



Allen Parish Libraries

"Bringing the World to You"

Code of Ethics

The Allen Parish Libraries recognizes the importance of codifying and making known to the profession and the general public the ethical principles that guide the work of librarians, other professionals providing information services, library trustees, and library staff.

Ethical dilemmas occur when values conflict. This Code of Ethics states the values we are committed to and embodies the profession's ethical responsibilities in this changing information environment.

We significantly influence or control the selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of information. In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information. We must ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.

The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision-making. These statements provide a framework; they cannot and do not dictate conduct to cover particular situations.

- I. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
- II. We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist efforts to censor library resources while maintaining local community standards.
- III. We protect each library user's legal right to privacy and confidentiality concerning information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired, or transmitted.
- IV. We recognize and respect intellectual property rights and advocate a balance between the interests of information users and rights holders.

- V. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.
- VI. We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.
- VII. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with the fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources.
- VIII. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our knowledge and skills, encouraging co-workers' professional development, and fostering potential work members' aspirations.

Based on the Code of the *American Library Association*

Code of Ethics Policy

System to Monitor Possible Ethics Violations

Ethics Training

- Louisiana Ethics are defined in the Louisiana Revised Statute 42:1111- 1121. A summary can be found at <http://ethics.la.gov/Pub/Laws/ethsum.pdf>.
- Each employee, by state law, must complete the ethics training each year between January 1st and December 31st. The training can be found at this web address: <https://eap.ethics.la.gov/ethicstraining/login.aspx>
- Once the employee has completed the ethics training, the certificate must be printed.
- A copy of the certificate must be turned in to the Director.
- The director files the certificate accordingly by year.

Reporting Responsibility

All board members, officers, employees, and volunteers are responsible for reporting concerns about violations of the Allen Parish Libraries code of ethics or suspected violations of laws or regulations that govern Allen Parish Libraries operations.

No Retaliation

It is contrary to the values of Allen Parish Libraries for anyone to retaliate against any board member, officer, employee, or volunteer who, in good faith, reports an ethics violation or a suspected violation of law, such as a complaint of discrimination, or suspected fraud, or suspected violation of any regulation governing the operations of Allen Parish Libraries. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

Reporting Procedure

Allen Parish Libraries has an open-door policy and suggests that employees share their questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints with their supervisor. You should talk with the director if you are uncomfortable speaking with or dissatisfied with your supervisor's response. Supervisors and managers must report complaints or concerns about suspected ethical and legal violations in writing to the director, who is responsible for investigating all reported complaints. Employees with concerns or complaints may also submit their problems in writing directly to their supervisor or the director.

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone filing a written complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the disclosed information indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and have been made maliciously or knowingly false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

Confidentiality

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Steps to Take When Ethics Violation Takes Place

All complaints or information about suspected ethics violations will be investigated, whether that information was reported in verbal or written form. Investigations will be conducted promptly.

The following steps will do investigations:

- Upon receipt of an ethics violation complaint by an employee, volunteer, or intern, the individual's supervisor (or Director if the fuss is about the supervisor) will immediately review the allegations and take any interim actions as appropriate. If the complaint is oral, encourage the individual to submit a complaint in writing. If they refuse, prepare a complaint based on the oral reporting. If a patron or trustee makes a complaint, the Director will:
 1. Conduct an immediate review and follow the actions listed above.
 2. If documents, emails, or phone records are relevant to the allegations, take steps to obtain and preserve them.
 3. Request and review all relevant documents, including all electronic communications.
 4. Interview all parties involved, including any relevant witnesses;
 5. Create written documentation of the investigation (such as a letter, memo, or email), which contains the following:
 - a. A list of all documents reviewed, along with a detailed summary of relevant documents;
 - b. A list of names of those interviewed, along with a detailed summary of their statements;
 - c. A timeline of events;
 - d. A summary of prior relevant incidents reported or unreported; and
 - e. The final resolution of the complaint and any corrective action(s).
- Keep the written documentation and associated documents in the employer's records.
- Promptly notify the individual who complained and the individual(s) who responded of the final determination and implement any corrective actions identified in the written document.
- Inform the individual who complained of their right to file a complaint or charge externally as outlined below.

- All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

Documentation of Changes in Ethics Policy

In the event of changes to the Allen Parish Libraries ethics policy, all employees and officials are to be notified and presented with a revised copy of the ethics policy to sign.

Adopted by the Board April 18, 2013

Revised by Board July 27, 2022