used on a first come first served basis if they are not currently in use.
5. Whenever possible, visitors to the City of New Bedford who wish to access email or conduct other business online, will have access to computers for a maximum of thirty (30) minutes. Visitors are also required to complete User Agreement Form and provide one (1) form of identification as described above.

K. Training and Equipment

1. Users are encouraged to learn about the Internet by checking out material the New Bedford Public Library has on the subject. Staff can only assist you with basic questions.
2. Printing of information is available for a nominal fee for each page printed. For more information, please speak to the library staff.

L. Accuracy and Appropriateness of Information

1. The New Bedford Public Library provides access only to the Internet. The library cannot control and is not able to monitor any information for either content or accuracy. The individual user is the ultimate judge of the appropriateness, usefulness and value of all material. In the case of minors, this responsibility rests with their parents or legal guardian.
2. In no case does the display of any material on the library's equipment workstations constitute an endorsement by the New Bedford Free Public Library of the material's content and point of view.
3. The New Bedford Free Public Library Board of Trustees, the library staff, and the City of New Bedford are not liable for any negative consequences that may occur as a result of using the library's Internet connection.

Meeting Room Policies

MEETING ROOM APPLICATION FORM

The public meeting rooms are provided for the benefit of all and may be used by organizations and individuals, as the space is available. The use of the meeting rooms must meet the goals and objectives of the Board of Trustees in providing for the informational, educational and cultural needs of the community. Meetings at the library buildings may be for literary, educational, philanthropic or civic purposes only. Permission granted to use library-meeting rooms in no way constitutes endorsement of the policies or beliefs of any group or organization. No outside groups or organizations using the meeting rooms shall charge an admission fee or sell materials, goods, or services for private profit or gain. The meeting rooms are also not available for purely social functions (functions designed for entertainment with friends or associates).

Organized community groups, agencies of city, state and federal government, and individual citizens may reserve the meeting rooms according to the following priorities:

1. Meetings which are held or sponsored by the library.
2. Meetings held by a city, state or federal agency or official.
3. Meetings held by organized New Bedford community groups – educational, civic, charitable, and cultural programs sponsored by local non-profit organizations.
4. Meetings held by Greater New Bedford organizations.
5. Meetings held by individuals.

Permission to use a library meeting room shall be obtained by a completed [application form](#) to the library director. Every effort will be made to honor all approved requests. However, the Board of Library Trustees reserves the right to reschedule based on the priority for use as stated in the policy. The library reserves the right to review each prospective use and determine whether or not that use falls within the meeting room guidelines. The library reserves the right to deny applications for use based on the availability of space and/or frequency of use. The library

reserves the right to set aside meeting rooms during specific blocks of time for use by the library staff or City Departments. The library is not responsible for costs incurred if a meeting is canceled due to circumstances beyond the library's control.

Rules governing use of library meeting rooms:

- Meeting rooms are used only during library hours.
- Groups must vacate the meeting room by the end of the allotted time or at least ten minutes before the building is closed.
- Refreshments are not allowed in the main library meeting room.
- To protect interior finishes, materials may not be attached to windows or walls.
- Library meeting rooms must be restored to their original clean condition including replacement of furniture.
- Unlawful activity shall not be permitted in meeting rooms and such activity shall be a basis to deny future use of the library meeting rooms by groups or individuals violating this policy.
- Meetings may be terminated if they are disruptive to library services.
- Activities for minors, age 17 and under, must be supervised by responsible adults.
- Permission to use meeting rooms is not transferable by any individual or group where application is approved.
- Meeting room users agree to pay for any and all damages to library property while applicant is using property.
- Users are requested to bring their own easels, equipment, and materials. (The library will not supply such.)

Enforcement of Library Rules, Regulations and Policies

Library staff have been delegated the authority to stop prohibited activities and behaviors.

Failure to comply with the Library's rules, regulations and policies may result in expulsion from the Library for a period of time and/or in arrest and/or prosecution. Violations may also result in the restriction and/or termination of Library privileges, including the use of Library computers and other equipment.

