

Eastern Shore Public Library
Customer Service Policy

The Eastern Shore Public Library strives to provide responsive library service to the residents of the Eastern Shore of Virginia through free access to diverse materials, programs, and information. The role of the library shall be to provide current, high-demand, high-interest materials for the leisure reading of all age groups; to encourage and foster an interest in reading by children; to serve as a support center for both formal and informal learning pursuits, and to do so in a cost-effective manner.

In addition to the quality of the facilities and the collections, it is equally, if not more, important that the library staff provide accurate, efficient, and friendly service at all times. Every customer is important. Each staff member while at work is a representative of the library. The impression made on the customer profoundly affects the library's image and its ongoing support.

The Customer Service Policy of the Eastern Shore 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 will offer the same high quality of service to all regardless of age, race, religion, sex, nationality, educational background, physical limitations, or any other criteria that may be the source of discrimination.
2. Customers will be treated with respect and courtesy in all transactions.
3. A judgment call will always be made in the customer's favor. If you make a mistake, it should always be made to the customer's advantage. If you are unsure, please check with the Director.
4. Customers will never be left without an alternative if a staff member is unable to comply with a request. If you are unsure about the proper action, please check with the Director.
5. Staff members will be familiar with and be able to articulate library policies as well as explain the rationale behind them.

Demeanor

In public service institutions such as the library, it is imperative that every staff/customer interaction is a positive one for the customer. 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 customers of the library which will ensure that customers will walk away feeling that their experience has been a positive one.

Ethics

The needs and requests of library customers 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 library customer or group of customers 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 conducted out of range of the public eye and ear. These details are confidential as well.

Staff members will respond to inquiries with the best factual information available but will refrain from offering personal opinions or advice in response to queries. In particular, library staff may direct customers to resources of consumer information, but they should not recommend specific products or services.

Positive Operating Procedures for All Staff

1. Every staff member will be punctual and will be at his/her assigned post and ready to work. Phones will be answered, workstations staffed, and doors opened punctually at 9 a.m.
2. All customers will be treated courteously and respectfully.
3. Greet each customer. Acknowledge a customer's entrance or presence by looking up and making eye contact and, when possible, greeting them verbally.
4. Look up and around periodically. Being helpful to customers takes precedence over desk work. Customers should not be lead to believe otherwise. For example, do not keep a customer waiting while you finish checking in a pile of books, nor should you leave the desk unattended to do something in the workroom unless absolutely necessary. If there is a line forming and there is no one to back you up, let customers in line know you will be with them as soon as possible.
5. Conduct transactions in a helpful, pleasant tone of voice. Keep any impatience, annoyance, or implication of ignorance from your voice. Pretend it is the customer's first visit to the library. It is always better to assume that the customer is unfamiliar with our library and its policies and procedures.
6. Unless there is a specific discipline problem, do not reprimand or scold a customer for any reason.
7. Give the customer your first name if follow-up is required. The personal touch is always nicer and more efficient.
8. If a customer has a question or complaint and the appropriate person to address the question is not available, staff members should offer to take the customer's name and phone number for follow-up by the appropriate staff member as soon as possible.
9. It is never appropriate for a customer to treat a staff member rudely, to verbally or physically threaten staff or to yell or use abusive language with staff. If such a situation arises, it is appropriate to call the Director and to refuse to serve that customer.

Approved and Adopted by the ESPL Board of Trustees on August 7, 2007.