

# **PUBLIC SERVICE POLICY**

Adopted by the Belvedere-Tiburon Library Agency on January 5, 1998  
Revised July 25, 2005

The Belvedere-Tiburon Library strives to provide excellent library services to all patrons. In addition to the quality of the facility and the collection, the Library staff shall provide accurate, efficient, and friendly service at all times.

The Public Service Policy of the Belvedere-Tiburon Library is the foundation for all staff interactions with the general public. All other Library policies should be interpreted in light of the principles herein defined.

- 1) The Library should offer the same quality and consistency of service to all patrons regardless of age, race, sex, nationality, educational background, physical limitations, or any other criteria that may be the source of discrimination.
- 2) Patrons should be treated with respect, as if they are the most important people in the world. Patrons should be welcomed when they enter the library and they should leave the library feeling they have been well served.
- 3) When in doubt, judgment calls should be made in the patron's favor.
- 4) Patrons should never be left without an alternative if a staff member is unable to comply with their request. (See attached procedures.)
- 5) All staff members shall be familiar with and able to articulate Library policies as well as to be able to 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 facial expression and postures, just as tone of voice and choice of words affect a verbal message.

In the Library it is imperative that every staff and patron interaction is a positive one for the patron. A friendly, helpful demeanor often ensures a positive experience even when the message conveyed is not a positive one.

Staff members shall act in a friendly, helpful manner to ensure that patrons will walk away feeling that their experience with the Library has been a positive one. (See attached procedures.)

Each staff member acts as a representative of the Belvedere-Tiburon Library to each person or group with whom s/he comes in contact. The impression s/he makes on the patron profoundly affects the Library's image.

## **GUIDELINES**

Library patrons' needs and requests shall always be taken seriously and treated with respect. Equal consideration and treatment will be given to all patrons within established guidelines 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, and other such items.)

All transactions will be in accordance with the policies and procedures of Marinnet.

All transactions will be consistent with the procedures and guidelines of the Belvedere-Tiburon Library.

Staff members will not accept personal gifts from Library patrons or groups.

Library equipment may not be lent to patrons for use outside the building, including lap tops, serving trays and kitchen items, projectors, etc.

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

Staff must always refer patrons to the appropriate department or library staff person that can best assist them.

## **POSITIVE OPERATING PROCEDURES**

- 1) SMILE!!
- 2) All staff shall greet patrons and acknowledge a patron's entrance or presence by looking up and making eye contact and/or extending a greeting verbally.
- 3) Look up and around periodically. Being helpful to patrons takes precedence over paperwork. No actions by staff should lead patrons to think otherwise.
- 4) Conduct transactions in a helpful, pleasant tone of voice as quietly as possible. Never express any impatience, annoyance, or implications of patron ignorance in your voice. It is always better to presume that the patron is unfamiliar with the Belvedere-Tiburon Library.
- 5) Conduct yourself in a professional manner while at work. This point is especially important while on a public service desk. At the public service desk staff should not spend time on any personal matters, including personal phone calls, reading periodicals or books, listening to earphones, performing internet or web-based personal searches, or having lengthy personal conversation between one another.
- 6) Unless there is a specific discipline problem or safety issue, do not reprimand or scold patrons. This includes children and young adults. The behavior of children is the responsibility of parents.

- 7) Give the patron your name if follow-up is required. The personal touch is always nicer – and more efficient.
- 8) Speak jargon-free when talking to library patrons. Avoid library and computer terminology or abbreviations that may be meaningless or threatening to the patron.
- 9) 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 the book that you want.)

### **EXAMPLES OF SITUATIONS WHEN ALTERNATIVES SHOULD BE OFFERED**

(These are only for purposes of illustration, not limitation.)

#### ***Children's Department***

- 1) If a book is not on the shelf, check trucks of books to be shelved, then computer, then offer to reserve or interlibrary loan (ILL) the material.
- 2) If a question cannot be answered in the Children's Room, either take the child to the Reference Desk and explain his/her question or, if the child is in the sixth grade or older, send him/her to the Reference Desk and alert Reference by phone.
- 3) If a child forgets his/her card, offer to look up the card number.

#### ***Circulation***

- 1) If a patron comes up delinquent and is unable to check out any more materials, suggest some options.
  - a) Renew overdue materials if they are not long overdue. If a renewal requires an override, offer a shorter borrowing period. (Ask patron what they need, not to exceed one week).
  - b) Offer to hold items for three days to allow patron to clear up delinquency.
  - c) In an urgent situation, offer a shorter borrowing period (3 days).
- 2) If a patron does not have his/her library card, offer to look up the number if they have other ID. If they do not have ID (especially children and young adults), in an urgent situation, look up their number and ask them to verify the information.

#### ***Reference Department***

- 1) Conduct a proper reference interview. Make certain that you give the patron what s/he wants, not necessarily what s/he asked for. Clarify what the person really needs. (When someone asks you, "Where are the biographies?" ask if s/he needs 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".)

- 3) Offer to help with the computers.
- 4) Offer to reserve materials.
- 5) Offer ILL when possible.
- 6) Offer a request for purchase form when new materials are needed.
- 7) Call another library for information when appropriate.
- 8) Give the patron a referral to someone who can answer the question or provide the information.