

3.1 – Staff Conduct

Purpose

The library is committed to fostering a welcoming, neutral, and professional environment for all patrons. As representatives of the library, employees are expected to uphold these values by refraining from discussing or displaying personal beliefs related to politics, religion, or other sensitive topics while on duty. This ensures the library remains an inclusive and respectful space for everyone, regardless of their personal views.

The core purpose of every library policy and procedure is to enhance public service. Employees should take pride in knowing their efforts contribute to making the library experience as positive as possible for all patrons. Staff members are expected to be pleasant, friendly, and helpful at all times. While they may not have all the answers, they should always convey a willingness to assist and be familiar with library policies, resources, and procedures to help patrons find the information they need.

Patron service should be the primary focus at all times. Personal conversations or other tasks should not detract from greeting and assisting patrons. Employees also share a responsibility for maintaining a clean and organized workspace, ensuring the library is presentable to the public. All tasks should be performed in accordance with each individual's job description as approved by the HRLS Board of Trustees.

The first and foremost duty of all employees is to provide prompt, efficient, courteous, and friendly service. Employees should be mindful that they represent the library both inside and outside its facilities, contributing to a positive public perception. Every patron's request should be treated as important, and all patrons should be treated with dignity and respect. No individual is to be discriminated against based on sexual orientation, gender identity, age, race, religion, political affiliation, or social and intellectual status.

3.2 - Library Staff and Trustees Communication Protocol

1. Primary Communication Method:

- All work-related communications between employees, supervisors, directors, and board trustees should be conducted via official library email addresses. This ensures professionalism, data security, and proper documentation of all communications.

2. Text Messaging:

- Text messaging to personal cell phones is reserved for emergency situations only, where immediate attention is required and where email may not be sufficient.
- Emergencies include, but are not limited to, situations where there is a safety concern, immediate operational impact, or urgent decision-making required outside of normal working hours.

3. Personal Cell Phones:

- The use of personal cell phones for non-emergency work communication is discouraged. Employees should refrain from using text messaging or personal messaging apps to contact other library employees and board trustees for work-related purposes unless explicitly authorized.

4. Response Time:

- Emails should be regularly monitored during work hours, and staff are expected to respond to work-related communications in a timely manner, typically within one business day.
- Non-urgent texts sent to personal cell phones outside of emergency situations may not receive a response.

5. Data Privacy and Security:

- Work-related emails sent through the library's official email system are protected and archived according to library data security protocols. Text messages sent through personal phones are not

covered under these protocols and may compromise the security of sensitive information.

3.3 – Appearance and Personal Hygiene

While the library does not have a formal dress code policy, employees are expected to use good judgment in selecting attire that reflects their role as representatives of the library and the community. Employees should consider their position, public interaction, and safety requirements when choosing their clothing. All staff must maintain a neat, clean, and well-groomed appearance.

Attire should be suitable for the work being performed and should not display personal beliefs related to politics, religion, or other sensitive topics, ensuring a respectful environment for both patrons and co-workers. Office and desk staff are expected to present a professional appearance with appropriate office attire. Clothing that is stained, torn, or includes cut-off shorts is discouraged.

Proper personal hygiene is essential for maintaining a positive and welcoming environment. All employees are expected to uphold high standards of cleanliness to ensure a comfortable and respectful atmosphere for both customers and colleagues.

3.4 – Physical Abilities

Essential Physical Abilities (with or without reasonable accommodations):

1. Clear speech and hearing abilities that enable effective communication with supervisors, colleagues, and library patrons.
2. Adequate vision to review and produce a variety of library materials, including written documents, correspondence, reports, and digital media, in both electronic and physical formats.
3. Manual dexterity to efficiently operate keyboards, computers, and other equipment necessary for processing and managing library materials.
4. Mobility that allows the employee to actively monitor and oversee library operations, attend offsite meetings, and participate in community and library district events as needed.
5. Ability to lift up to 20 pounds, push and pull carts weighing up to 100 pounds, bend, stoop, and reach shelving from floor level up to 6 feet high, and stand or walk for at least one hour at a time.
6. Tolerance of dust exposure while handling books and other library materials.

The specific tasks required will vary according to the job description approved by the HRLS Board of Trustees.

3.5 – Personal Use of Office Equipment

Personal Use of Office Communication Equipment Policy

The Heartland Regional Library System (HRLS) provides employees with phones, computers, internet access, and other office equipment for the purpose of conducting library business. To ensure professional and appropriate use of these resources, the following guidelines apply:

Computer and Internet Usage

- **Business-Related Use:** The library's computer systems, including email and internet access, are to be used primarily for library business.
- **Limited Personal Use:** Occasional, minimal personal use of email or the internet is permitted, provided it does not interfere with work responsibilities or disrupt library operations. Excessive personal use is considered a violation of this policy.
- **Prohibited Activities:** The use of library computers for any personal profit-making ventures is strictly forbidden.
- **Inappropriate Content:** Employees must not access or share websites or content that contains sexually explicit, obscene, or offensive material. The transmission of such material via email or other communication methods is strictly prohibited. Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- **Monitoring and Privacy:** The library owns all computer systems and data therein. Employees should have no expectation of privacy regarding emails, internet activity, or other information stored on work devices. The library reserves the right to monitor, inspect, and review computer usage without prior notice to employees.

