



The policies of the Schenectady County Public Library are established and modified by the Board of Trustees of the Library and are guided by the policies of Schenectady County. These policies seek to embody the mission of the library as articulated by the mission statement and bylaws. Policies may be changed at any time by a simple majority vote at a meeting of the Trustees in which notice of the changes has been given.

**Specific policies of Schenectady County that are relevant to library policies include, but are not limited to the following:**

Code of Conduct, ADA Policies and Plan, Child Abuse Reporting Procedures, Sex Abuse Prevention Procedure, Computer Use Policy (for employees), Employee Policies, Ethics and Disclosure Law, Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Prevention Policy, Hazard Communication Procedure, Public Communication Guideline, Smoking Policy, and Standard Provisions (for contracts)

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## Internal Policies -----

### 1. Board of Trustees

BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SCHENECTADY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
**1.1 Bylaws**

Mission Statement

The mission of the Schenectady County Public Library is to meet our community's informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs by providing free and open access to a comprehensive range of materials, services and programs.

ARTICLE I - Officers and Board Membership

1. The officers of the Board shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.
2. The President, who shall be a Trustee, shall be elected at the Annual Meeting in January in even numbered years. The President shall preside at all meetings and shall be the presiding officer. The President may serve a two-year term, and shall be eligible for reelection to a second two-year term. At the end of the second term, the President shall step down from office and be ineligible for election to the office of President for two years. If the President shall have completed the term of a President who left office, the two-term limit shall apply when they are elected to the Presidency.
3. The Vice President, who shall be a Trustee, shall be elected at the Annual meeting in January in even numbered years. The Vice President shall act as President in the absence of the President. The Vice President may serve a two-year term, and shall be eligible for reelection to a second two-year term. At the end of the second term, the Vice President shall step down from office and be ineligible for election to the office of Vice President for two years.
4. The Secretary, who shall be a Trustee, shall be elected at the Annual Meeting in January in even numbered years.
5. The Treasurer, who shall be a Trustee, shall be elected at the Annual Meeting in January in even numbered years. The Treasurer shall make biannual reports to the Board of Trustees of monies on deposit in approved banking institutions and report to the Board on all actions taken by the Treasurer since the last report.
6. Vacancies among the officers shall be filled at an election by vote at a regular meeting.
7. The President is the official spokesperson for the Board of Trustees. No other Trustee shall speak officially for the Board unless called to do so by the President and/or the Board of Trustees.
8. Trustees who fail to attend three consecutive meetings without excuse accepted as satisfactory by the Trustees shall be deemed to have resigned, and the vacancies created shall be filled through requests to the Schenectady County Legislature.

ARTICLE II - Meetings

1. The Annual Meeting shall be held in January at such time, place and hour as may be prescribed by the Board, at which time officers shall be elected in even numbered years.

2. The regular meeting of the Board shall be held each month except December, July, and August at such time place and hour as may be prescribed by the Board. Notice of regular meeting, including a copy of the agenda and attachments, shall be distributed to board members not less than five days before such meeting.
3. Special meetings shall be held on the call of the President or any three Trustees upon not less than 48 hours' written notice served personally or delivered to the residence of each Trustee, or on 5 days' written notice duly mailed to the address of each Trustee as given to the Director. The presence of any Trustee at a special meeting shall be conclusive evidence without other proof of due notice to him or her of such meeting. Such notices shall state the subjects to be considered at the special meeting and no other subject shall be considered unless by unanimous consent of all Trustees.
4. A majority of Trustees present in person shall constitute a quorum, and a majority vote of Trustees shall be necessary for the transaction of business.
5. Proceedings shall be conducted in the manner usual in deliberative bodies, and when not contrary to these rules, according to the latest edition of "Robert's Rules of Order." The presiding officer shall decide all questions of order, subject to appeal, and such vote on the appeal shall be held without debate.
6. The meetings are open to the public unless the board goes into executive session. An executive session, if necessary, shall be conducted during a regular or special meeting.
7. The privilege of the floor shall be extended to any who wish to address the board at each meeting before business is considered.

