

INDIAN RIVER AREA LIBRARY

Customer Service Policy

1. STATEMENT of PURPOSE

The *Indian River Area Library* (“IRAL”) exists for its patrons. Delivering excellent quality, user-centered service is the Library’s top priority. Every employee plays an important role in creating a welcoming environment and ensuring that all interactions with patrons are helpful and productive. Not every staff member has personal contact with Library users, but every position in some way lends support in developing and offering the best possible array of resources and services.

All staff shall be friendly and knowledgeable. Every Library patron will be greeted with a smile and demonstration that the staff is here to help them use the Library effectively. Users’ needs are the focus of every staff person’s efforts.

2. LIBRARY SERVICE PRINCIPLES

- A. Everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
- B. All staff shall be welcoming and professional.
- C. All staff shall be knowledgeable about their work and attentive to it.
- D. All staff shall listen carefully to understand each request.
- E. All questions and requests are treated as valid.
- F. Differences and diversity are honored.
- G. All staff shall find the best available strategy or solution for meeting user needs.
- H. Staff shall support each other in providing service.
- I. Staff shall eliminate unnecessary barriers to service.
- J. Staff shall resolve mistakes and problems without blame.
- K. All staff shall take responsibility for completion of a task and follow-through.
- L. All staff shall foster an environment for teaching and learning.

3. DESCRIPTIONS of PRINCIPLES

- A. **All staff shall treat everyone with dignity and respect.**
 - a. A good guide for this is for all staff to treat others in the ways they would like to be treated. By concentrating on the needs of users and co-workers and genuinely caring about their well-being, staff demonstrate that they hold other human beings in high regard. Staff collaborations should not harm anyone’s self-esteem but rather encourage a positive personal interaction.
- B. **All staff shall be welcoming and professional.**
 - a. The quality and success of users’ Library experiences depend on interactions with librarians and staff. By being poised and ready to interact with users, establishing initial

eye contact and greeting people with open facial expressions and body language, staff conveys readiness and willingness to provide service. Each staff member represents the *Indian River Area Library* in their work.

C. All staff strive to be knowledgeable about their work.

- a. Service is affected by how much each staff member knows about the workings of their department and the Library as a whole. All staff serving the public are expected to know where collections are located, how call numbers work, how to use the Library catalog, and what services the Library offers. Staff members will be familiar with Library policies, procedures, and services and are able to provide an explanation to the patron or else refer to the question to the Library Director. Staff shall be committed to their individual professional development and lifelong learning.

D. All staff shall listen to understand.

- a. Careful listening is an essential component of effective communication and problem-solving. Staff will ask questions and restate what has been heard to have a better chance of getting to the real meaning of a person's communication.

E. All questions and requests will be regarded as valid.

- a. Libraries ensure free speech, individual enrichment, learning, and expansion of knowledge. While the Library will not always be able to fulfill every question or need, staff should not in any way judge the worthiness of a question or its subject matter. When necessary, staff should explain limitations of staffing or resources that make it impossible to completely satisfy a user's need.
- b. Staff recognizes the need to enforce policies and procedures and that some patrons may find this disagreeable. Staff will be patient, respectful, and helpful even when being firm about Library rules.

F. All staff should honor differences and diversity.

- a. The Library's users and employees have a variety of backgrounds, including differences in culture, lifestyle, religion, experience, educational level, and learning style. The Library provides an atmosphere that ensures opportunities and eliminates barriers to achievement. All staff shall set aside personal biases and prejudices to work effectively with users and each other.

G. All staff shall find the best available strategy or solution for meeting user needs.

- a. The individuality and diversity of a Library's users make it impossible to treat each patron encounter in the same way. The key to undertaking a successful resolution for each user encounter is to skillfully negotiate what the user needs and to translate that need into providing the appropriate Library response. The staff will not rely on a standard response but will customize to meet the individual person and circumstance. Staff shall consult with colleagues if unsure on the most effective way to meet a user's request.

H. All staff shall support each other in providing service.

- a. The efforts of the entire Library staff are needed to satisfy an individual user's needs. Meeting users' needs happens through accurate and efficient technical processing and shelving on a routine basis; it can happen in response to specific requests at public service desks.

I. All staff shall eliminate unnecessary barriers to service.

- a. Everyone should constructively challenge procedures, policies, and other barriers to information access, services, and use of the facility. The organizational need for such things as maintenance, processing, and statistics gathering should not unduly impede access to collections, information, or information technology. When limitations are necessary, they should be explained with kindness and understanding.

J. All staff shall resolve mistakes and problems without blame.

- a. Because of the Library's complexity, there may be varied problems that have an impact on service to users. These problems exist when there is a difference between the way things are and the way someone wants them to be. By gathering information about the problem and analyzing it while focusing on its resolution, positive steps can be taken to resolve mistakes and problems and avoid repetition in the future.

K. All staff shall take responsibility for completion of a task and follow-through.

- a. Staff may ensure that Library users have a successful experience by asking them if they received the information or assistance they needed. Staff will not refer users to another unit or service point without being certain that they are able to provide the proper solution to the patron's need. Staff will call ahead and confirm with the unit or service point if unsure about making a referral.

L. All staff shall create a teaching and learning environment.

- a. The Library's goal is for the public to become effective library users who recognize libraries as resources to support lifelong learning, including information, education, and recreation.

The *Indian River Area Library* Administration supports these principles through:

- The persons it hires
- The physical environment it creates
- Serving as good examples of these policies
- The continuing education training and workshops it sponsors