



Public Service Policy

The Barrington Public Library strives to offer excellent library services to all. In addition to the quality of the facility and the collections, it is equally important that the Library staff provide accurate, efficient, and friendly service at all times.

The Public Service Policy of the Barrington Public Library is the foundation for all staff interactions with the general public. All other library policies should be interpreted in light of the principles outlined below.

1. The Library shall offer the same quality of service to all regardless of age, race, sex, nationality, educational background, physical limitations, or other criteria which may be a source of discrimination.
2. Patrons shall be treated with the recognition that the Library exists for the purpose of serving their needs.
3. Staff members shall be familiar with and able to articulate Library policies as well as explain the rationale behind them.
4. Deviations from policy shall always be made in the patron's favor (e.g. forgiving fines at the time of a serious illness or death in the patron's family). If a staff member is unsure of what a response should be in what appears to be a "special case," the staff member shall defer to the Supervisor, or to the Library Director. When a staff member must act on his/her own, the Supervisor or Director shall be informed of the action, but the staff member can feel confident that the Director will support any decision made in his/her absence.
5. Patrons shall be offered an alternative if a staff member is unable to comply with their request (e.g. work out a schedule whereby they may pay fines over a longer period of time if it is a hardship to pay at once).

Guidelines for Carrying out Public Service Policy

Each staff member, while at work, acts as a representative of the Barrington Public Library to each person or group with whom he or she comes in contact. The impression made on the patron profoundly affects the Library's image. A friendly, helpful demeanor can often ensure a positive experience even when the message conveyed is not a pleasant one. This includes the way a person looks, speaks and acts; one's manner of behavior toward others; a personal way of expressing attitude. Non-verbal behavior conveys attitude via facial expression and posture just as tone of voice and choice of words affect a verbal message.

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

All interactions and transactions between a Library patron 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, material's selection, loan transaction records, reference questions, etc.)



Staff members may not accept substantial or monetary gifts from Library patrons or groups.

Staff members may not offer personal opinions or advice in answer to queries, but should always follow established Library practices by referring to professional sources in response to Library queries.

Positive Operating Procedures

1. Greet the patron with a smile. Acknowledge a patron's presence by looking up and making eye contact or greeting verbally.
2. Look up and around periodically. Being helpful to patrons takes precedence over paperwork and staff conversation; patrons should not be given reason to think otherwise.
3. Conduct transactions in a helpful, pleasant tone of voice. Keep any impatience, annoyance, or implications of a patron's ignorance from your voice. It is always safer to presume that the patron is unfamiliar with Library procedures, or has not used the service before, and to always provide full information.
4. Unless there is a specific discipline problem, do not reprimand patrons. When an unruly patron must be told to leave, give him/her a "clean slate" when the patron returns to the Library.
5. Give the patron your first name if asked. The personal touch is always appreciated.
6. Be jargon free when talking to Library patrons. Avoid Library and computer jargon or abbreviations which would be meaningless to the patron (e.g. clearcharge, ILL, BPL, etc.). Explain to the patron what the procedure you will be following if it is not readily apparent (e.g. We will contact another Library for the book that you want; it may take 3 or 4 days for it to arrive. When it does, we will call you. We will hold the book at the Circulation desk for 7 days).
7. When a patron is not satisfied with your response, or does not accept your explanation of the Library's policy, offer to have the patron speak to your Supervisor, Department Head or to the Library Director, and offer the patron the opportunity to fill out a complaint/suggestion form.

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees

November 17, 1994