#### ARTICLE III - Committees

1. All committees shall be appointed by the President.
2. The actions of all Committees shall be subject to the approval of the Board and no Committee or individual shall authorize any expenditure or action without authority of the Board.
3. A Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the President at the November meeting. It shall consist of three members appointed by the President. Current officers shall be ineligible to be appointed to the Nominating Committee.
4. All committees shall report to the Board their action on matters referred to them.
5. Standing committees include Budget and Finance Committee, Planning Committee, and Building Committee.
6. The Budget and Finance Committee shall consist of the President, Treasurer, and other designees of the President and shall review the Budget with the Director before its submission to the County Manager and to the County Legislature, subject to the approval of the Board.
7. Committees for specific purposes may be appointed by the President. Such committees shall serve until the completion of the work for which they were appointed.

#### ARTICLE IV - Director

1. The Director shall be the active executive and administrator of the Library, acting under the direction and review of the Board, and shall act as professional advisor to the Trustees. He/she shall have, subject to approval of the Board, general direction of the employees, business affairs, real and personal property, and administration of the Library system.

2. The Director shall accept ultimate responsibility for the proper performance of duties by all employees of the Library.
3. The Director, under the supervision of the Board, prepares the Budget, the Annual Report, and other reports as the Board may from time to time request.
4. It shall be the duty of the Director or the Director's designee, to attend all meetings of the Board and Committees of the Board where action may be taken affecting the interests of the library including budget meetings or other municipal meetings. The Director shall have the right to speak on all matters under consideration at such Board meetings, but shall not have the privilege to vote thereon. The Director, or his/her designee, shall serve as the Clerk of the Board.

#### ARTICLE V - Amendments

1. These bylaws may be amended, in part or in whole, at a regular meeting of the Board of Trustees by a majority vote of the Trustees after the amendment has been submitted in writing at a prior meeting and notice has been given in the "notice of the meeting" at which it is to be considered.

#### ARTICLE VI - Miscellaneous

1. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the corporation shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) or (b) by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).
2. No part of the net earnings of the corporation shall inure to the benefit of any member, trustee, director or officer of the corporation, or any private individual (except that reasonable compensation may be paid for services rendered to or for the corporation), and no member, trustee, director, or officers of the corporation, or any private individual, shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the corporate assets on dissolution of the corporation.
3. No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be devoted to propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation (except to the extent authorized by Internal Revenue Code section 501[h] as amended, or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law, during any fiscal year or years in which the corporation has chosen to utilize the benefits authorized by the statutory provision), and the corporation shall not participate in or intervene (including the publishing or distribution of statements) in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.
4. Upon dissolution of the Schenectady County Public Library, the board of trustees shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the corporation, dispose of the remaining assets of the corporation exclusively for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future Federal tax code), or shall distribute the same to the Federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by order of the Supreme Court of the State of New York in the judicial district in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, organized and operated exclusively for such purposes, as said Court shall determine.

5. The Commissioner of Education is designated as the representative of the corporation upon whom process in any action or proceeding against it may be served.

## 1.2 Board Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy

1. The management of the library is the responsibility of the library director. It is the director's job to select books and other library materials, employ the staff and supervise day-to-day operations. It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to set policies for library operations while keeping in mind its fiscal responsibilities to the taxpayers of the county.
2. Trustees must distinguish clearly between their personal attitudes and philosophies and those of the institution. After a policy or rule is adopted by a majority of the library board, individual trustees should not criticize or disagree with those decisions publicly.
3. A trustee must respect the confidential nature of library business while being aware of and in compliance with applicable laws governing freedom of information. Trustees must not divulge information learned during executive sessions of the board, or any information regarding future board plans or actions until such action is officially taken.
4. The Board of Trustees must notify the library director in a timely fashion of all board meetings. The director is expected to attend board meetings.
5. Trustees must be prepared to resist censorship of library materials by groups or individuals.
6. Trustees who accept library board membership are expected to perform all the functions of library trustees. If a trustee is unable to attend meetings regularly and complete work delegated to him or her, the trustee should resign so that an active member can be appointed.
7. Conflicts of Interest: The summary below is subordinate to the Schenectady County Ethics and Disclosure Law, and includes issues relevant to the SCPL.
  - a. Conflict of Interest means a conflict, or the appearance of a conflict, between the private interests and official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust. "Interest" means a direct or indirect pecuniary or material benefit accruing to a Library trustee or employee as the result of a contract with the Library which such officer or employee serves. Persons in a position of trust include staff members, officers, and board members of SCPL.
  - b. Full disclosure shall be made as soon as practical by the interested parties to the full Board of Trustees in all conflicts of interest, including but not limited to the following:
    - i. A board trustee is related to another board member or staff member by blood, marriage or domestic partnership.
    - ii. A board member or his/her organization accrues a direct or indirect pecuniary or material benefit from a SCPL transaction or staff member of such organization receives payment from SCPL for any subcontract, goods, or services other than as part of her/his regular job responsibilities or as reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred as provided in the bylaws and board policy.
    - iii. A board member is a member of the governing body of a contributor to SCPL.
    - iv. A trustee working as a volunteer on behalf of SCPL who meets any of the situations or criteria listed above shall report their conflict to their supervisor or the Trustees.
  - c. Following full disclosure of a possible conflict of interest or any condition listed above, the Board of Trustees shall determine whether a conflict of interest exists and, if so, the Board shall take action necessary to address the conflict and protect SCPL's best interests. Votes on conflict of interest issues shall be by a majority vote without counting the vote of any interested trustee,

