

POLICIES OF THE GONZALES PUBLIC LIBRARY

I. THE GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE GONZALES PUBLIC LIBRARY SHALL BE:

A. To assemble, preserve and administer in organized collections, books and related educational and recreational material in order to promote through guidance and stimulation the communication of ideas, an enlightened citizenship and enriched personal lives.

B. To serve the community as a center of reliable information.

C. To provide a quiet place where inquiring minds may encounter the original, sometimes unorthodox and critical ideas so necessary as correctives and stimulants in a society that depends for its survival on free competition in ideas.

D. To support educational, civic, and cultural activities of groups and organizations.

E. To provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people, men and women to educate themselves.

F. To seek to identify community needs, to provide programs of service to meet such needs and to cooperate with other organizations, agencies, and institutions which can provide programs of service to meet community needs.

G. To provide opportunity for recreation through the use of literature, music, films and other art forms.

H. To support the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement.

I. To stimulate learning as a lifelong activity and to increase the visibility of the Library within the community, by offering free educational programs of public interest.

J. To provide an effective formal planning process and to conduct informal reviews of the library's effectiveness in the community.

II. WHO MAY USE THE LIBRARY

A. The library will serve all residents of the community who have a valid Texas I.D. Service will not be denied or abridged because of **religious, racial, social, economic, or political status**. Persons residing outside the geographical area but owning property or attending an educational institution in the area shall be considered residents. Persons residing within the geographical area of **Gonzales County** shall be considered residents. Residents of DeWitt and Lavaca Counties who already hold library cards and are in good standing will be allowed to continue their usage without fees.

B. Residents of other surrounding counties may pay a borrower non-refundable fee of twenty dollars (\$20.00) to be renewed annually to obtain same privileges as above.

C. The use of the library or its service shall be limited when excessive demands of groups or individuals tend to curtail service to the general public. Such demands may include those made by students, internet users and others whose demands for staff time, available materials or space would prohibit attention and service to library patrons.

D. The use of the library or its services may be denied for due cause. Such cause may be failure to return books or to pay penalties, destruction of library property or any other objectionable conduct on library premises.

E. Patrons and staff shall maintain a quiet atmosphere. Cell phones must be turned off.

III. SERVICES OF THE LIBRARY

A. The library will select from the mass of available materials, and organize for easy access, those books and materials, which best meet the needs of the community.

B. The library staff will provide guidance and assistance for people to obtain the information they seek as recorded in print and audio-visual resources.

C. The library will provide information and materials to help people to:

1. equip themselves for efficient activities in useful occupations and practical affairs, including vocational information, parent and home education, child care, nutrition, physical health, emotional stability and growth, budgeting and consumer information and specialized business, industrial and agricultural information.

2. increase their competence to form sound judgments on public problems and to encourage them to express their opinions and to act according to their judgment.

3. increase their understanding and appreciation of literature, the arts, sciences and the political and natural world.

4. promote personal and social well being and develop creative and spiritual capacities.

D. The library will initiate programs, exhibits, book lists, etc. to stimulate the use of library materials for the enlightenment of people of all ages.

E. The library will cooperate with other community agencies and organizations to determine and meet the educational needs of the community and help them with their programs through such services as special bibliographies, materials and exhibits.

F. The library accepts responsibility for securing information beyond its own resources by:

1. collecting information about, and listing for referral, resources of agencies, institutions, organizations and individuals in and beyond the community.

2. borrowing for patrons with serious interests, materials which are not owned by the library and which cannot be purchased or materials for which the demand does not justify purchase.

G. The library will lend to GISD materials which are requested for patrons with serious interest and which are not available in the school library. Patrons of this library have a priority in the use of materials.

H. The library will endeavor to maintain a balance in its services to men, women, young people, and children. The public library will cooperate with, but cannot perform the functions of school or other institutional libraries, which are designed to meet curricular needs.

I. Library services will be provided during hours which best meet needs of the community.

J. Periodic review will be made of library services to determine any which should be discontinued or what others might be needed.

K. The library will maintain an up-to-date computer catalogue, which provides easy reference for patrons, using the current edition of Dewey for classification.

L. The library will arrange and display materials so that the patrons may easily find their selections.

IV. LIBRARY MATERIALS

A. The library will provide any material which helps to meet its objectives. Materials may include books, periodicals, pamphlets, newspapers, pictures, videos, maps, recordings, reference materials and microforms.