Patrons shall receive a single warning from Library staff indicating they are violating the Library's rules, regulations or policies. If the patron continues to violate the Library's rules, regulations or policies and governing behavioral guidelines, the Director and/or Library supervisor, and by extension any Library staff member, will request the patron to leave the facility. Note that particularly egregious behavior may warrant immediate expulsion.

Patrons asked to leave the facility for failure to abide by the above rules and regulations are at a minimum barred for the remainder of the day and/or evening.

Barring a patron for a period greater than one day is a decision that will be made by the Library Director and/or the Board of Trustees. No patron shall have his/her library privileges suspended without first offering the patron a pre-deprivation hearing to contest the pending suspension. A

notice that the library's contemplating suspension of a patron's library privileges will be sent by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the patron or, in the case of a minor child, his/her parents or guardian. If the library has no known record of address for the patron, notice of the contemplated suspension can be served in hand by constable.

The pre-deprivation hearing will be held before the Library Director or his/her designee at a date no earlier than three (3) days from the receipt of notice.

Once a determination regarding suspension is made, notice of suspension of library privileges will be sent by regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known address of the patron or, in the case of a minor child, his/her parents or guardian. If the library has no known record of address for the patron, notice of suspension can be served in hand by constable. A copy of this correspondence will be sent to the New Bedford Police Department.

Appeal of the suspension may be made, in writing, to the New Bedford Free Public Library Board of Trustees, New Bedford City Hall, 133 William Street, New Bedford, MA 02740 within ten (10) days of receipt of notice of suspension. The patron, or in the case of a minor child, the parents or guardian, will be notified by the Board of the date and time of the hearing on the notice of appeal.

At no time will physical force be used by any library personnel to remove a patron from the facility. As appropriate, other library staff on duty may accompany an employee when a patron is to be informed that s/he is requested to leave the building or is not permitted to take an action prohibited by these policies, rules and regulations. If the patron resists and immediate removal is needed, the New Bedford Police will be contacted.

BORROWING POLICY

A valid library card must be presented to borrow materials.

To apply for a library card, see the guidelines below:

1. Anyone may apply in person at the main library or branches for a library card with presentation of a valid photo identification and acceptable proof of address*.
2. Organizations must submit a list of individuals authorized to use the card along with their signatures. The director of the organization must sign the registration form.
3. Residents of group homes must present a letter of residency from the director of the home written on letterhead from the group home.
4. Children 17 and under must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who must co-sign the registration form and present their own valid photo identification and acceptable proof of address*.

Card validation: A library card is valid for 3 years and subject to an address check every 3 years which requires presentation of a valid ID*.

Lost or stolen card: Replacement cards cost \$1.00 and require presentation of a valid ID*.

***Acceptable Proof of Address includes but is not limited to:**

- Valid Massachusetts Driver's License with current address
- Valid Massachusetts State Identification Card with current address
- An imprinted bank check or deposit slip
- Rent receipt (confirming 30 day occupancy)
- Utility bill dated within the last 30 days
- Letter verifying residency and mailing address dated within the last 30 days from a social service provider, temporary employer that provides housing, or a short-term residence

***In the event an acceptable proof of address is not available, the library card will be mailed to the patron at the address provided. The card will be entered with a temporary status. Upon receipt of the card, the patron will need to return to the library with card in hand to have status updated.

Loan Periods

1. Print and audio materials may be borrowed for 2 weeks.
2. Videos and DVDs may be borrowed for 1 week unless otherwise specified
3. Museum passes may be borrowed as specified for each museum.
4. Teachers may borrow items with a "Teacher's card" up to 6 weeks. Use of the collection with a "Teacher's card" is subject to specific rules. Contact Circulation Desk for more details**.

5. Reference material does not circulate

Loan Limits

- Patrons may have a total of 35 items on their card at any given time.
- Non-fiction works are limited to 3 items per subject.
- Magazines are limited to 15 per card.
- Audiocassettes, records, and music CD's are limited to 6 for each format.
- Videocassettes and DVDs are limited to 2 items at any given time.
- Museum passes are limited to 1 per family.