even if the disinterested directors are less than a quorum provided that at least one consenting trustee is disinterested.

- d. No Trustee shall serve as an employee of the SCPL.
- e. An interested Board member, officer, or staff member shall not participate in any discussion or debate of the Board of Trustees, or of any committee or subcommittee thereof in which the subject of discussion is a contract, transaction, or situation in which there may be a perceived or actual conflict of interest. However, they may be present to provide clarifying information in such a discussion or debate unless objected to by any present board or committee member.
- f. Any board member in a position to make decisions about spending SCPL resources which may result in a conflict of interest has a duty to disclose that conflict as soon as it arises (or becomes apparent); s/he should abstain in any final decisions.

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## 2. Administration

### 2.1 Plan of Service

The Trustees shall develop goals and evaluations that address major areas of Library service:

Element 1 – Resource Sharing: Cooperative Collection Development, Integrated Library Software, Delivery, Interlibrary Loans, Digital Collections Access,

Element 2 – Special Client Groups: Adult Literacy, Coordinated Outreach to Underserved, Correctional Facilities, Youth, and Early Literacy

Element 3 – Professional Development and Training

Element 4 – Consulting and Development Services

Element 5 – Coordinated Services for Members: Virtual Reference, Digitization Services

Element 6 – Awareness and Advocacy

Element 7 – Communications Among Member Libraries and/or Branches

Element 8 – Collaborative Efforts with Other Library Systems

Element 9 - Other Relevant elements

Element 10 - Construction

## 3. Personnel

### 3.1 Whistleblower Policy

The SCPL Board of Trustees recognizes that employees have an important role to play in assuring that the library is operated in accordance with the law and the library's own policies, and therefore adopts this Whistleblower Policy to protect an employee who reports in good faith a reasonable belief that applicable law, or Board policy, is being violated.

In order to be protected under this policy, an employee must report a reasonable belief that

- a policy, practice or activity of the System is in violation of applicable law;
- an action taken on behalf of the System is in violation of existing System policy;
- an individual or entity with which the System has a business relationship has, in the course of that relationship, violated applicable law.

The report must be in writing, and directed to the Director and the Board President; the report may also be provided to any other member of the Board. The Board will investigate the report, and take such action as may be appropriate with respect to the subject of the report; the Board will inform the

employee of the action taken, to the extent that it can do so. The Board will not take adverse action against the employee based on the report, or on objectively reasonable follow-up

## External Policies -----

### 4. Collection

#### 4.1 Selection of Library Material

**Responsibility for Selection** - Responsibility for selection resides ultimately with the Director, subject to the policies of the Board of Trustees. The Director may partially or entirely delegate her authority to staff members who are deemed to have the training and experience necessary to interpret and apply the policy to the task of making day-to-day selections.

**Selection** - Selection is a critical and interpretive process involving a general knowledge of a subject and its important literature, a familiarity with the materials in the collection, an awareness of the bibliographies on the subject, and recognition of the needs of the community. An examination of current production and demand, book reviews, bibliographical publications, publishers' advertising media, and requests of library patrons are used in the process of selecting materials for library collections.

The library does not promulgate particular beliefs or views, nor is the selection of any given material equivalent to endorsement of the author's views. The library tries to provide materials representing all approaches to public issues of a controversial nature. It is aware that there are those who may take issue with the selection of any specific item and welcomes any expression of opinion by patrons. However, the library does not and effectively cannot undertake the task of trying to please all patrons by the elimination of items purchased after due deliberation under guidance of the policies expressed herein. To provide a resource where free individuals may examine many points of view and make their own decisions is one of the essential purposes of the Library.

