Personnel Manual

Adopted December 21, 2017
by the
Board of Trustees
Introduction

This manual provides information concerning the policies and governance of the Central Skagit Library District. It also contains information and guidelines with respect to the rights, duties and responsibilities of employees. It includes a summary of rules, responsibilities and benefits, all of which are subject to change. From time to time the procedures, practices, policies, and benefits described here may be modified, deviated from, or discontinued at the sole discretion of the Central Skagit Library District. The policies and procedures in this Handbook are for general reference and general guidelines only and may not be applicable in all cases.

This manual is not a contract express or implied and should not in any way, form or fashion be considered a contract, nor does it create a promise of specific treatment in specific circumstances. This document supersedes all past, written or verbal, expressed or implied policies, handbooks, documents, standards, benefits, and programs outlined within it. It is not intended to alter the “at-will” employment relationship in any way.
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A. At-Will Employment

Employment at the Central Skagit Library District is at-will, which means that either the employee or the Library may terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without a reason or notice. This at-will relationship can be modified only in writing, signed by the Board of Trustees. The at-will relationship cannot be modified by any oral statements or promises, by anything in the Personnel Guidelines or in any other manuals or handbooks employment applications, recruiting materials, memorandums, letters of understanding provided at the time of hire, or other material provided to employees in connection with their employment. No manager, supervisor, or employee of the CSLD has any authority to independently enter into any agreement for employment for any specific period of time or to make any agreement for employment other than at-will. Completion of an introductory period or conferral of regular status shall not change an employee's status as an employee-at-will or in any way restrict the employer’s right to terminate such an employee.

B. Employment Categories

In order to clarify employment status and benefits eligibility, all employees are classified as either “exempt” or “nonexempt” from overtime compensation according to the overtime provisions of state and federal laws. In addition, all employees fall into one of the following categories:

1. Regular full-time: an employee who is normally scheduled to work a standard forty (40) hours or more work week. This position includes associated benefits.
2. Regular part-time: An employee who is normally scheduled to work less than forty (40) hours per week. This position may or may not include associated benefits.
3. Temporary: an employee who is scheduled to work for a specific time frame, usually less than five (5) months. There are no benefits associated with this position.
4. Substitute: an employee who is not regularly scheduled to work. When scheduled, this employee works less than 20 hours per week. There are no benefits associated with this position.

C. Introductory Training Period

All new exempt and non-exempt employees work on an introductory training basis for the first six (6) months after their date of hire. If the Central Skagit Library District determines the designated introductory period does not allow sufficient time to thoroughly evaluate the employee’s performance, it may be extended at the sole discretion of the Library Director. This period is intended to give new employees the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve a satisfactory level of performance and to determine whether the new position meets their expectations. This period or completion of it does not create a contract or a guarantee of employment for any specific period of time as set forth above. Either the employee or the library district may end the employment relationship at any time during or after the introductory period, with or without a reason or notice.
During the introductory period, new employees are eligible for those benefits that are required by law, or by Central Skagit Library District benefit programs.

D. Equal Employment Opportunity
Central Skagit Library District is an equal opportunity employer. It is the library’s policy and practice to recruit, hire, compensate, train and develop, evaluate, discipline, place, promote, lay off, and terminate employees equally and without discrimination. Employees and applicants will not be subjected to unlawful discrimination or harassment based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, national origin, veteran’s status, marital status, disability status, including sensory, mental, physical, or genetic information, sexual orientation, or any other basis prohibited by applicable state, federal or local laws. All employees are expected to carry out the primary aim of Central Skagit Library District’s commitment to provide equal employment opportunities.

E. Reasonable Accommodation
Central Skagit Library District may make reasonable accommodations for the known physical or mental disabilities of an employee, unless undue hardship would result. The employee should advise the District of any accommodations he or she believes are medically necessary in order to perform the job so that an interactive process can begin to confirm the existence of a disability, its limitations in the workplace, and to explore available reasonable accommodations that will enable the employee to perform all of the essential functions of his/her position. The Central Skagit Library District may request medical certification from the employee’s health care provider for assistance in determining what, if any, reasonable accommodation may be appropriate. Central Skagit Library District may take other action regarding employee accommodation, as appropriate, in accordance with applicable state, federal or local laws.

F. Wages and Salary Review
Central Skagit Library District attempts to pay employees a competitive rate that reflects the employee’s job position and performance. The Library Director and/or Board of Trustees endeavors to review wages and salaries at regular intervals and adjust reflect employees’ performance, budgetary considerations, and other factors.

G. Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy
The Central Skagit Library District promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits any discriminatory practices, including, but not limited to, any form of unlawful harassment or retaliation in the workplace on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, national origin, religion, age, citizenship, marital status, sexual orientation, veteran’s status, disability status, including sensory, physical, mental, or genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by state, federal or local law. Conduct that demonstrates mutual respect is expected of all employees in the workplace. Retaliation against any person who complains of harassment or discrimination in good faith, or who participates in an investigation in good faith, is also prohibited.
**Harassment** is verbal or physical conduct that includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and display or circulation in the workplace of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her legally protected class status; and that has the purpose or effect of:

- creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment;
- unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance; or
- otherwise adversely affecting an individual's employment opportunities.

