



Media Relations Policy

Library Spokesperson

In order to provide the most current and consistent information about the library, all contact with news media will be carried out through the library director, his or her designee, or board president, although at times they may refer the media to specific staff members. The library board president is the spokesperson for the library board of trustees. All inquiries from reporters or other media persons should be reported immediately to the library director.

If staff or trustees are asked to provide the public with information related to library business or policy, library administration will provide clear guidelines for responding to such requests.

Employees who represent the library as media spokespersons should avoid speculation on any topic and refrain from offering personal opinions about library policies or programs, even when asked to do so by a reporter.

Questions from the public regarding the general operations or direction of the library should be referred to the director. Inquiries related to the underlying principles of a policy that are open to interpretation from a political, constitutional, and/or legal perspective should be referred to the director. Examples of such policies include, but are not limited to, those covering internet access, filtering, intellectual freedom, and meeting room issues.

Inquiries regarding the library budget should be referred to the director, business manager, board treasurer and/or board president.

In the event of an emergency, official statements to the public and the media will be made by the director or the board president. If it is necessary for other library staff to provide the public with information in such situations, library administration will offer guidance as needed.

Newsgathering in the Library

Members of the media who wish to conduct newsgathering in the library in any manner disruptive to the operation of the library or its use by other patrons must make themselves known to either the director or to the staff member in charge of the building in the director's absence. Examples of behavior that can be disruptive to the operation of the library or its use by other customers include interviewing at other than normal conversational voice level, photographing, video recording, or audio recording patrons or staff. Staff members witnessing members of the media in this situation must inform them of the policy and ask that they request and gain permission from the director before further conducting newsgathering in the library. This policy



does not apply to a member of the media in his or her capacity as a patron using the library's resources.

Photography and Filming In the Library

Photography or video recording in the library is generally permitted if it is for library promotion, a student project, or strictly for personal use. Photography or video recording for commercial purposes is not permitted without approval by the director; such approval must be requested in writing and in advance.

All requests to use a library facility as a setting for photography or filming are to be referred to the director, who has the responsibility and authority to evaluate the requests and to monitor the filming. Requests will be evaluated in terms of their impact on library operations and services. The director will make arrangements with specific library departments and personnel in advance of the approved photography.

In order to protect the rights of individual patrons and to reduce distractions, photographing and video recording on library property are restricted as follows:

1. Under no circumstances may the public, members of the media, or library staff take photographs or record video without the express permission of any library patron or staff member who would be prominently included within the composition. In the case of minors permission must come from the parent or legal guardian.
2. Media are subject to the provisions of the Code of Conduct policy and may not disturb the normal operations of the library.
3. In the event of a critical incident or emergency requiring police or fire response, media access may be limited to allow emergency personnel to ensure safety and security.
4. The terms above apply to the media as well as to amateur photographers and filmmakers.

Library Promotion

The board is responsible for seeing that the public understands the objectives and goals of the library. It is also responsible for promoting good public relations whenever and wherever possible, to encourage use of the library, to inform the public of library programs, and to obtain citizen support for library development. The library director handles the details of the communications program.

Press releases

The library will send press releases to both traditional and online media outlets, including, but not limited to, newspapers, radio stations and television stations. Press releases may focus on regular or special programming, library services, board news, general library information, etc. Press releases and promotional items should look professional, be accurate, and provide a



positive reflection of the library. Any letters to the editor from library staff designed to speak for the library must have prior approval from the director.

Website

In accordance with state law, the library will maintain a website. This website will list the library's contact information, hours, board and financial information, and upcoming events.

Social Media

Library-sponsored social media is used to convey information about library programs and services, raise awareness about library and community issues, obtain patron feedback, exchange ideas or insights about library trends, reach out to potential new patrons and supporters and respond to breaking news or publicity.

Only employees designated and authorized by the director can post, delete, edit or otherwise modify content on library-sponsored social media. Any such employee with authorization to add or modify social media content is required to follow these general guidelines:

1. Make certain all social media postings are accurate, without grammatical errors or factual misrepresentations.
2. Maintain privacy, confidentiality, and obtain permission to use other sites' content. If the employee is unsure whether or not to disclose any information, the employee should refrain from posting it.
3. Find ways to engage patrons, including adding content that supports the library's mission.
4. Make certain all postings provide a positive reflection of the library; all posts should be constructive and beneficial.

The above guidelines apply only to VWPLD employees posting on behalf of the library. They do not apply to patrons commenting on library posts.

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