

Dear Volunteer:

We are very pleased that you will be working with us! We realize that your choosing to work here indicates that you are already aware of the importance of libraries in the community, and of the nature of service that it requires.

Following are our **Mission Statement**, our **Statement on Intellectual Freedom/Censorship** and general guidelines for working in the Library:

Mission Statement

“To provide a variety of information sources, educational and cultural programs and services to fulfill and inspire a civically and culturally engaged community.”

Statement on Intellectual Freedom/Censorship

*It is the belief of this Library that intellectual freedom and access to information are fundamental to the free and open exchange of ideas necessary in a democratic society. The Library’s collection will contain widely diverse points of view on many controversial subjects and will be freely provided to all Library patrons. No form of censorship or restriction of Library materials by Library staff will be tolerated in accordance with the Library’s principles of intellectual freedom. Censorship is an individual matter, and individuals are expected to exercise their right **not** to read, for themselves and their children only, and **not** for other members of the community. Inclusion of any material in the collection is not to be considered an endorsement by the Board of Directors.*

We have two primary roles:

1. **Popular materials Library:** The Library features current, high-interest materials, both fiction and non-fiction, in a variety of formats for people of all ages. The Library actively encourages the use of its collections.
2. **Gateway to children’s learning:** The Library encourages an interest in reading and learning in young children through services for children and their families. In addition to books on parenting, child development, and programs to foster reading readiness, the Library offers a wide selection of materials for preschoolers and young children.

Our secondary roles are:

1. **Educational enrichment for school-age children:** The Library supports the educational aims of the school system by providing classics and current fiction, as well as numerous materials on subjects of common interest for reports and science experiments.
2. **Community reference and information resource:** The Library provides information through materials in the Library and on the Library website.
3. **Local history and genealogy:** The Library maintains limited collections in these areas, with support from our Regional Library, the Martinsburg-Berkeley County Public Library.

GUIDELINES FOR LIBRARY SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

The following are guidelines, some of which are policy and all of which the Library feels are conducive to a positive Library experience for both patrons and volunteers.

Any library volunteer who will be working with personal patron information will be required to sign a Confidentiality Pledge in order to be “certified.” Certified library volunteers are volunteers who have undergone training by a staff member or a qualified volunteer, and who are working with any aspect of patron information. They will be required to read, understand and agree to the policies of the Shepherdstown Public Library, and to sign the Confidentiality Pledge indicating their willingness to do so.

Patron Interactions:

- A patron **physically present** in the Library takes precedence over most other duties, such as making phone calls, shelving books, etc.
- The patron should be asked **as soon as possible** if help is needed in searching the catalog, finding a book, or locating other areas of the Library (children’s department, bathroom, etc.)
- A patron’s taste in books is a highly personal issue and should never be commented on negatively or even discussed. If a patron asks your opinion, you may give it; it is not, however, our role to judge anyone’s taste in reading. We carry many types of books, some of which may be disagreeable to different individuals, but we must accommodate all the varied tastes of our community.
- If a patron disagrees with any fine charged, the fine should be removed (unless it is a chronic problem, in which case the question can be referred to the Director or Assistant Director) and a notation made if the volunteer feels it necessary.
- If a patron denies having a book that is on his/her record, first check the stacks (our mistake) and then gently suggest that you will renew it for three more weeks to give us both a chance to look a little further. Make a note of it for others to see, since it may be in a place that is not obvious (mending, hold shelf, etc.). Again, if the patron adamantly refuses to pay for or acknowledge the lost book, let it go and inform the Director or Assistant Director.
- Luckily, problem patrons have been few and far between in this Library, but a difficult patron should never be challenged if there is any perceived potential for violence. The police can be called if necessary, and in an extreme case, the librarian should leave the building along with any other patrons present.

- **Privacy is paramount.** The patron database is private information and is not to be shared with anyone other than the patron him/herself. A parent requesting to see the record of his/her child who is under the age of 16 should be accommodated, using your own judgment. Any requests from governmental authorities should be referred to the Director or Assistant Director, as legal advice would be required to proceed. **The computer screen should be kept blank between patrons' transactions** to avoid viewing someone else's loans (get in the habit of pressing "Escape" after every transaction.) When calling to inform patrons of **books on hold, the title should not be mentioned to anyone except the requesting patron.** Names must not be spoken aloud when associated with an item or a transaction while within hearing of other patrons and non-certified volunteers. All unnecessary paper with patron information on it must be shredded.
- As a public facility, tourists are part of our responsibility. They should be shown friendliness and courtesy, and given any information they are seeking. If the weather is benign, requests for restroom use should be referred either to the Visitor's Center or the Town Hall. In case of emergencies, or when the other agencies are closed, however, anyone is allowed to use the restroom. You may use your judgment in this area.

Personal Appearance

- The Library is a casual place. Dress is informal and comfortable.
- In addition to the fact that we occupy such a small space, other library staff and patrons may be highly allergic to fragrances, so please refrain from using perfume.

Library Confidentiality and Privacy

The Shepherdstown Public Library is committed to patron confidentiality and privacy as guaranteed by the West Virginia Code, Chapter 10 (§10-1-22.) The Library will generally refuse requests for available lists of registered library patrons or for the records of patron transactions by any federal, state, or local law enforcement officer except pursuant to a court order entered by a court of competent jurisdiction. Costs incurred by the Library due to compliance with such court orders will be charged to the agency seeking the information.

Exceptions

With the exception of library staff and "certified library volunteers" performing their required library duties, patron records may only be disclosed to:

- The patron himself/herself upon verification of identity;
- Parents of minor children under specific circumstances (see "Minor Patrons" below); Anyone with written consent of the patron involved;
- Law enforcement officers, when staff members have knowledge of the name and description of a person who has committed, is committing, or threatens to commit a crime affecting Library staff, patrons, trustees, or Library property;

- Law enforcement officers, when an officer believes there is imminent danger or physical harm of a patron. Information such as materials borrowed, resources reviewed, or services used at the library may only be disclosed upon court order;
- Law enforcement officers, upon court order or subpoena, in which case library staff are to refer requests to the Library Director or person in-charge.
- **Minor Patrons Exception** If a library cardholder is under the age of 16, the parent or guardian who signed for the child's card may be given specific information regarding that child's record. If the parent or guardian is in possession of the child's card, they may be given any information in the child's record. If the child's card is not in the parent's or guardian's possession, the information provided will be limited to materials that are overdue, lost, or damaged and fines owed.

Confidentiality and privacy extend to any transaction with any patron of the library. In our small setting, care must be taken not to expose any information in any form to anyone who is not entitled to it. This includes:

- Patron personal record information
- Circulation records
- Items on hold shelf
- Overdue materials records
- Interlibrary loan requests
- Database search records
- Requests for photocopy duplication
- Copies left in copier
- Faxes left in fax machine
- User profiles for selective dissemination of information (SDI) services (Special Services)
- Records of Web pages visited on public terminals
- E-mail messages sent and received on public terminals
- Records of individual consultations with patrons
- Copies of messages generated through e-mail or chat reference services
- Sign-up sheets for use of computer terminals or other library resources
- Any other instance in which patron information is present

Again, we greatly appreciate your time and commitment to the Library, and we hope you enjoy your experience here!

Volunteer Confidentiality Pledge

I hereby acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to adhere to the policies regarding patron interactions, confidentiality and privacy in the Shepherdstown Public Library:

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____