**Sexual harassment** is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance, creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Some additional examples of unwanted conduct of a sexual nature include: sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies; leering, catcalls, or touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display or circulation in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures (including through e-mail); and other physical, verbal, or visual conduct of a sexual nature. Gender-based harassment that is harassment not involving sexual activity or language (e.g., male manager yells only at female employees and not males) may also constitute sex discrimination if it is severe or pervasive and directed at employees because of their sex.

**Disability Accommodation.** Any individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the employment position, which such individual holds or desires to apply for, will be provided with a reasonable accommodation, upon request, so long as such accommodation does not impose an undue hardship. The prohibition against discrimination on the basis of disability does not apply if the particular disability, after reasonable accommodation, prevents the proper performance of the essential functions of the workers’ job.

**Required Reporting.** Any employee who believes that he/she has been subjected to discrimination and/or harassment in violation of this policy, if comfortable, should promptly and directly inform the offender that the conduct is offensive and that it must stop. The offended employee is required to promptly report the incident(s) to the Library Director or any manager within the District with whom the individual feels comfortable reporting. Early reporting and intervention have proven to be the most effective method of resolving actual or perceived incidents of harassment. Therefore, while no fixed reporting period has been established, CSLD strongly urges the prompt reporting of complaints or concerns so that prompt corrective action may be taken.
Employees are required to promptly report all alleged incidents of discrimination and/or harassment which they observe or experience in the workplace regardless of the perpetrator, whether it be a coworker, supervisor, or non-employee working or visiting the premises, including but not limited to patrons, volunteers, vendors, consultants, or independent contractors. An initial report of harassment need not be in writing. Any supervisor, manager, or executive who receives a report or is otherwise aware of possible discrimination or harassment must promptly report the situation to his/her supervisor or the Director. If the report involves the supervisor or the Director, any supervisory personnel receiving the report must promptly report the situation to the Board of Trustees.

Investigation and Corrective Action. All reports of alleged discrimination and/or harassment will be promptly and impartially investigated, and all employees are required to cooperate in good-faith with such investigations and provide honest information within their knowledge, when asked to do so. Confidentiality will, to the extent practical under the law and under the necessities of providing a fair investigation, be protected, but it cannot be guaranteed. When it has been determined that a violation of this policy or other policies has occurred, depending upon the severity of the actions identified, appropriate corrective action and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination, will be taken. The reporting employee will be notified following the disposition of the complaint.

Retaliation. CSLD prohibits retaliation and will not take adverse action against any person reporting, in good faith, alleged discrimination and/or harassment, providing information in connection with the investigation of such report, or opposing discrimination in the workplace. Employees who believe that they have been subjected to retaliation should report such incident(s) in the same manner that employees are required to report incidents of discrimination and/or harassment. Acts of retaliation will be promptly investigated, and appropriate action will be taken, which may include discipline, up to and including termination.

Finally, these policies should not, and may not, be used as a basis for excluding or separating individuals with a particular protected characteristic from participating in business or work-related social activities in order to avoid allegations of harassment. The prohibitions against harassment, discrimination, and retaliation are intended to compliment and further policies prohibiting discriminatory or harassing treatment, not to form the basis of an exception to them.

H. Corrective Discipline and Termination of Employment

Certain policies and procedures must be in place for the efficient and successful operation of the library as well as for the protection and fair treatment of all employees and patrons. Disciplinary action is taken for the intended purpose of correcting work-related performance and conduct. CSLD may, in its absolute and sole discretion, discipline any employee who violates any rule, practice, policy, or regulation or performs his or her work unsatisfactorily. Any decision by management to implement discipline or utilize progressive types of discipline in no way alters or discharges an employee’s status as an at-will employee.
Discipline less than termination may take the form of a verbal warning, a written warning; a performance improvement plan requiring improvements in one or more areas; probation; or suspension with or without pay. The option chosen, or whether any of the options are used prior to termination, is at the sole discretion of management. The adoption of a progressive discipline policy is not a promise of specific treatment in specific circumstances, and management has the right, within its discretion, to repeat, skip, or modify steps in the progression or disregard the progression and terminate the employee. The evaluation of the seriousness of the offense, the employee’s past performance record, and the context surrounding the offense will inform the appropriate disciplinary response to be made solely by management.

I. Resignation/Termination
Resignation is voluntary and although notice is not required of an at-will employee, at least two (2) weeks’ notice is requested as a professional courtesy. Failure to provide two (2) weeks’ notice of your resignation may adversely affect your eligibility for re-hire. The Employer, in its discretion, may not require an employee who has given notice of his/her resignation to work the entirety of the advance notice, if any, is given.

If you are terminated or laid off, you will receive benefits in accordance with the policies contained in this handbook.

You must return all library property on or before your last day of work. Prior to your departure an exit interview may be scheduled to discuss the reasons for your resignation and to clarify the effect of resignation on your benefits.

J. Performance Evaluation
One tool used for communicating is the formal performance review to provide guidance, direction, and feedback pertaining to an employee’s job performance. The performance evaluation is a time for the employee and supervisor to set measurable goals which employees can be expected to accomplish as well as an opportunity to ask questions, discuss ideas or problems, and review or update job descriptions. As a new employee, you may receive an informal performance review once 90 days of work have been completed. A formal performance review will be conducted at the completion of 180 days of employment. The completion of the period of review does not alter or change the at-will status of the employee’s employment.

