

J. V. FLETCHER LIBRARY
CUSTOMER SERVICES POLICY

The J. V. Fletcher Library strives to offer excellent library services to all. In addition to the quality of the facility and the collection, it is equally important that the library staff provide accurate, efficient and friendly service at all times. Although we often view the patron as the "clientele" -- it is important to remember that the patron as voter and tax payer, is also the ultimate "boss."

The Customer Services Policy of the J. V. Fletcher Library is the foundation for all staff interactions with the general public. All other library policies should be interpreted in the light of the principles outlined below.

1. The Library should offer the same quality of service to all regardless of age, race, sex, nationality, educational background, physical limitations, or any other criteria which may be the source of discrimination.
2. Patrons should be treated as if they are the most important people in the world. They are!
3. Judgment calls should always be made in the patron's favor. If you make a mistake, it should always be to the patron's advantage.
4. Patrons should never be left without an alternative if a staff member is unable to comply with their request (see attached procedures).
5. Staff members should be familiar with and able to articulate library policies as well as explain the rationale behind them.

Demeanor

Demeanor is defined as: the way a person looks, speaks, and acts; one's manner of behavior towards others; a personal mode of expressing attitude. Non-verbal demeanor conveys attitude via the facial expression and posture just as tone of voice and choice of words affect a message.

In public service institutions such as the Library, it is imperative that every staff/patron interaction is a positive one for the patron. A friendly helpful demeanor can often ensure a positive experience even when the message conveyed is not a pleasant one.

Staff members are expected to act in a friendly, helpful manner which will ensure that the patron will walk away feeling that their experience with the Library has been a positive one (see attached procedures).

Each staff member, while at work, acts as a representative of the J. V. Fletcher Library to each person or group with whom she or he comes in contact. The impression made on the patron profoundly affects the library's image and on-going support.

Ethics

The needs and requests of library patrons must always be taken seriously and treated with respect. Equal consideration and treatment will be given to all users within established guidelines and in a non-judgmental environment.

All interactions and transactions between a library patron or group of patrons and the Library will be considered confidential and will be discussed only in a professional context. (Such matters include, but are not limited to, registration information, materials' selection, loan transaction records, reference questions, patron card status, etc.). Staff should remember that, although the temptation to discuss or share difficult transactions at the public desk is great, such discussions should be limited to the Staff Lounge or private offices; these details are confidential as well.

Staff members will not offer personal opinions or advice in answer to queries, but will always follow established library practices.

VOTED AND APPROVED by Board of Library Trustees: 11/6/90
Encl. Sample Positive Operating Procedures

Examples of Situations When Alternatives Should be Offered
(These are for purposes of illustration only, not limitation)

I. Children's Reference Division

1. If a book is not on the shelf, check trucks of books to be shelved, then the computer; offer to reserve or ILL the material.
2. If a question cannot be answered from the juvenile Reference collection, refer the patron to the Adult Reference Dept. and call ahead to alert that desk.

II. Circulation Division

1. If a patron forgets his/her card, offer to look it up. Remind patron that the system may be down or that they may need to use an area library, and that carrying the card is important.
2. If a patron comes up delinquent, suggest some options:
 - a. Renew overdue materials if the patron feels he/she still has them.
 - b. Offer to hold items for three days to allow the patron to clear up the delinquency.
 - c. Offer to photocopy needed information if only a few pages.
 - d. In an urgent situation, offer a shorter loan period (3 days).

A. Fine Arts Sub-Division

1. If a town event, snow closing or other emergency might affect the patron's ability to return videos on time to library desks, waive the overdue charge.

III. Reference Division

1. Conduct a proper reference interview: i. e. make sure that you give the patron what he/she wants, not necessarily what was asked for:
 - clarify what the person really needs (when someone asks you "Where are the biographies?", ask if they need help in finding a particular book.
 - follow up whenever possible with "did you find just what you were looking for?" or "May I help you further?"

2. Never let the patron leave without an answer to his/her question or without a referral to another source. (The words "We don't have that here" should always be followed by "But I'll see if I can locate it for you.")
 - offer to help with equipment and copier
 - offer to reserve materials
 - offer ILL or Network Transfer when possible
 - offer to fill out order form for new title
 - call another library for information when appropriate
 - give the patron a referral to someone who can answer the question or provide the information

Positive Operating Procedures

1. Be punctual -- service commences at the advertised hour we open. Phones should be answered and workstations staffed at 10:00AM. Stay current with the Meeting Room and the Personnel Calendars, and be up-to-date on your emails.

2. Smile.

3. Greet the patron -- of every age, in every division. Acknowledge a patron's entrance or presence by looking up and making eye contact or greeting verbally. J. C. Penney trained new workers stating, "You -- or your replacement -- will greet each customer personally within the first thirty seconds the customer is in the store."

4. Look up and around periodically. Being helpful to patrons takes precedence over desk work; patrons should not be led to think otherwise. Walk your area to notice patrons needing help in the stacks, areas needing tending or trash to be picked up. Accompany patrons to stack areas and collections; never point from your workstation.

5. Conduct transactions in a helpful pleasant tone of voice. Keep any impatience, annoyance or implication of ignorance from your voice. Pretend it is their first visit to the library (if not, it may be their last). It's always better to presume that the patron is unfamiliar with the J. V. Fletcher Library.

6. Do not reprimand or scold patrons, refer difficult interactions to the Building Supervisor of the Day or management.

7. Give the patron a business card with your name on it if follow-up is required. The personal touch is always nicer -- and more efficient!

8. Be jargon free when talking to library patrons:

- avoid library and computer jargon or abbreviations which would be meaningless or threatening to the patron (i.e. delinquency, ILL, BPL, etc.)

- explain to the patron what procedure you will be following if it is not readily apparent (i.e. "I will be contacting another library for this book you want; it may take 3 or 4 days. When it comes in, we will call you in the evening to notify you to come pick it up.")