##### 4.1.1 Youth Services

Materials found in the Young Adult collection are selected for youth in grades seven through twelve. Children's materials are selected for early childhood through seventh grade audiences. Otherwise, the same selection process as in adult services is used.

##### 4.1.2 Collection Maintenance

The library recognizes the need for continuous evaluation of its collection in response to the changing nature and needs of its community through a process known as deselection or "weeding" by Branch librarians and Central ordering librarians. Collection Maintenance encompasses removal, replacement, relocation, and duplication of titles from the collection. The same criteria that are applied to acquisitions form the basis for weeding the collection.

##### 4.1.3 Removal



Collection maintenance involves the removal of material from the collection. Material may be removed from the collection for the following reasons:

1. Physical condition poor
2. Multiple copies are no longer needed
3. Contains outdated information
4. Replaced by later edition or version
5. Adequate similar material available
6. Insufficient use
7. Broken sets or runs
8. Unindexed periodicals

#### **4.1.4 Replacement**

While the library tries to have copies of all standard and important works, it does not attempt to replace each copy withdrawn because of loss, damage, or wear. Community interest and the availability of newer items or materials in other formats will be of primary consideration. Since materials rapidly go out of print, many specific titles simply cannot be replaced. Decisions will be based on the following criteria:

1. Extent of the present library collection on the subject
2. Historical or continued value of the subject
3. Availability of newer or better material on the subject
4. Indexing or listing in standard reference sources
5. Amount of public interest in the subject
6. Number of copies held
7. Price of replacement copy

#### **4.1.5 Relocation**

During the weeding process it may be determined that certain materials may better serve library patrons in another location and those items may be transferred to another branch or another collection as deemed appropriate. At the Central Library, valuable and irreplaceable items may be placed in secure storage based on usage, duplication, or protection from injury.

#### **4.1.6 Duplication**

Budget, demand, and timeliness will be the primary factors in applying guidelines and in making duplication decisions with a focus on providing the newest and most popular materials to the greatest number of patrons possible.

#### **4.1.7 Basis for Exclusion**

The Library reserves the right to exclude materials that are judged to appeal purely to a taste for sensationalism or pornography. However, a serious work that illustrates some problem or aspect of life will not be excluded because its language or subject matter may be offensive to some readers. While inflammatory, sensational, or prejudicial materials are not generally purchased, some such may be acquired because they have influenced mature critical thinking either recently or in the past.

The Library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any item may offend some patrons. Selections will not be made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to the building of the collection and to serving the interests of readers.

Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents, and cataloged books or other items will not be placed on closed shelves except for the express purpose of protecting rare or valuable items from injury or theft.

Responsibility for the use of Library material by children rests with their parents or legal guardians. Selection will not be inhibited by the possibility that controversial items may come into the possession of children.

#### **4.1.8 Challenges**

If any title in the collection is criticized or questioned by individuals or organizations, Form #124, "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials," may be filled out. Upon receipt of such a request, a complete written re-evaluation will be made. If the re-evaluation substantiates the original decision to include the title, it will remain in the collection. If the criticism is considered valid, the title will be removed from the collection and discarded. The final decision rests with the Director, who shall send a letter of explanation to the person concerned.

#### **4.1.9 Memorial Gifts**

The Library often receives, from an individual or an organization, a gift of library materials or a sum of money for the purchase of materials in memory of or in honor of another person. Library selection standards apply. All gifts of this type should be referred to the coordinating librarian.

#### **4.1.10 Anonymous Gifts**

Since the establishment of the Whitney Book Corner by the Friends of the Schenectady County Library in 2003, area citizens have become accustomed to leaving books and other library material at the Central library and branches with the knowledge that items of acceptable quality will either be sold at Whitney or over the Internet to generate supplemental funds of benefit to the Library or cataloged to enhance the collection. Donors should consult the list of items the Friends are unable to accept prior to depositing their donations.

Librarians may peruse these gifts while in the sorting area for materials of use to the Library's collections. Otherwise all donations are considered property of the Friends once left in the possession of the Library.