The Central Skagit Library District strives to review employees on a yearly basis. Generally, library management will attempt to conduct those reviews during the month of the anniversary of the date of one’s employment, although dates and times of employee reviews may be conducted at any time, in the sole discretion of the Library Director.

K. Open Communication
At Central Skagit Library District, we believe communication is at the heart of good employee relations. Employees should share their concerns, seek information, provide input, and resolve
work-related issues by professionally discussing them with his or her supervisor until fully resolved. It may not be possible to achieve the results an employee wants, but the Library Director should attempt to explain in each case why a certain course of action is preferred. Such communication will be treated with courtesy and fairness and professional inquiries and comments will not result in retaliation. The Central Skagit Library District Board of Trustees is not involved in the day-to-day personnel matters for the library and, accordingly, employees must attempt to resolve the issue in the above manner.

If an employee has a concern about discrimination and/or harassment, Central Skagit Library District has a specific Anti-Harassment and Non-Discrimination policy regarding the reporting and handling of those workplace complaints or concerns.

L. Employee Conduct
Employees are expected to use good judgment, adhere to high ethical standards, and avoid situations that create an actual or perceived conflict between personal interests and those of the agency. Central Skagit Library District requires that the transactions employees participate in are ethical and within the law, both in letter and spirit.

In cases where Central Skagit Library District is contacted to give statements regarding policy and library business, only information sanctioned by the Director or the Board of Trustees for staff dissemination may be shared. Questions or comments that go beyond the daily business of library transactions should be referred to the Library Director.

The Central Skagit Library District may not impede upon a staff-member’s right to participate in public meetings or other civic activities. Unless sanctioned by the Central Skagit Library District to speak on the library’s behalf, employees who participate in these activities must make it clear that they do not speak for, or represent, the interests of the Central Skagit Library District in any capacity.

The Central Skagit Library District abides by the American Library Association’s Code of Ethics for Librarians. All library staff are expected to adhere to this code (see Appendices).

Conflicts of interests or unethical behavior may take many forms including, but not limited to, the acceptance of gifts from vendors, potential vendors, or consumers of the agency. Employees may engage in outside business activities, provided such activities do not adversely affect the Library or the employee’s job performance and the employee does not work for a vendor. Employees are prohibited from engaging in financial participation, outside employment or any other undertaking that is prejudicial to the best interests of the Central Skagit Library District. Employees may not use proprietary and/or confidential information for personal gain or to the Library’s detriment, nor may they use assets or labor for personal use.

If an employee has a financial or employment relationship with a vendor, potential vendor, or consumer of the agency, the employee must disclose this fact in writing to the Library Director or
Board of Trustees. The Library Board of Trustees will determine what course of action must be taken to resolve any conflict it believes may exist. If the conflict is severe and cannot be resolved or remedied, Central Skagit Library District may ask the employee to tender his/her resignation. Central Skagit Library District has sole discretion to determine whether such a conflict of interest exists.

All employees must strive to:

- conduct themselves in a manner that protects the Central Skagit Library District’s reputation and ensures continued confidence in the Library district;
- behave in a professional and respectful manner;
- treat all persons honestly and fairly, and with proper regard for their rights, entitlements, duties and obligations, and to act responsibly in the performance of their duties at all times;
- be professional and courteous in dealing with fellow employees, Board members, city or county employees, Mayor and Councilors, customers and all members of the public and to resolve any work-related disagreements in a mature manner, based on reasonable expectations;
- carry their duties in a fair, impartial, and transparent manner;
- promote the health and safety of others;
- avoid using their position improperly for personal advantage;
- avoid using insider information, internal protocols or procedures for personal gain;
- resolve any conflict between personal interests and public duty in favor of the public interest.

M. Dress Code

It is important that the public have confidence in the staff and the staff members have confidence/pride in themselves when transacting business at the Central Skagit Library District. To help present this image and foster public confidence, staff members must dress appropriately for their work assignment and when dealing with the public. Staff must wear clean, pressed and well-maintained attire appropriate to the type of work they do. Shoes are required. The Director has the authority to define appropriate attire with neutral application of the standards without regard to gender and with reasonable accommodation(s) based on religion. Nothing should be worn that has obscene language. Excessive displays of skin should be avoided.

Acceptable attire includes:

- Jeans/jean skirts are permitted but must be appropriate for a work environment
- Slacks, chinos, walking shorts, Capri pants, gauchos, or culottes
- Sleeveless shirts that do not expose undergarments
- T-shirts with reading/books/children’s characters themes
The following are examples of unacceptable attire:

- Excessively torn/excessively faded clothing
- Extremely wrinkled clothing
- Muscle shirts
- Drooping pants that expose undergarments or that require constant repositioning
- Underwear may not be worn as outwear, nor should it be showing at anytime
- Sweat suits or gym clothing of any kind
- Tattoos that are vulgar, obscene or intentionally offensive in content must be covered
- Jewelry should not restrict work or be dangerous in job performance

N. Outside Employment

Employees of the Central Skagit Library District who engage in outside employment, second jobs, or “moonlighting,” any activity related to such employment must be conducted offsite and not during regularly scheduled work hours. It is expected that a full-time position with Central Skagit Library District is the first priority of the employee in relation to other jobs an employee may have. If the outside employment leads to absenteeism, adversely affects library operations or scheduling, or interferes with an employee’s performance, the Central Skagit Library District may deem the outside employment to be a conflict of interest.