B. Materials acquired will meet high standards of quality in content and expression.

C. The library will keep itself informed of other publicly available resources of books and other materials in the area to avoid unnecessary duplication.

D. The library will not attempt to furnish materials needed for formal courses of study offered by elementary and secondary schools and by institutions of higher learning. The public library has materials for self-study but is not primarily designed to furnish reading required for academic study.

E. All materials except those which are in special demand and cannot be duplicated, including rare and fragile items, will be lent for home use under library regulations and procedures.

F. Books or library material selection is and shall be vested in the Library Director, and under his/her direction, such members of the staff who are qualified by education or training. Any book or library material so selected shall be held to have been selected by the board.

G. The library subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association, which affirms its belief in the following basic policies:

1. as a responsibility of library service, books and other reading matter selected should be chosen for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all the people of the community. In no case should any book be excluded because of the race or nationality, or the political or religious views of the writer.

2. there should be the fullest practicable provisions of materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times (international, national, and local), and books or other reading matter of sound factual authority, which should not be proscribed or removed from library shelves because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

3. censorship of books, urged or practiced by volunteer arbiters of moral or political opinion or by organizations which would establish a coercive concept of Americanism, must be challenged by libraries in maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information and enlightenment through the recorded word.

4. libraries should enlist the cooperation of allied groups in the field of science, of education, and of book publishing in resisting all abridgement of the free access to ideas and full freedom of expression that are the tradition and heritage of Americans.

5. as an institution of education for democratic living, the library should welcome the use of its meeting rooms for socially useful and cultural activities and discussion of current public questions. Such meeting places should be available on equal terms to all groups in the community regardless of the beliefs and affiliations of their members.

H. The library also subscribes to the Freedom to Read statement prepared by the American Library Association and the American Book Publisher's Council.

I. Materials, which are no longer useful in the light of the stated objectives of the library, will be systematically weeded from the collection according to the accepted professional practices. Such materials will be sold, given away or discarded.

V. COOPERATION WITH OTHER LIBRARIES

A. The Library Board recognizes that no single library can meet all demands in its community. Libraries in different political subdivisions working together, sharing their services and resources, can meet more nearly the full needs of their users.

B. The Library Board and the Library Director will be alert to opportunities of cooperation with other libraries to strengthen the services and resources of the library.

C. The Library will be a member of the South Texas Library System.

VI. PHYSICAL FACILITIES

A. To achieve the goal of good library service the Library Board accepts the responsibility to see that public library building facilities are provided which will adequately meet the physical requirements of modern, progressive library service. Such facilities will offer to the community a compelling invitation to enter, read, look, listen and learn. Each building or bookmobile will fit an expanding program of library service.

B. The library's site shall be readily accessible to all residents and will have no barriers which would restrict the very young, elderly or handicapped.

C. The Library Board will recommend acquisition of sites and/or new buildings only after a service program has been adopted and the Library Director or consulting librarian has prepared a written outline of the community's library building needs.

D. The Library Board accepts the responsibility to assist in securing the funds for needed facilities.

E. The Library Director, architect and the Library Board as a planning team, with the assistance of consultants, will endeavor to plan facilities to meet recognized standards and needs of the community.

VII. GIFTS

A. Within the provisions of the state laws, the Library Board adopts the following policies:

1. Gifts of books and other materials will be accepted on the condition that the Library Director has the authority to make whatever disposition he or she deems advisable. (See policy on library materials.)

2. Gifts of money, real property and/or stock will be accepted if conditions attached thereto are acceptable to the Library Board and to the City of Gonzales or other governing bodies involved.

3. Gifts of personal property, art objects, portraits, antiques, and other museum objects will not be accepted. Any exception must be approved by the Library Board.

4. The library will not accept for retention materials which are not outright gifts.

5. Gifts of monies for memorial purposes will be accepted and encouraged.

VIII. PUBLIC RELATIONS

A. The library public relations aim is to conduct coordinated community outreach measures, which communicate positive images of the library and promote use of the library's materials, services and programs. Some of the goals of the library public relations include:

1. the understanding of the library's objectives and services by governing officials, civic leaders and the general public.
2. the active participation of people of all ages in the various services offered by the library.
3. to seek out non-readers and new people in the community and encourage their interest in the wide range of services offered by the library.

B. The Library Board recognizes that public relations involve every person who has any connection with the library. The Board urges its own members and every staff member to realize that he/she represents the library in every public contact. Good service supports good public relations.