#### **4.1.11 Freedom of Information**

Freedom to Read

1. We defend the constitutional rights of all individuals, including children and teenagers, to use the library's resources and services;
2. We value our nation's diversity and strive to reflect that diversity by providing a full spectrum of resources and services to the communities we serve;
3. We affirm the responsibility and the rights of all parents and guardians to guide their own children's use of the library and its resources and services;

4. We connect people and ideas by helping each person select from and effectively use the library's resources;
5. We protect each individual's privacy and confidentiality in the use of library resources and services;
6. We protect the rights of individuals to express their opinions about library resources and services;
7. We celebrate and preserve our democratic society by making available the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions and ideas, so that all individuals have the opportunity to become lifelong learners, informed, literate, educated and culturally enriched.

#### **4.1.12 Freedom to View**

The Freedom to View, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

## **5. Library Use**

### **5.1 Patron Code of Conduct**

By entering the library a patron is making a commitment to act courteously toward all other people, to act responsibly with regard to public property and to follow all rules of the facility. The use of the library is for reading, studying and learning.

Generally, patrons are expected to:

1. Supervise children at all times
2. Keep all valuables and personal property. The Library is not responsible for lost items.
3. Engage in activities associated with the use of a public library. Patrons not reading, studying, using library materials or attending events may be asked to leave the building.

No illegal acts are permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, any action prohibited in these policies. In order to provide a safe and comfortable environment, the following are specifically NOT permitted inside the buildings:

1. Animals or pets (except service animals)
2. Any behavior that interferes with the peaceful enjoyment of the library
3. Bathing or shaving or laundering or personal hygiene of any type in public spaces
4. Bicycles
5. Cell phone conversations, except in lobby or outdoors
6. Computer use in violation of policy
7. Consumption of food in an undesignated area
8. Uncovered beverage
9. Profanity, threatening, harassing, or intimidating language or behavior
10. Sleeping
11. Unsupervised children under age 13
12. Any behavior that creates health or environmental hazards, including an unacceptable standard of hygiene

The following acts constitute violations against the County and are subject to legal action and/or loss of library privileges, including being banned from the premises:

1. Loitering, soliciting, or panhandling on library property
2. Public intoxication
3. Harassment or threats of any type to anyone
4. Using tobacco products or ecigarettes in any building or within 100 feet of an entrance.
5. Sequestering or "stashing" library property or personal items within the library building for the exclusive use of an individual or group
6. Defacing, mutilating, or otherwise damaging library property
7. Removing or attempting to remove library property from the library without proper authorization
8. Stealing or knowingly possessing stolen library property
9. Trafficking, for profit or otherwise, in library property
10. Using library property or materials, including computers or wireless network, to commit a crime
11. Trespassing in non-public areas without authorization or in any library facilities after closing hours

Enforcement of the above policies is the responsibility of the Director.

## 5.2 Complaints

Each patron who expresses a complaint shall be treated with respect and assured by the staff person who takes the complaint that the patron's concerns will be given every consideration.

1. Each complaint shall be referred to a department supervisor, who will follow the established SCPL guidelines for dealing with the public as expressed in the SCPL staff manual.
2. If the situation cannot be resolved, the department supervisor will offer to consult with the library Director or Assistant Director.
3. Under no circumstances shall a staff member attempt to resolve a serious complaint on his or her own. Such issues as challenges to materials, confidentiality issues or any other complaint

with legal implications shall immediately be taken to the Library Director who shall notify the President of the Board of Trustees as soon as possible.

4. If a patron is complaining about specific library materials, they shall be given the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form to fill out and submit. Department supervisors will initiate a formal process of evaluating the complaint. The Library Director will respond in writing to the patron with the decision made in regard to the material in question.
5. For those situations carrying legal implications the Board of Trustees shall seek legal counsel before taking any formal action with regard to such a complaint. The patron will be notified of the Board's decision as soon as possible.

### 5.3 Incident Reports

1. Internal incident reports may be filed by any staff member or security officer to document a violation of library rules or to establish a record of patron misconduct.
2. Reports are kept on file 10 years.
3. Incident reports may be used as justification for a patron being banned from the library either temporarily or permanently and for police action.
4. Patron information contained in incident reports is covered by Library Confidentiality Policy (5.9)

### 5.4 Children

The Library is a public place. Library staff is very concerned about the safety of all children who use the library. However, staff duties do not include child care or child supervision. The responsibility for children's safety and behavior rests with parents and caregivers. Please review the following guidelines to insure a positive library experience:

1. For their comfort and safety, children 12 or under must be accompanied by an adult or responsible teenager, age 13 or older, at all times.
2. Library staff reserves the right to deny Internet use to any adult whose children are inadequately supervised while the adult is using a computer.
3. Library staff or library security reserves the right to inform children whose behavior is unsafe or disruptive to others. Children who do not comply may be asked to leave the library.
4. If children under 13 are left alone in the library, library staff will contact a parent or guardian. If no responsible adult can be located, staff will contact the local police department.
5. Children's use of all library materials, including the unfiltered Internet, is the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian.
6. Parents or guardians may restrict their children from internet access or rating of PG13 or higher rated videos when a child's library card is established.
7. Parents or guardians are responsible for all fines, fees, and damage incurred by their children.