O. Nepotism

No person shall be employed in the same department or in any position supervised by a member of their immediate family or by a co-employee with whom the employee is co-habitating as this can cause serious conflicts of interest, including problems with favoritism, performance evaluations, and employee morale. “Immediate family” is defined as spouse, parent, child, grandchild, sibling, grandparent, step-parent, step-child, step-sibling, in-law, aunt, uncle, niece, and nephew. “Co-habitators” are defined as people, whether or not they are otherwise related, living in the same household as friends, roommates, or significant others, whether or not they are in a committed intimate relationship.

P. No Smoking

The library premises are designated as a no-smoking area. No smoking is allowed anywhere on premises. Employees and visitors who wish to smoke must leave the building to do so and observe the 25-foot rule. (RCW 70.160)

Q. Injury and Incidents

Any injury, however slight, occurring on the job must be reported immediately to the Library Director. Failure to report an injury, whether medical attention is required at the time or not, may
affect your eligibility for state provided worker’s compensation benefits. If an injured employee is unable to return to work the same day (in the opinion of a doctor), he or she will be paid through the day of the injury. Other compensation will be directed through the Department of Labor and Industries.

Incidents involving patrons or co-workers should be reported immediately to the Library Director and an Incident Form should be submitted.

R. Substance Abuse

While at work, each employee has a responsibility to coworkers, and to the general public, to perform his or her work in a safe and conscientious manner. Central Skagit Library District expects employees to be able to work in an environment free from the effects of alcohol and/or other job-impairing substances.

Employees using prescribed drugs or nonprescription medications that have any side effects, which could affect their ability to safely perform job duties, must notify their supervisor of the substance taken and its side effects before reporting for work. Medical verification of ability to safely perform job duties may be required before the employee is allowed to continue his or her work assignment.

Although the use of prescribed drugs or nonprescription medications that contain controlled substances as part of a prescribed medical treatment program is not grounds for disciplinary action, failure to report the use of such substances, illegally obtaining the substance, or use which is inconsistent with a prescription or label, is grounds for disciplinary action. An employee is expected to know and follow the prescription medicine usage guidelines prescribed by the employee’s health care provider. Employees may use legally prescribed and over-the-counter medications, provided the use of such medication(s) does not adversely affect job performance or the safety of the employee or others in the work place.

In compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited. All employees shall abide, as a condition of employment, by the terms of this Act and shall notify the Library Director or Chair of the Board of Trustees within five (5) days of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace. Failure to comply shall be grounds for appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination. Controlled substances include cocaine, opiates, amphetamines, barbiturates, hallucinogens, and marijuana, “designer drugs” not approved for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and any drug identified in the Controlled Substances Act, as well as medication containing controlled substances.
S. Continuing Education and Travel

It is the policy of the Library to encourage continuing education and professional involvement for employees. Training and educational activities will be assessed on a case by case nature to ensure that activities are relevant to the library’s program, mission and strategic focus. The Library Director must authorize all training and travel.

Each employee who drives a private vehicle on Library business must have a valid driver’s license and liability insurance on said vehicle.

It is the policy of the Library to reimburse employees for reasonable and necessary expenditures made by employees while on official Library business. Mileage will be reimbursed at the rate established under the then existing regulation of the Internal Revenue Service for personal vehicle usage. Meals will be reimbursed at the rate established under the Washington State Office of Financial Management per diem rates. For out-of-state per diem rates, refer to the U.S. General Services Administration. All expenses must be itemized if applicable. Claims for reimbursement of travel expenses, other than mileage, shall be accompanied by invoices and/or receipts showing proof of payment of such claims.

T. Rest Breaks and Meal Periods

Employees working more than four (4) consecutive hours are authorized one 10-minute rest break, and those working more than six (6) hours in a day are authorized two 10-minute rest breaks. Employees need not be given a full 10-minute rest break when the nature of the office or non-manual work allows intermittent rest breaks (time for rest or brief personal activities away from work) not later than the end of the third hour of their shift.

Regulations require a half hour unpaid meal period for those working over five (5) hours in a day, to be scheduled no earlier than three (3) and no later than five (5) hours after the employee’s start time as designated by management to ensure coverage of all necessary duties during this period. Hourly, non-exempt employees are to be completely relieved from all work during the meal period. If the employee’s half hour meal period is interrupted, the meal period will be paid. Employees working a nine (9) hour shift are entitled to a one (1) hour unpaid meal break, which shall be paid if the employee is not completely relieved of duty for the one-hour meal period.

Employees returning to work after childbirth who wish to express breast milk will be provided a reasonable break time in a private, secure location other than a bathroom in which to do so pursuant to the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Employees interested in this benefit should contact the Library Director.

Breaks are not cumulative, cannot be carried over to another day, and may not be taken during the first or last hour of work.
U. Attendance and Payroll

The work week is defined as Monday through Sunday. Employees are required to maintain an accurate time sheet noting hours worked, vacation and other leave, and compensatory time earned and taken. Dates of pay for employees shall be on the 10th and 25th of the month.