C. The Library Director and professional staff will be expected to make talks and to participate in community activities. A reasonable amount of library time will be allowed staff for preparation and speaking. Materials to be used by press, radio or television will be approved by the Library Director or the Library Board.

IX. PAYMENT OF EXPENSES

A. Reimbursement shall be made for expenses incurred by the librarian, staff and board members in connection with board-approved attendance at workshops and other library associated meetings.

B. The occasion and amount must be approved by the Board.

X. PAYMENT OF PROFESSIONAL DUES

A. Payment of professional dues shall be made for the Library Director and included in the budget.

B. The nature and amount of professional dues referred to in the preceding paragraph shall be determined through mutual agreement between the Library Director and the Library Board.

XI. PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS

A. JOB DESCRIPTION

The Library Board and Library Director will provide a job description for each employee of the library including degree of responsibility, educational and other qualifications required, special abilities and skills required.

B. HOLIDAYS WITH PAY

City library staff shall be given the same holidays with pay as set by the City of Gonzales for employees.

C. VACATION WITH PAY

City library staff shall be given the same vacation pay as set by the City of Gonzales for employees.

D. SICK LEAVE WITH PAY

City library staff shall be given the same sick leave with pay as set by the City of Gonzales for employees.

E. PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

Part-time employees receive benefits as stated by the City Personnel Handbook.

XII. POLICY FOR CHECKING OUT MATERIALS

A. A total of 3 books/magazines/audio books may be checked out per patron for a period of two weeks. They may be re-checked once if there is not a great demand for such material. These materials may be re-checked in person or by telephone.

B. A fine of .25 cents per day shall be required on all overdue books/magazines/audio books; only regular library days shall be included in the amount of days overdue. There shall be a maximum fine of \$30.00 per book if the book is returned in good condition.

C. Multi-media projectors may be checked out for a period of up to five (5) days. There are no rechecks on projectors. A fine of \$10.00 per day shall be required with no maximum fine. Multi-media projectors may be reserved in advance.

D. DVDs may be checked out for a period of 3 days not to exceed 3 per household. There are no rechecks on DVDs. A fine of \$1.00 per day shall be required on all overdue DVDs with a maximum fine of \$25.00.

E. No person with overdue items shall be permitted to check out additional materials and Internet usage shall be denied.

XIII. EVALUATION CHECK LIST:

A. PHYSICAL PLANT

1. Is the main library conveniently located and easily accessible?
2. Is there a large sign outside the library identifying it?
3. Is there adequate parking for both staff and patrons?
4. Is the building space adequate to serve the population?
5. Does the library building provide for expansion of services and community growth and for enlargement if and when needed?
6. Is the building safe? Are there adequate emergency exits well marked?
7. Has there been a building survey made by a qualified authority within the past ten years?
8. Can elderly and handicapped patrons use the library?
9. Is the building air-conditioned? Adequately heated?
10. Does the lighting meet today's standards?
11. Are acoustical materials used whenever necessary to keep noise level down?
12. Is there adequate space (offices and work area) for the staff, including an area where supervisors may hold private conversations?
13. Does the staff have its own rest area and washroom facilities?
14. Can the public washroom facilities be adequately controlled?
15. Is there a meeting room for community groups?
16. Is there provision for patrons' boots and coats?
17. Are there provisions for returning books when the library is closed?
18. Is the shelving adjustable?
19. Is the telephone service adequate? Are there public phones?
20. Is there copying equipment for public use?
21. Are there signs identifying various areas of the library and its collection?
22. Are the building and its contents adequately insured?

B. SERVICES

1. Is the library dedicated to service rather than the mere storage of books?
2. Does the library have definite goals? In writing? Are these goals discussed periodically?
3. Does your collection meet the needs of the entire community? Are community needs reviewed?
4. Does your library provide a wide range of different materials besides books?
5. Does your library participate in inter-loan services and with other libraries?
6. Does your library have a written statement of policy for selection of books and related materials?
7. Does the Head Librarian have the authority to approve the selection of books and related materials for purchase?
8. Does your library meet at least minimum standards for size of book collection as indicated in the following scale? Under 10,000 population, 3.5 to 5 volumes per capita.
9. Does annual purchase of new books equal 15 to 25 percent of the library's annual budget?
10. Are worn-out and out-of-date books regularly withdrawn from the collection?
11. Are about 65 percent of the adult books nonfiction?
12. Is the library's collection classified according to a recognized system, such as Dewey or Library of Congress?
13. Are records for items missing or discarded removed from the catalogue?
14. Is the library open at least the following hours? Population 5,000 – 10,000, 15 to 30 hours per week.
15. Is the library open during hours most convenient for the community?
16. Is there a catalogue of the library collection for public use?
17. Is there a special area of the library for reference service?
18. Does the library have a program of service for adults and young people, which includes instruction in the use of books and libraries?
19. Does the library supplement programs of the community organizations by preparing a booklist or arranging exhibits?
20. Does the library cooperate with community organizations in program planning?