Telephone Use

- **Business Purposes:** The library's telephone system is intended primarily for business use.
- **Personal Calls:** Employees may make personal calls using the library's telephone system, provided they are brief, infrequent, and made during

non-work times (e.g., lunch or breaks). Personal calls should not interfere with work duties.

- **Mobile Phone Usage:** The use of personal mobile phones for calls or text messaging should be limited during working hours and reserved for emergencies or essential personal business. Employees should refrain from using mobile phones while performing library duties, unless directly related to their work.
- **Prohibited While Driving:** The use of mobile phones, including for calls or texts, is prohibited while driving on library business. Employees should prioritize safety and adhere to all local laws regarding mobile phone use while driving.

Copier Use

- **Business Use:** The library's copier is intended for official library business and operations.
- **Limited Personal Use:** Personal copying is allowed on a limited basis. Employees should ensure that personal copies do not interfere with library duties and are kept to a reasonable amount. Repeated or excessive use of the copier for personal purposes is prohibited.
- **Approval:** Personal copying should be approved by a supervisor if it is substantial or frequent. Employees must adhere to any guidelines or restrictions set forth by the library regarding copier use.

3.6 – Drug, Smoking, Vaping, Alcohol-Free Workplace

The Heartland Regional Library System (HRLS) is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, and productive work environment for all employees. This policy outlines the standards and expectations regarding drug, smoke, vape, and alcohol use within the workplace.

This policy applies to all HRLS employees, volunteers, and any individuals who visit HRLS facilities.

Drug-Free Workplace

- **Prohibition:** The use, possession, distribution, or sale of illegal drugs or controlled substances is strictly prohibited on HRLS premises or while performing HRLS-related duties.
- **Prescription Medications:** Employees using prescription medications that may affect their ability to perform their job duties are required to notify their supervisor. Such information will be kept confidential to the extent possible.

Smoke-Free Workplace

- **Prohibition:** Smoking of any kind is prohibited inside all HRLS buildings, including private offices, restrooms, and common areas. This policy extends to all types of smoking products, including cigarettes, cigars, pipes and away from all entrances.

Vape-Free Workplace

- **Prohibition:** Smoking of any kind is prohibited inside all HRLS buildings, including private offices, restrooms, and common areas. This policy extends to all types of smoking products, including cigarettes, cigars, pipes and away from all entrances.

Alcohol-Free Workplace

- **Prohibition:** The consumption, possession, or distribution of alcoholic beverages is prohibited on HRLS premises.

Employee Responsibilities

- **Reporting:** Employees who are aware of any violations of this policy are encouraged to report them to their supervisor or HRLS management. Reports will be handled confidentially.
- **Compliance:** Employees are expected to comply with this policy as part of their commitment to maintaining a safe and professional workplace.

Enforcement

- **Disciplinary Actions:** Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary actions, up to and including termination of employment, depending on the severity and frequency of the violation.
- **Support:** HRLS is committed to providing support for employees who may be struggling with substance abuse issues, including referrals to counseling and rehabilitation programs.

3.7 – Hours and Attendance

Operating Hours: The operating hours for the Heartland Regional Library System (HRLS) is as follows:

- **Eldon branch:**
 - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
 - Thursday – 9:00 am – 7:00 pm
 - Saturday – 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
- **Belle, Iberia, and Vienna branches:**
 - Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm
 - Thursday – 1:00 pm – 7:00 pm
 - Saturday – 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Attendance Policy:

Employees are expected to work according to the operating hours of their respective library branches. Specific workweek expectations are outlined as follows:

- **Full-Time Library Branch Managers and Library Aides:**
 - Expected to work 40 hours per week.
- **Part-Time Library Branch Managers and Library Aides:**
 - Expected to work 22 hours per week.
- **Business Office Manager, Cataloger, Outreach Programmers, and Director:**
 - Expected to work 40 hours per week.
- **Other Staff:**
 - Work schedules will be arranged in coordination with the Director.

Any additional hours worked beyond the scheduled time must be pre-approved by the Director.

Flexible scheduling is allowed, provided that employees are present during their branch's public operating hours. Staff must coordinate schedules with their colleagues to ensure adequate coverage during these times. Any make-up hours require prior approval from the Director and should be kept to a minimum.

3.8 – Extra Hours and Comp Time

Overtime work beyond the employee's scheduled work period is not customary for the library. When an exception is made, it must be approved by the director prior to working overtime.

When overtime occurs, the director may approve payment for that extra time, compensatory time, or addition of the extra hours to the employee's vacation time. If compensatory time is approved, those hours will ordinarily be taken within the next month.

3.9 – Absenteeism and Tardiness

It is expected that every employee will be at work on the days assigned for work and ready to commence working at the assigned start time. Employees should contact their supervisor(s) as soon as possible when they become aware that they will be unexpectedly late or absent. Being late is a situation where an employee is not ready to work at the STARTING TIME of the scheduled work shift or does not return promptly from a break/rest period or mealtime.