Regular and timely attendance is essential for the library to function productively. Absences and tardiness (or leaving early) are disruptive to the efforts of co-workers and the Central Skagit Library District. Unexplained absences and excessive tardiness, or leaving early, will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including, termination of employment. The Director may require an employee to provide medical certification from a health care provider for absences due to illness, injury, or absences over more than three days.

If you are not able to attend work or if you will need to arrive to work late or leave earlier than you normally scheduled shift, you are required to contact the Library Director by phone prior to the start of the scheduled shift and as far in advance as possible. You should indicate the reason for your absence or lateness and when you expect to be at work. Employees who do not report to work on time and do not call may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

V. Leave

1. Paid Holiday Leave
The Library shall celebrate the following holidays off with pay for regular full-time employees:

- New Year’s Day: January 1
- Martin Luther King Day: 3rd Monday of January
- President’s Day: 3rd Monday of February
- Memorial Day: Last Monday of May
- Independence Day: July 4
- Labor Day: 1st Monday of September
- Veteran’s Day: November 11
- Thanksgiving Day: 4th Thursday of November
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day: December 25
In the event a holiday falls upon a Sunday, the following Monday shall be deemed to be the legal holiday. In the event the legal holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be deemed to be the legal holiday.

When a holiday falls within a period of paid leave, the holiday shall not be counted as a leave day in computing the amount of leave debited. An employee who is absent without leave on the day immediately preceding or following a holiday shall lose the holiday as well as pay for that day.

Regular employees, those who work 20 hours per week or more, will receive holiday pay for their usual and customary hours if the holiday lands on a day they are normally scheduled to work. Employees will not receive holiday pay if a holiday falls on a regularly scheduled day off.

2. Vacation Leave

Leave time is credited at the end of each month and available for use after the employee has worked at least ninety calendar days.

Full-time employees shall earn two (2) hours of vacation leave for each forty (40) hours actually worked. Vacation time may be accumulated to a maximum of 240 hours. Full-time employees are strongly encouraged to take at least 40 hours of leave time per year. Upon separation, accumulated, unused vacation leave will be paid to the employee.

Regular part-time employees, those working 20 hours a week or more, but less than 40 hours, earn leave time on a prorated basis based on the number of hours they are regularly scheduled to work. Part-time employees are encouraged to take at least 20 hours of leave hours per year. Leave time may be accumulated to a maximum of 120 hours. Accrued but unused vacation leave will be paid out upon separation from employment.

Those employees who work under 20 hours per week are not entitled to paid vacation leave.

Vacation time must be approved by the Library Director in advance of taking the leave time. Generally, an employee seeking vacation time should give at least two weeks prior notice of the request to help with scheduling.

3. Sick Leave

Paid sick leave is available for employees to care for their health and the health of their family members. Paid sick leave may be used for any of the following reasons:

• An employee or family member’s mental or physical illness, injury or health condition;
• An employee or family member’s preventive care such as a medical, dental or optical appointments and/or treatment;
• Closure of the employee’s place of business or child’s school/place of care by order of a public official for any health-related reasons;
• If the employee or the employee’s family member is a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

“Family member” means any of the following: (a) child, including biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, or a child to whom the employee stands in loco parentis, is a legal guardian, or is a de facto parent, regardless of age or dependency status; (b) biological, adoptive, de facto, or foster parent, stepparent, or legal guardian of an employee or the employee’s spouse or registered domestic partner, or a person who stood in loco parentis when the employee was a minor child; (c) spouse; (d) registered domestic partner; (e) grandparent; (f) grandchild; or (g) sibling.

Full-time employees shall earn two (2) hours of sick leave for each forty (40) hours actually worked.

Regular part-time employees who work over 20 hours per week, but less than 40 hours per week, earn prorated sick leave based on the percentage of full time hours worked.

Regular part-time employees working less than 20 hours per week will receive paid sick leave benefits at the rate of 1 hour for every 40 hours worked to a maximum of 40 hours.

For regular full-time employees and regular part-time employees working more than 20 hours per week, sick leave may be carried over from year to year to a maximum accrual of 1000 hours.

Employees may use accrued leave after ninety calendar days of employment. Paid sick leave may be taken in one hour increments.

Whenever possible, sick leave must be approved in advance by management. If an employee is unable to get advanced approval due to an emergency, he or she must notify management as soon as practicable. Central Skagit Library District, at its sole discretion, may require employees to provide medical documentation from a health care provider for absences due to illness or injury unless the employee shows that such verification request will result in an unreasonable burden or expense to the employee. Any request for verification will not exceed privacy or verification requirements otherwise established by Washington state or federal law that permit employers to make medical inquiries.

Accrued but unused sick leave will not be paid out at any time during employment or upon separation from employment.
An employee who has exhausted either sick leave or vacation may be granted, upon the
approval of the Director, a leave of absence of up to 12 weeks without pay.

Parental leave is unpaid, but the employee may elect to use all accrued sick leave and
accrued vacation time during the leave. Request for parental leave should be made in
writing to the Library Director or the Chair of the Board of Trustees at the earliest possible
date. Any leave related to pregnancy disability (the period of time an employee is sick or
temporarily disabled because of pregnancy and/or childbirth) will be in addition to
available Parental Leave. This leave is also unpaid leave unless the employee has available
accrued paid time off that is required to be used during this type of leave.