21. Does the library maintain a list of community organizations?

22. Is the library reasonably quiet?

C. STAFF

1. Do you make it possible for the Library Director to administer without interference from the board?

2. Does the library have at least one staff member for each 2,000 people served?

3. Do you have written up-to-date job descriptions?

4. Is the major portion of the staff man-hours provided by full-time employees rather than part-time volunteers?

5. Are the members of the staff informed through a manual or other means of the library's personnel policies on such matters as vacation, sick leave, salary increments, pensions, hospitalization, insurance and other fringe benefits?

D. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

1. Do you have the image your library projects to the community? Do you have a planned, continuously operating public relations program?

2. Do photographs or stories of library activities appear in the local press and other available media at least once a month?

3. Does your public relations program have as one goal the encouragement of use of the library by persons not now patrons?

4. Are your board meetings open to the public?

5. Are the persons on the charge desk courteous and helpful to patrons?

6. Do your official policies toward overdue books, juvenile behavior problems, etc., take into consideration the poor public relations generated by excessive harshness?

7. Do you maintain good working relations with municipal and school officials?

8. Do you extend borrowing privileges to persons serving your community even though they may live outside it; i.e., teachers, public employees, etc.?

E. FINANCES

1. Are you taking full advantage of all existing programs local, state and federal that may assist your library?

2. Does the Library Director meet with the board to determine the budget needs?
3. Do you determine the service needs of the community that should be met by the library and then formulate your budget to meet those needs?
4. Do you have a policy for accepting gifts?
5. Do you regularly approach local groups as to how they can assist the library?
6. Do you acknowledge all gifts promptly and appropriately?
7. Do you refuse gifts with undesirable strings attached?

XIV. DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS FOR BOARD MEMBERS

- A. Definite interest in the library, in the community, and in the library's relationship to the community. (As expressed in active membership in various clubs and organizations of community interest.)
- B. Readiness to devote time and effort to carrying out the duties of the board.
- C. Recognition of the library's importance as a center of information, of community culture, recreation and continuing education.
- D. Close acquaintance with community social and economic conditions and with groups within the community.
- E. Ability to work well with others; i.e., board members, librarian and staff members and the public served by the library.
- F. An open mind, intellectual curiosity and respect for the opinions of others.
- G. Initiative and ability to establish policies for successful operations of the library with impartial service to all its patrons.

XV. DUTIES OF BOARD MEMBERS

- A. Attend all meetings of the board and maintain records of the meetings.
- B. Be aware of the programs and needs of the library, the library trends in the vicinity and elsewhere, and state and national standards.
- C. Become familiar with state and local library laws.
- D. Recommend for employment a qualified and competent librarian.

E. Recommend policies and objectives (short and long range) governing the library's programs to city council. Policies should be regularly reviewed, revised when necessary, and should conform to city regulations. Each board should consider and adopt an official policy on the following:

1. Hours open.

2. Basic policy regarding book and materials selection and purchase.

3. Charges for lost library materials and fines on overdue materials.

4. Service to schools.

5. Service to special groups such as hospitals, senior citizens, civic organizations and the handicapped.

6. Methods of extending services such as new branches and bookmobiles.

7. Acceptance of gifts.

8. Paying expenses of personnel to attend professional meetings and workshops.

9. Use of meeting room.

F. Establish and support a planned program of public relations.

G. Report regularly to local officials and to the general public.

H. Promote and support adequate funding of the library programs and plans for expansion of service and facilities.

I. Support library legislation, which extends and improves library service.

J. Promote and support the library's membership in the State Library System.

K. Actively participate in discussions and decisions regarding cooperative library systems.

L. Ensure the governing authority of the library appoints or elects to represent the library at the annual meeting of system member libraries.

M. Promote and support adequate local, state and federal funding for public libraries and the state library system.

N. Gain an understanding of librarianship by attending workshops, participating in professional meetings and working on committee assignments.

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