The library may ask for a doctor's excuse if one or any of the following occur (this is not an all-inclusive list): (1) if an employee is absent for more than 3 days; (2) if an employee is absent on a regular basis or in a particular pattern; (3) if an employee is absent on more than one occasion, or that occasion is more than two days long, during their probationary period.

If an employee is absent for any scheduled days or shifts without calling his or her supervisor, another supervisor in charge, or clocking in, in accordance with departmental procedures, he or she may be subject to disciplinary procedures up to and including termination.

If an employee is absent for three or more consecutive scheduled days or shifts without notifying their supervisor or the designated supervisor, or if they fail to clock in using the Time Sheets program as required, it will be considered job abandonment, and the employee may face disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

3.10 – Disciplinary Action

Objective: To address and resolve employee misconduct or performance issues in a fair and consistent manner, with a focus on ensuring that employees meet organizational standards.

Immediate Disciplinary Actions:

Certain actions are considered severe enough to warrant immediate disciplinary action, which may include suspension or discharge from employment. These actions are:

- Conviction of a felony or misdemeanor that affects job performance.
- Theft of library property, equipment, or supplies.
- Vandalism or willful damage to library property.
- Physical or verbal abuse or acts intended to harm others or property on HRLS premises.
- Falsification of library records or documents.
- Willful disregard of library policies and procedures.
- Willful violation of safety, health, fire, or security guidelines.
- Insubordination or refusal to perform assigned duties.
- Violations of the Non-Harassment policy.
- Unlawful harassment or discrimination, including violations of HRLS policies.

Disciplinary Process:

1. Immediate Written Warning: An immediate written warning may be issued for serious misconduct or performance issues. This document will outline the specific incident(s), the expected corrective action, and potential consequences for continued unacceptable behavior. The employee will be required to sign the document, acknowledging receipt and understanding. If the employee refuses to sign, a note of refusal will be added to the document.

2. Disciplinary Probation: In cases where a corrective action plan is deemed necessary, the employee may be placed on disciplinary probation. This will include a detailed memo specifying the conduct or performance issues, improvement expectations, and a timeframe for reevaluation (e.g., 30, 60, or 90 days). The employee will be asked to sign the document, and a copy will be provided. If the employee refuses to sign, a note of refusal will be added to the document.

3. Discharge: If an employee's performance or behavior does not improve to a satisfactory level during disciplinary probation, or if the misconduct is deemed severe enough, discharge from employment may be considered. The decision for termination will be based on the severity of the issue and the outcome of the probation period.

Procedure for Disciplinary Actions:

1. **Documentation:** All disciplinary actions, including immediate warnings, probation, and discharge, must be documented thoroughly. Documentation should include the nature of the issue, actions taken, and any communications with the employee.
2. **Review and Appeal:** Employees have the right to review and appeal disciplinary decisions. An appeal should be submitted in writing to the Library Director within a specified period following the disciplinary action.
3. **Consistency and Fairness:** All disciplinary actions must be consistent with HRLS policies and applied fairly to all employees. Supervisors and managers are responsible for ensuring that disciplinary measures are appropriate and documented according to this policy.

3.11 – Evaluations

The purpose of evaluation forms is to support employee growth and the development of effective work habits. Evaluations serve as a structured opportunity to provide feedback, recognize accomplishments, and identify areas for improvement.

Employee evaluations will be conducted annually. Each employee will be provided with a blank evaluation form specific to their position to complete a self-evaluation. This self-evaluation process allows employees to reflect on their own performance, identify their strengths, and recognize areas where they can improve. The self-evaluation will be submitted to the Library Director as part of the evaluation process, providing a comprehensive view of the employee's performance and fostering a more collaborative and insightful evaluation discussion.

Responsibilities:

1. All HRLS Employees:

- All HRLS employees will fill out a self-evaluation form and will send to the director.
- All HRLS employees have the option to fill out an evaluation form for their supervisor and/or coworkers.

2. Branch Supervisors:

- Responsible for conducting evaluations for all employees under their supervision.
- Must ensure evaluations are objective, fair, and reflective of the employee's performance throughout the review period.
- Provide constructive feedback to support the employee's professional development.

3. Library Director:

- Responsible for evaluating all employees.
- Reviews and approves all employee evaluations conducted by branch supervisors to ensure consistency and fairness.
- Discusses evaluation results with branch supervisors and employees and provides guidance as needed.

Process:**1. Evaluation Discussion:**

- Evaluations will be discussed with the employee in a one-on-one meeting.
- Both the director and the employee are required to sign the evaluation form to acknowledge that the discussion took place and the employee has received feedback.
- Employees are encouraged to provide feedback or comments during the evaluation meeting.

2. Documentation:

- A photocopy of the completed evaluation form will be provided to the employee for their records.
- The original evaluation form will be retained in the employee's personnel file at the Regional Office.

Follow-Up:

- The Library Director will ensure that evaluation outcomes are used constructively to support employee development plans and address any performance issues.
- Supervisors will work with employees to set goals and provide resources or training as needed to foster continued growth.