The employee has the right to return, upon expiration of such leave, to the same position,
or a similar position of comparable pay and benefits, unless business necessity prevents
the library district from returning the employee to such position. No retaliation for proper
use of sick leave will occur.

5. Bereavement Leave
The Central Skagit Library District allows employee bereavement leave for the death of an
employee’s immediate family member. Immediate family is defined as the employee’s
spouse, child, grandchild, parent, brother, sister, in-laws, grandparents, guardian of the
employee, or the death of any person residing with or legally dependent upon the
employee. The Library may pay employees (who have completed 3 months of employment
and are considered regular part-time or full-time employees) their normal wages, up to a
maximum of one week of regular scheduled employment for bereavement leave.

6. Jury Duty
The Central Skagit Library District allows all employees who are called to serve on jury duty
to take the time required to serve. Employees who are summoned for jury duty or who
are subpoenaed to appear in court or in deposition should present a copy of the summons
or subpoena to the Library Director. Employees who are dismissed from jury duty or are
not required to remain in the court must report to work during regular work hours.

In the event a library employee is called for jury duty, the library will release them and
assure no loss of wages for up to five working days.

7. Military Leave
Central Skagit Library District complies with Washington State and federal laws regarding
leave for military service, including reinstatement as required by those laws. (RCW 49.77)

If an employee is called to active duty in one of the uniformed services of the United States,
he or she is entitled to 21 paid work days of military leave per year (each October 1 through
September 30) if one works an average of 20 or more hours per workweek. In addition, if
called to active duty, one may be entitled to up to 5 years unpaid military leave with
protections provided by state and federal law.
8. Personal Leave
Under limited circumstances, employees may be granted a leave of absence for emergency circumstances (where the employee does not have available other leave, such as sick leave, vacation leave, etc.). Generally, this leave is only for extraordinary circumstances, and the decision about whether an employee will be granted such leave is at the sole discretion of the Library Director. Such leave is unpaid and the initial request for personal leave cannot be extended beyond twelve (12) consecutive weeks.

W. Benefits
Central Skagit Library District offers benefits to its eligible employees, to assist with health care coverage and related expenses. Eligible employees will receive information about these programs and eligibility requirements on a periodic basis. Eligibility for benefits may be determined by the insurer or the Board of Trustees and are subject to change. In the event an employee has questions regarding eligible benefits or needs information, please contact the Library Director. All full-time (working 40 hours per week) and regular part-time employees (working over 20 hours per week) are eligible for the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). Information on PERS is available upon employment.

X. Miscellaneous
1. Electronic Communication and Technology
Central Skagit Library District respects the individual privacy of its employees. However, employee privacy does not extend to employees’ work-related conduct or to the use of district-provided equipment or supplies and employees should have no expectation of privacy while using library communication systems and technology.

It is the policy of Central Skagit Library District to provide the communication services, computers, and other equipment necessary for the conduct of its business. It is the further policy of Central Skagit Library District to reserve the right to monitor its employees’ use(s) of these communication services, computers, and other equipment to ensure that professional and business performance and conduct standards are maintained.

Central Skagit Library District communication services, computers, and all other electronic systems are for the sole purpose of conducting the district’s business. These systems are not intended to be used by employees for conducting personal business, playing electronic or video games, storing personal documents, etc., or for any other personal reason. Inappropriate use of the district’s communications and/or computer systems may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

All information stored in the computers and other electronic record-keeping devices is the property of Central Skagit Library District. Specifically, but without limitation, all documents, data, software, hardware, tapes, taped messages, voice mail, electronic mail, etc., stored in the district’s communications and computer systems are the property of
Central Skagit Library District and may be used and accessed by the district at any time and in any manner it deems appropriate.

Central Skagit Library District reserves the right to access, alter, save, copy, recreate, print, and/or use this electronic data in any method not prohibited by law. Central Skagit Library District may and can monitor employee activity on its communications systems, its computers, and its electronic record-keeping and/or storage systems as it deems necessary, without prior notification to the employees who customarily use these systems.

All electronically based computer programs and software are owned and licensed to Central Skagit Library District and may not be used or copied for personal use or for any non-district business purpose. Employees are prohibited from installing any unauthorized software onto computers owned by Central Skagit Library District.

No employee, unless authorized in writing by the Executive Director or (the Board), may remove or download any records maintained in the agency’s computer systems or other electronic record-keeping, and/or storage devices.

All portable equipment provided for an employee’s use, such as laptops, fax machines, wizards, and cellular phones, must be promptly returned to the district when such equipment is no longer required or immediately upon the employee’s departure from Central Skagit Library District. All equipment must be returned in good condition. Any damage beyond reasonable wear and tear shall be the financial responsibility of the employee.

Employees may not use Central Skagit Library District’s voice mail, electronic mail, desktop computers, fax machines or the Internet for transmitting sexually explicit messages, cartoons, or jokes; unwelcome propositions or personal letters; harassing or threatening behavior; or any other message or file that can be construed to be unlawful discrimination or harassment of others based on their protected status.

