

# Claverack Free Library

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## Code of Ethics Policy

**Adopted: November 2014**

## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees of the Claverack Free Library and the staff of the Claverack Free Library to provide quality library service to the residents of the communities we serve. The Code of Ethics, which follows, represents our commitment to the ethical standards for our library. Failure to adhere to this Code of Ethics by any individual trustee may result in removal from the board.

The Claverack Free Library recognizes 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 GUIDELINES

Trustees and staff in the capacity of trust upon them, shall observe ethical standards with absolute truth, integrity, and honor. Trustees and staff must distinguish clearly between their personal attitudes and philosophies and those of the institution, acknowledging the formal position of the board even if they personally disagree.

After a policy or rule is adopted by a majority of the library board, individual trustees and staff should publicly support those decisions. Trustees and staff must respect the confidential nature of library business while being aware of and in compliance with applicable laws governing freedom of information. Trustees must not divulge information learned during executive sessions of the board, or any information regarding future board plans or actions until such action is officially taken. Negotiations of contracts are in the purview of the assigned board committee/representative.

Trustees must avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or financial benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues or the situation. It is incumbent upon any trustee to recuse himself or herself immediately whenever the appearance of a conflict of interests exists.

Trustees must make decisions in the best interest of residents in all parts of the Claverack Free Library's chartered service area. No preference will be given to any town, village, or group of people.

Trustees must be prepared to support to the fullest the efforts of librarians in resisting censorship of library materials by groups or individuals.

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 of Ethics 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.

1. 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.
2. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
3. 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.
4. We recognize and respect intellectual property rights.
5. 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 the Library.
6. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or the Claverack Free Library.

7. 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 the Claverack Free Library or the provision of access to its information resources.

8. 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.