### 5.5 Programming Policies

1. The library sponsors informative and entertaining talks, demonstrations, audio-visual presentations, workshops, children's storytimes and crafts, concerts, and other special events. Library programs are coordinated by library staff and offered free to the public. It is the

responsibility of participants to inform the staff of allergies so that reasonable modifications can be made if possible.

2. Programs are selected by library staff for their relevance to community needs and interests, popular appeal, and suitability for a general audience. Presenters are chosen for their proven expertise and public performance experience. Other factors considered are the availability of staff and meeting rooms.
3. No fees may be charged to people attending library programs except with the approval of the library director. Items that may be sold are books and recordings by authors and musicians or items related to the program. Friends of the Library or associates of the performer must handle the sale of these items.
4. Some children's programs may be restricted by age level. Registration is sometimes limited. An adult or responsible teenager must remain on library premises while the child under age 13 is in a program.
5. Programs may be cancelled for a number of reasons, including: severe weather, absence of the presenter, or low registration. Cancelled programs are not automatically rescheduled.
6. The library does not advocate or endorse the content and viewpoints of presenters and programs.
7. Programs are not used for commercial, religious, or partisan purposes or the solicitation of business.

## 5.6 Meeting Room Policies

The Meeting Rooms of the Schenectady County Public Library are available for a variety of social, cultural and educational activities and discussions of current public questions. Use of meeting rooms is free of charge for non-commercial organization; all other commercial groups will be charged \$100 for up to a three-hour rental. They are available on equal terms to all groups in the community, regardless of beliefs and affiliations of their members, provided that the meetings are open to the public. No charge shall be made for admission to any meeting and no collection shall be taken up; neither may dues be collected. Use of the rooms is limited to three meetings per calendar year for any organization. Events may not be scheduled more than two months in advance of the meeting date. The serving of food or beverages of any type needs to be approved.

## 5.7 Displays, Posting and Exhibits

The cases, bulletin boards and other designated display areas at Schenectady County Public Library are used primarily to promote library programs and resources. As time and space permit, they may also be made available to individuals and community organizations for educational, cultural, historical, scientific, civic, and charitable exhibits. The library assumes no responsibility for items on display.

### Display Applications

The library does not necessarily endorse the viewpoints of any exhibit. Displays promoting political, religious, controversial, personal or commercial points of view, which are discriminatory in any way, which incite violence, or which promote anything in violation of local, state, or federal law will not be accepted. Displays should be appropriate for all age groups. Displays at the library cannot be involved in the sale of any item or service.

Final determination of the policy compliance of any display is made by the Library Director. Use of the case is a privilege, and the Library reserves the right to refuse any display proposal. If an exhibitor violates the policies or procedures for display, future requests will not be allowed. Appeals of this decision can be made to the Library Board of Trustees.

## 5.8 Internet and Technology

### 5.8.1 Computer and Internet Use Policy

The library offers computer workstations as a service to the community it serves. Along with the privilege of using the library's computer workstations comes responsibility for considerate, ethical and legal use. Use of library Internet facilities, including terminals and Internet connections, acknowledges your acceptance of and agreement to abide by the following computer usage and Internet access guidelines.

1. Schenectady County Public Library cards are non-transferable. Patrons must present their own library card to register for a computer session. Staff may ask for additional identification. The use of a friend or family member's library card is not permitted and may result in the suspension of computer privileges. Any patron outside the SALS/MVLS service area must show picture identification.
2. A library card entitles a patron to 90 minutes of use per day, on a first come, first served, basis. Time limits per session may vary by branch or during peak periods. Exceptions must be requested in advance and may or may not be granted at the discretion of the staff.
3. The library assumes no responsibility or protection for submitting private and personal information online, or any security or protection for credit card or account numbers.
4. A. Patrons found to be viewing pornography or other material deemed by library staff or security personnel to be inappropriate or unacceptable for a public setting will be subject to the following procedure:
  - 1) The first offense will result in a verbal warning issued by a staff member or security personnel that viewing inappropriate material is unacceptable and any further offense will result in the permanent loss of computer privileges. A dated note will be placed on the patron account that a warning was given for a computer violation.
  - 2) At the second offense, the patron will be verbally told their computer privileges are permanently revoked. A block will be placed on the patron account, an incident report filed and a banned patron letter mailed to the patron and filed with security and library management.
- B. Patrons may not use the computing resources of SCPL for any illegal purpose in violation of any library rule or policy or of any local, state, or federal laws or regulations. Misuse of the library computers or Internet access will result in the loss of computer and library privileges. Unlawful activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Illegal and unacceptable use of computing resources includes but is not limited to:

  1. Using the library's Internet access to view, print, distribute, display, send or receive images, or graphics of material that violates laws relating to child pornography.
  2. Violating copyright laws: Patrons must respect copyright laws and licensing agreements and assume responsibility for payment of any required fees. United States Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Co) prohibits the unauthorized reproduction or distribution of copyrighted materials, except as permitted by the principle of "fair use".

3. Uploading and/or downloading pirated materials, such as music, movies or software.
  4. Malicious use or cyber bullying.
  5. Transmitting, uploading, distributing or viewing obscene, abusive and/or sexually explicit material.
  6. Using library computers or networks to commit fraud, hacking, stalking, or to make threats or deliberately misrepresent themselves online or to library staff.
  7. Unlawful activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
5. Parents/guardians must take responsibility for their child's use of library computers and Internet access. Children under the age of 13 are allowed Internet access unless restricted by a parent or guardian. Parents may restrict their minor child's use of the Internet at any age.
6. Library staff may limit computer use by an adult whose children are inadequately supervised while the adult is using the computer.
7. Guest passes
1. Patrons from outside the SALS/MVLS service area may be granted a guest pass to use public computers, subject to availability, for a fee.
  2. Any patron from within the SALS/MVLS service area with outstanding fines may be granted a guest pass to use a computer, subject to availability, if they make a payment towards their fine.
  3. Guest passes are restricted to one per patron per day, dependent on availability of public computers and with preference given to Schenectady County and MVLS/SALS library patrons.

### 5.8.2 Social Media Policy

Social media is defined as any web-based tool such as a blog, micro-blog, online forum, content-sharing website, or other digital channel established for online interaction and connection. The Library maintains a presence on several social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. These sites allow users to interact with the Library's profile.

Postings containing any of the following will be removed:

1. Obscene comments or hate speech
2. Personal attacks, harassment, or threatening language
3. Potentially libelous statements
4. Plagiarized or copyrighted material
5. Commercial messages or spam
6. Material that is deemed off-topic or inappropriate
7. Private or personal information
8. Falsification of identity
9. Any illegal activity
10. Solicitation for donations, or memberships, or services requiring a fee
11. Photos or other images that may fall in any of the above categories

The library does not collect, maintain, or otherwise use the personal information stored on any third party site in any way other than to communicate with users on that site. Users should be aware that third



party websites may have their own privacy policies. The Library is not responsible for any of the patron generated comments/content that appears on the website(s). A posted comment is the opinion of the poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement or agreement by the Schenectady County Public Library

Staff will monitor the Library's social media pages and remove postings that violate this policy. Violators of this policy may have their user profiles blocked.

When using social media both behavior and content are a reflection of the staff person posting to the site and of the Library. Staff posts to social media should be professional, accurate, and be in keeping with the library's mission. Comments and messages sent to social media should be responded to in a timely manner by staff.

## 5.9 Confidentiality and Privacy

Our commitment to privacy and confidentiality has deep roots not only in the law but also in the ethics and practices of librarianship. In accordance with the American Library Association's Code of Ethics: "We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired, or transmitted."

1. Circulation, registration information, and information retrieval records may not be disclosed except to:
  - a. The cardholder (with card or other proper id). NOTE: This is regardless of age or relationship. For example, parents cannot be told what materials a child 13 or older has checked out without the child's consent.
  - b. Library staff acting within the scope of their duties in the administration of the library system and in facilitating inter library loans.
  - c. Persons authorized by the cardholder to access the individual's records identified by a signed note of permission given by the cardholder.
  - d. Representatives of any local, state, or federal government, pursuant to subpoena or search warrant authorized under the authority of federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or investigative power. Upon receipt of any such subpoena or search warrant, the Library Director will consult with the Schenectady County Attorney to determine if the subpoena or search warrant is in proper form and if there is a valid basis for its issuance before providing confidential information.