**Passwords.** Employees are responsible for creating and safeguarding login Id’s, passwords, and other computer security measures. Sharing security information with other employees is prohibited without authorization from management. Any security breach or suspected security breach must be reported to the Director immediately. Passwords are created for system security and should not create any expectation of privacy or confidentiality for the employee. Management at any time for any reason may request passwords, and any employee’s access to Land Title’s network may be terminated by management at any time for any reason.

**Electronic or Digital Communication.** E-mail or texting is often used inappropriately in business settings to make casual remarks that may be misinterpreted in other contexts, including legal proceedings. Users should use the same care in drafting e-mail and other electronic documents or communications that they would for any written communication.
Especially in a public setting, care should be used as documents are subject to a public records request.

Any transmission via e-mail of confidential information must be done with extreme caution. This includes the protected personal information of individuals (including applicants, current or former employees), District proprietary information, and employment oversight information (performance, compensation, etc.). E-mails should include only the minimum necessary information for the intended purpose and be addressed, cc’d or forwarded only to those individuals who have a need to receive the confidential information. Whenever possible, users should use alternative means to communicate highly sensitive information. In order to maintain and assure the District’s access to data, and to respond to any applicable public records requests, you are not permitted to use encryption devices on District networks or property without express written authorization from management.

2. Confidential Information
Employees of Central Skagit Library District will receive and have access to information that is confidential in nature to the agency, its consumers and vendors, including but not limited to nonpublic consumer information which must be secured. Employees are not to disclose any such confidential information to (a) any other person in the agency unless there is a legitimate business reason for doing so; or (b) any person outside the agency unless management has expressly stated that the information can be disclosed to that person. This obligation exists even after the employee leaves the organization. Compliance with the Public Disclosure Requests must be handled according to the law.

3. Social Media Guidelines
Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, tweeting, and blogging have an ever increasing presence as a way to keep in touch with family and friends. With increased usage however, comes the increased potential for the accidental or intentional inclusion of inappropriate information. In some cases, information conveyed through social media has led to legal liability for the person posting the information. In recognition of the large role that social media plays in our society, Central Skagit Library District is providing these guidelines to assist you in utilizing social media in a safe and responsible manner.

Publication of knowingly or maliciously false, defamatory facts about another individual on a social networking site that is viewable by others can give rise to a claim for libel, slander or defamation by the person discussed. Although it can be very tempting to vent about another person through a social networking site, extreme caution should be used when deciding what information to include.

Employees should refrain from using discriminatory language against members of a legally protected class or post material that is obscene, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, or discriminatory to another person or entity. Employees are prohibited from making
maliciously false comments (with knowledge of falsity or reckless disregard for the truth) about the district or its employees on social media websites or comments.

Use of a social networking site to communicate inappropriately with or about a patron, vendor, or a coworker may lead to the filing of a claim for harassment with the Agency. If, after an investigation, it is determined that harassment occurred, the posting individual may be subjected to discipline by the Agency. The harassed individual could also seek a restraining order or start a legal proceeding against you.

Through your employment, you may have access to confidential information about patrons and coworkers, such as medical conditions, home addresses and work schedules. Existing Agency guidelines that restrict the disclosure of such confidential information apply with equal force to social media postings. Inclusion of confidential information about coworkers or proprietary information the district on a social networking site could lead to disciplinary action for violation of district policies.

In the case of library-operated social media sites, employees should:

- Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Central Skagit Library District.
- Not make statements about patrons, or post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential information.
- Never identify a Library user without permission.
- Be very cautious using information about children under the age of 17 if that child is not part of a program where parents registered and signed a photograph release.
- Not represent postings as official LCLS opinion or policy, unless this has been clearly approved by the Library Director.
- Not conduct political activities or personal business.
- Observe and abide by all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions in posting materials to electronic media.
- Be respectful in your comments and avoid inflammatory topics.
- When interviewing others, clarify how their information will be used/disseminated.

NOTE: Employees may access personal social media sites only on their own personal cell phone or other personal devices during break times.

Nothing in these guidelines will be construed or applied to interfere or restrain employee action that is legally protected by state or federal law, including but not limited to concerted activities protected under the National Labor Relations Act.
4. Public Terms of Use (Social Media)
Central Skagit Library District has no affiliation with any advertisements or other material posted by third party sites or software.

By choosing to comment on Central Skagit Library District Social Media sites, public users agree to these terms:

- Comments are moderated by library staff, and the library has the sole discretion to not post or to remove comments that are inappropriate, unlawful or off topic.
- Persons who repeatedly violate these terms may be barred from further postings.
- The library does not collect, maintain or otherwise use personal information stored on any third party social media site in any way other than to communicate with users on that site.
The Central Skagit Library District subscribes to and supports the statements in the American Library Association Code of Ethics, Code of Ethics for Librarians, Library Bill of Rights, and Freedom to Read statement. Appendices I and II are published in the handbook as a reference resource and are not incorporated into the handbook because they are national publications originally authored in 1939 and not necessarily reflective of the current state of Washington state or federal law. Current state and federal law control and supersede any conflicting provisions of either code of ethics statements.
Appendix I - American Library Association Code of Ethics

As members of the American Library Association, we recognize the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and to the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees and library staffs.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed, and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We have a special obligation to ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

I. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.

II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.

III. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.

IV. We respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.

V. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.

VI. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.