Renewals

Patrons are allowed 2 renewals either in person at the circulation desk or by telephone. Items may not be available for renewal when another patron has placed a "hold" on that particular item. Patrons may also place holds via the Web at www.sailsinc.org with a valid library card and knowledge of their PIN **.

Holds

Patrons may reserve (place a hold) in person at the library by using the online catalog with a valid SAILS library card. They may also access the online catalog via the web at www.sailsinc.org with a valid library card and knowledge of their PIN **.

Circulation staff will also place holds for patrons at the circulation desk or via the telephone.

**Contact Circulation Desk of the New Bedford main library for assistance with the needed information at 508- 991-6275.

Late Fees

For print and audio items, fines accrue at a rate of \$.05 per day to a maximum fine of \$2.00 per item.

For videos and DVDs, fines accrue at a rate of \$.25 per day to the maximum of \$5.00 per item.

For museum passes, fines accrue at a rate of \$5.00 per day to the maximum of \$25.00 per pass.

Patrons who have fines of \$10.00 and over will be blocked. Borrowing privileges will be restored only when fines are paid.

Interlibrary Loan

SAILS Network Loan Borrowing Services for New Bedford Free Public Library Users:

In the event you do not find what you need at your library, you may search the SAILS online catalog, the “NetLibrary”, and the “Virtual Catalog” available at www.sailsinc.org with a valid library card from the SAILS network, you may use this service.

Interlibrary Loan Request Form

In the event that you do not find what you need in the online catalogs listed above, you may use this form to submit an online interlibrary loan request for the item you cannot find. The main library in New Bedford will contact you when item is available. Item can be picked up at any New Bedford library. This service is available only to patrons with a valid SAILS network library card. Call Reference Desk 508- 991-6280 or e-mail at nbmref@sailsinc.org .

Exceptions: Reference items and microforms are not available for Interlibrary Loans.

Course Reserves (if applicable)

Obituaries/Local History

Requests will be handled by order in which they are received. A shipping fee of \$2.00 per request plus \$.25 per copy will be charged. We discourage requests for obituaries by phone, but you can request obituaries published in the Standard-Times (1829-present) by sending a written request to:

Genealogy Department
New Bedford Free Public Library
613 Pleasant St.
New Bedford, MA 02740

Your request must indicate your mailing address as well as your telephone number. Provide name and death date for each obituary requested. Librarian will search one week from the date of death provided.

You can also e-mail your request for obituary to nbmref@sailsinc.org. You are required to provide your complete mailing address.

Other Policies:

The library card may be used at any SAILS library. Libraries may vary as to their borrowing policies as well as their policies regarding checking out materials without a library card in hand. The New Bedford Free Public Library, including its branch libraries and Bookmobile, require presentation of a library card in hand to check out library materials.

- **See Internet Policy**
- **See Museum Pass Information**

Information for Researchers

Genealogy Collection includes:

- Compilation of births, marriages and deaths for most Massachusetts cities and towns before 1851, some cemetery listings, and marriage and death notices from the local newspapers.
- Extensive collection of New England state and municipal histories. The collection for New Bedford and Southeastern Massachusetts is especially extensive.
- General guides to genealogical research methods, gazetteers, guides to research in selected states outside of New England and other countries, and materials on surnames and heraldry.
- Significant collection of histories of families of Southeastern Massachusetts.
- 250,000 card index to whaling crew lists and seamen's protection papers from the records of the New Bedford Customs District.
- Material on French Canadian, Portuguese, and Native-American genealogy.

Items kept in the Genealogy Room are not available for circulation and must be used in the room.

Researchers may contact curator by phone at 508- 991-6276. Requests for information should be specific. Photocopying charges are \$.25 per page.

Archives and Art Rooms

The New Bedford Free Public Library Archives acquires, preserves and provides access to records created by, for and about the community of New Bedford and the surrounding area.

These materials include records of local government, manuscripts, whaling and Quaker materials, rare printed books, photographs, historical prints, sheet music, broadsides, architectural drawings, material on local artists, and maps concerned with the history of the community.

The Art Room acquires, preserves and provides access to historical materials about the arts and music of New Bedford and the surrounding area. The Art Room contains printed books, works on paper, lithographs and prints, paintings, sketchbooks, broadsides, art photographs, and ephemera.

- Hours must be made by appointment only.
- Appointments must be made in advance - 24 hour advance notice is requested.

Registration

Registration is required prior to appointment. Contact appropriate person for the registration form. Valid photo ID is required for registration and with every visit. All researchers are required to sign a register upon arrival, providing name, address, signature, and their research topics.

Regulations

- Materials must be used in the Archives or Art Room and may not be removed for use elsewhere. Under no circumstances do materials from Archives or the Art Room circulate.
- Coats, briefcases, parcels, and personal books are not allowed in the Archives or Art Room.
- Please leave them in the lockers provided. Lockers may be obtained free of charge upon request at the Reference Desk.
- No ink of any kind may be used. Use pencils only.
- Laptop, hand held computers, and audio recording devices may be brought into the Archives and Art Rooms. Cameras, scanners, and other visual recording devices may not.

Photocopies

Photocopies will be supplied for research purposes only, and may be obtained for cost of \$.25 per page. Researchers are not allowed to copy materials using their own personal copying devices. Photocopying will not be permitted in cases of oversize, or fragile materials.

Photographic Services

Contact Library Administration for details.

Request to Publish

If you wish to publish material from the Archives or Art Room, a request in writing must be made to the Board of Library Trustees at least 90 days prior to the anticipated use of the material.

Mail Requests

Mail requests may be addressed to the attention of the Archivist or Art Manager as applicable.

Reference Policy

Reference Service Defined

Good reference service involves identifying a person's information need and proceeding to fulfill it accurately, efficiently and pleasantly, using the resources available in the Library system, and including referral to resources in other libraries or agencies, if necessary.

Reference Department Mission Statement

Reference services will be provided at all times that the library is open. The reference desk will be staffed by trained staff in order to provide quality service.

The New Bedford Free Public Library regards as valid every reference question asked by any patron of any age. All questions will be given equal consideration and each will be answered as accurately and completely as possible within a reasonable time limit. Every effort will be made to complete each reference transaction successfully, consulting with colleagues when necessary.

Reference Department Service Priorities

The following services will be provided to patrons listed in order of priority:

1. Directional personal service to library users who come to the library. Patrons are served on a first come, first served basis.
2. Telephone inquiries.
3. Library orientation and bibliographic instruction.
4. Email, fax, TTY, and mail reference.

Simultaneous requests will be managed at the librarian's discretion with regard to urgency, complexity and availability of staff resources. If the librarian cannot answer a request immediately, he or she will obtain contact information from the patron and see that the patron received a response within 24 hours. If it becomes necessary for a librarian to leave a desk, he/she will make suitable arrangement for coverage. Requests from federal, state, or local government agencies have highest priority.

Reference Department Standards

- All information requests are to be handled. If information is available, it is provided to patrons without making a judgment on its moral or aesthetic worth.
- No effort will be made to determine whether library users are entitled to library cards before reference service is given.
- The needs of every library patron will always be taken seriously and treated with respect and confidentiality.
- Service to the public takes precedence over other duties and service to the patron present takes precedence over telephone inquiries.
- Librarians will rely upon information obtained from reputable sources in order to give the most accurate and authoritative answers to questions. Staff should avoid giving personal opinions, philosophy, or evaluations. The library will always cite the source of the answer.

- Neither the patron's nor the staff member's personal opinions or beliefs should influence the quality of service provided.
- Staff shall not offer their personal opinions on social issues, politics, religion, etc., to patrons.
- Staff will offer to schedule an appointment for patrons if extensive research is needed.
- Telephone reference service should be used for providing short, factual information.

Adopted on Tuesday, May 26, 2015