

Claverack Free Library

Patron Service Policy

Approved: January 21, 2020

The Claverack Free Library (CFL) 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 CFL staff (employees and volunteers) provide accurate, efficient and friendly service at all times. Although we often view the patron as a customer, it is important to remember that the patron, as voter and taxpayer, is also the ultimate “boss”. The patron service policy is the foundation for staff interactions with the general public. All other CFL policies should be interpreted in light of the principles outlined below.

- Staff should offer the same quality of services to all regardless of age, race, sex, nationality, educational background, physical limitations, or any other criteria that may be the source of discrimination.
- Patrons deserve attention and respect; their requests and needs should be the first order of business.
- Judgment calls should always be made in the patron’s favor. If staff misinterprets a CFL policy, it should always be to the patron’s advantage. Staff will not be penalized for errors made in good faith pursuant to this policy.
- If staff is unable to comply with a patron’s request, the patron should be offered an alternative whenever possible. If unsure about the proper action, staff should check with the Director.
- Staff should be familiar with and able to articulate CFL policies as well as explain the rationale behind them.
- When patrons have concerns or issues, staff will address them promptly, efficiently and kindly, keeping the Director informed as needed.

Demeanor

In public service institutions such as the CFL, 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 to all patrons of the CFL which will ensure they walk away feeling that their experience has been a positive one.

Confidentiality

The needs and requests of CFL 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 between a CFL patron and the CFL will be considered confidential and will be discussed only in a professional context. (Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, registration information, materials selection, loan transaction records,

reference questions, patron card status, etc.) Staff should remember that, although the temptation to share difficult transactions at the public desk is great, such discussions should be conducted out of range of the public eye and ear. These details are confidential as well. (Please see Confidentiality Policy for details).

Staff members will respond to inquiries with the best factual information available in a nonpartisan way. In particular, CFL staff may direct patrons to resources of consumer information, but they should avoid endorsements of individual products and services.

Positive Operating Procedures for All Staff

1. Every staff member will strive to be punctual, at his/her assigned post and ready to work. Interaction between staff should be professional.
2. All patrons will be treated courteously and respectfully.
3. Staff will acknowledge a patron's entrance or presence by making eye contact and, when possible, greet them verbally.
4. Staff will be aware of patrons in the CFL and how they might assist them or encourage them to use its resources.. Being helpful to patrons takes precedence over desk work. Staff should not leave the desk unattended unless absolutely necessary. If a check out line forms and there is no back up, staff should inform patrons they will be helped as soon as possible.
5. Staff will conduct transactions in a helpful, pleasant tone of voice avoiding any impatience or implication of ignorance. Even if it is not the patron's first visit to the CFL, they may need assistance with a new resource, activity or technology. The more comfortable a patron can become with the many resources available, the more they will value their visits.