VII. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
VIII. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

Adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; and January 22, 2008.
Appendix II- Code of Ethics for Librarians

PREAMBLE

1. The library as an institution exists for the benefit of a given constituency, whether it be the citizens of a community, members of an educational institution, or some larger or more specialized group. Those who enter the library profession assume an obligation to maintain ethical standards of behavior in relation to the governing authority under which they work, to the library constituency, to the library as an institution and to fellow workers on the staff, to other members of the library profession, and to society in general.

2. The term librarian in this code applies to any person who is employed by a library to do work that is recognized to be professional in character according to standards established by the American Library Association.

3. This code sets forth principles of ethical behavior for the professional librarian. It is not a declaration of prerogatives nor a statement of recommended practices in specific situations.

I. RELATION OF THE LIBRARIAN TO THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY

4. The librarian should perform his duties with realization of the fact that final jurisdiction over the administration of the library rests in the officially constituted governing authority. This authority may be vested in a designated individual, or in a group such as a committee or board.

5. The chief librarian should keep the governing authority informed on professional standards and progressive action. Each librarian should be responsible for carrying out the policies of the governing authority and its appointed executives with a spirit of loyalty to the library.

6. The chief librarian should interpret decisions of the governing authority to the staff, and should act as liaison officer in maintaining friendly relations between staff members and those in authority.

7. Recommendations to the governing authority for the appointment of a staff member should be made by the chief librarian solely upon the basis of the candidate’s professional and personal qualifications for the position. Continuance in service and promotion should depend upon the quality of performance, following a definite and known policy. Whenever the good of the service requires a change in personnel, timely warning should be given. If desirable adjustment cannot be made, unsatisfactory service should be terminated in accordance with the policy of the library and the rules of tenure.

8. Resolutions, petitions, and requests of a staff organization or group should be submitted through a duly appointed representative to the chief librarian. If a mutually satisfactory
solution cannot be reached, the chief librarian, on request of the staff, should transmit the matter to the governing authority. The staff may further request that they be allowed to send a representative to the governing authority, in order to present their opinions in person.

II. RELATION OF THE LIBRARIAN TO HIS CONSTITUENCY

9. The chief librarian, aided by staff members in touch with the constituency, should study the present and future needs of the library, and should acquire materials on the basis of those needs. Provision should be made for as wide a range of publications and as varied a representation of viewpoints as is consistent with the policies of the library and with the funds available.

10. It is the librarian’s responsibility to make the resources and services of the library known to its potential users. Impartial service should be rendered to all who are entitled to use the library.

11. It is the librarian’s obligation to treat as confidential any private information obtained through contact with library patrons.

12. The librarian should try to protect library property and to inculcate in users a sense of their responsibility for its preservation.

III. RELATIONS OF THE LIBRARIAN WITHIN HIS LIBRARY

13. The chief librarian should delegate authority, encourage a sense of responsibility and initiative on the part of staff members, provide for their professional development, and appreciate good work. Staff members should be informed of the duties of their positions and the policies and problems of the library.

14. Loyalty to fellow workers and a spirit of courteous cooperation, whether between individuals or between departments, are essential to effective library service.

15. Criticism of library policies, service, and personnel should be offered only to the proper authority for the sole purpose of improvement of the library.

16. Acceptance of a position in a library incurs an obligation to remain long enough to repay the library for the expense incident to adjustment. A contract signed or agreement made should be adhered to faithfully until it expires or is dissolved by mutual consent.

17. Resignations should be made long enough before they are to take effect to allow adequate time for the work to be put in shape and a successor appointed.*

18. A librarian should never enter into a business dealing on behalf of the library which will result in personal profit.
19. A librarian should never turn the library’s resources to personal use, to the detriment of services which the library renders to its patrons.

IV. RELATION OF THE LIBRARIAN TO HIS PROFESSION

20. Librarians should recognize librarianship as an educational profession and realize that the growing effectiveness of their service is dependent upon their own development.

21. In view of the importance of ability and personality traits in library work, a librarian should encourage only those persons with suitable aptitudes to enter the library profession and should discourage the continuance in service of the unfit.

22. Recommendations should be confidential and should be fair to the candidate and the prospective employer by presenting an unbiased statement of strong and weak points.

23. Librarians should have a sincere belief and a critical interest in the library profession. They should endeavor to achieve and maintain adequate salaries and proper working conditions.

24. Formal appraisal of the policies or practices of another library should be given only upon the invitation of that library’s governing authority or chief librarian.*

25. Librarians, in recognizing the essential unity of their profession, should have membership in library organizations and should be ready to attend and participate in library meetings and conferences.

V. RELATION OF THE LIBRARIAN TO SOCIETY

26. Librarians should encourage a general realization of the value of library service and be informed concerning movements, organizations, and institutions whose aims are compatible with those of the library.

27. Librarians should participate in public and community affairs and so represent the library that it will take its place among educational, social, and cultural agencies.

28. A librarian’s conduct should be such as to maintain public esteem for the library and for library work.


* These statements are out of date and are overridden by current state and federal law.
Appendix III - Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Appendix IV - The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that
publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.
To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society, individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.
We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.


A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association
Association of American Publishers

Subsequently endorsed by:

American Booksellers for Free Expression
The Association of American University Presses
The Children’s Book Council
Freedom to Read Foundation
National Association of College Stores
National Coalition Against Censorship
National Council of Teachers of English
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression