

## MOUNT VERNON CITY LIBRARY

### 2. CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

#### 2.01 PURPOSE

The Mount Vernon City Library strives to offer excellent library services, which includes a quality facility and collection. The library staff provides accurate, efficient and friendly service to all customers at all times. The Mount Vernon city resident, as voter and taxpayer, are the people to whom the staff is ultimately responsible.

The *Customer Service Policy of the Mount Vernon City 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.**

#### 2.02 POSITIVELY OUTRAGEOUS SERVICE

- The library offers the same quality of service to all regardless of age, race, sex, nationality, educational background, physical limitations or any other criteria, which may be the source of discrimination.
- Customers are treated politely and with respect. They are the reason the library exists.
- **Judgment calls are to be made in the customer's favor. If a mistake is made, it should always be to the customer's advantage.**
- If a staff member is unable to comply with a request, the customer will be offered an alternative.
- Staff members are familiar with library policies and are able to articulate them and to explain the rationale behind them.

#### 2.04 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. Body language conveys attitude just as the tone of voice and choice of words affect a message.

It is imperative that every staff/customer interaction be a positive one for the customer. A friendly helpful demeanor usually ensures a positive experience even when the message conveyed is not a pleasant one.

Staff members are expected to act in a friendly, helpful manner which will ensure that the customer will walk away feeling that their experience with the library has been a positive one.

Each staff member, while at work, is a representative of the library and the City of Mount Vernon. **The impression made on the customer profoundly affects the library's image and on-going support.**

## **2.06 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 users within established guidelines and in a non-judgmental environment.

All interactions and transactions 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 discussion of confidential customer issues should be limited to non-public areas.

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

## **2.08 POSITIVE OPERATING PROCEDURES AND INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Be punctual. Service commences at the advertised hour we open and full service is available until the hour we close. Phones should be answered and workstations manned when the library opens for the public.
2. Wear your nametag when you are on the desk.
3. Answer the phone in a pleasant manner, using a greeting, identifying the library and yourself and offering help. "Mount Vernon City Library, this is (your name), may I help you?"
4. Smile.
5. Greet the customer. Acknowledge a customer's presence by looking up and making eye contact or greeting verbally. If you are busy with another customer, acknowledge the customer who is waiting and explain that you will help the new customer as soon as you can.
6. Maintain friendly contact with library users without engaging in lengthy conversations. If it is hard to break away, explain that you enjoy talking but you need to get back to work.
7. Keep your voice low so it doesn't disturb library users.
8. Keep conversation with other staff members to a minimum. If you need to discuss something in depth, do it when you are both off the desk and out of the public area. If it can't wait, get coverage for the desk and go to the staff area to have your discussion. Even though you may be discussing library business the public will think you are socializing and are too busy to help them.
9. Avoid extended phone calls while you are on the desk. Even though the call is library-related, it means you are not available to library users. Place calls when you are off the desk. If you receive a call, ask if you can call back or ask someone to cover for you and go to a non-public area.
10. Take personal phone calls away from the desk. Either tell the caller you will call back when you are off the desk or ask someone to cover for you and go to a non-public area to take your call.
11. Look up and around periodically. If you are on the Reference Desk, walk around and notice if there are people in the stacks or at the terminals who might need help. Being

helpful to customers takes precedence over deskwork. **PEOPLE AREN'T AN INTERRUPTION OF OUR BUSINESS – THEY ARE OUR BUSINESS.**

12. Never point. If you are at the Reference Desk, escort the customer to the appropriate area. If you are at the Circulation Desk, refer the customer to the Reference Desk.
13. Whenever possible, when referring a customer to another staff member, ask the staff member to help the customer (“Will you please help Mrs. Brown with some Consumer information”) instead of leaving the customer to fend for herself.
14. Conduct transactions in a helpful, pleasant tone of voice. Keep any impatience, annoyance or implication of ignorance from your voice. It’s always better to presume that the customer is unfamiliar with the library, the Dewey Decimal system and the catalog.
15. Unless there is a specific discipline problem, do not reprimand or scold customers.
16. Use plain language when speaking to customers.
  - Avoid using library and computer jargon, which would be meaningless to the customer.
  - Explain to the customer what procedure you will be following if it is not readily apparent
17. When a customer complains, refer the customer to the Circulation Supervisor, Deputy Director or Library Director, if they are available. Be sure to pass the customer’s name and phone number on to the Circulation Supervisor.
18. If there will be a lapse of time before you can obtain information for a customer, tell the customer you will call them. Don’t tell the customer to call you.
19. Leave parking spaces near the library for customer use.

Approved by the Board of Trustees August 2, 2001