The library collects only that personally identifiable information about patrons that is necessary to ensure the proper operation of the Library and otherwise required for access to Library resources or participation in Library functions, including, but not limited to, the use of the website.

Notwithstanding the previous principal, patrons should not have the expectation of complete privacy and confidentiality. Library employees working within the scope of their duties will have access to personal information.

When anyone visits the Library's website, non-personal information (such as cookies, IP address) may be required for the running of online applications, however this data has no element by which specific individuals may be identified to or by third parties.

The Library will not sell, lease, or otherwise distribute or disclose a patron's e-mail address, postal address, phone number, borrower records, or other personal information to outside parties unless required by law. Some Library website pages contain links to external sites not maintained by the Library. The Library cannot be responsible for a patron's privacy when the patron discloses information to outside websites. Visitors to those websites are advised to check the privacy statements of each site to learn how the website will use such information.

To use Schenectady County Public Library databases remotely users are asked for their Schenectady County Public Library card number to ensure that only authorized users have access. Database vendors do not have access to any user records or information.

Photos and videos which may appear on the Library's websites are gathered from public programs, events, and Library spaces. To insure the privacy of individuals, including children, images will not be identified using full names or personal identifying information without written approval from the photographed subject, parent, or legal guardian.

Radio Frequency Identification. The only information stored on the RFID chip/tag will be limited to the item barcode, as well as a security bit that indicates if the item is in or out of the library.

1. RFID technology will not be used for library cards.
2. All local, state and/or federal legislation relating to RFID and library usage will be fully complied with.

#### Photography and Recording

1. By entering the Library, patrons consent, and authorize without restriction or compensation, to the possible use of their image appearing in photography, audio, video, or other formats which may be included in media or marketing.
2. Professional, promotional, or news photography and videography are prohibited unless approved by the Director or his or her designee.
3. Personal photography should not record any library patron without prior consent.

The Library may use visitor information for new, unanticipated, uses not previously disclosed in this policy. When the Library's information practices change, the Library will post the changes on its website to notify patrons and provide them with the opportunity to opt out of these new uses.

Any concerns about how patron information is used should be directed to the Director, who, with the staff, enforces this policy.

## 5.10 Video Surveillance Policy

Schenectady County Public Library seeks to provide security protection for its patrons, staff and property by deploying video camera technology at all of its locations. The video cameras are installed at strategic points in both the interior and exterior of the buildings to capture a broad view of building entrances and exits as well as key public usage areas such as Service Desks and Program Rooms. The system is intended to be used by authorized Library Administration and Security staff to verify the time and people involved in incidents such as Code of Conduct violations, trespassing, theft, violent activity, building defacement and other acts of vandalism occurring on Library property. The Library Director may authorize access to video recordings in order to

review and assess reports of workplace safety violations or reports of staff not adhering to County and Library work policies and practices.

### **Guiding Principles**

1. Access to the data files recorded through video surveillance system is limited to staff authorized by the Library Director. Such staff may include the Assistant Library Director, Library Assistant for Technology, Security personnel assigned to the Library, and Branch staff who witness incidents of Code of Conduct violations or reports of accidents, injuries or criminal activity.
2. Authorized staff will be trained annually on the appropriate use of the video surveillance systems and they will sign a document indicated that they have read and agree to abide by the policies regarding the use of the video systems.
3. The Library will be transparent with the public and the staff regarding the purpose and use of video surveillance at its locations with signage and the publication of this policy through print and digital formats.
4. Cameras will be placed only in public areas where people lack a reasonable expectation of privacy to capture violations of Library Code of Conduct, and/or criminal activities. Camera locations will include parking lots, entrances, public corridors and library usage areas including book stacks, public computer areas, service desks and program rooms.
5. Cameras will not be placed in areas where people have a reasonable expectation of privacy such as restrooms or private offices.
6. Video recording will not be used for the purpose of routine staff performance monitoring or evaluation.
7. When an incident or a report of activity prompts the need to review video files, authorized staff will limit their examination of files to those specifically related to the incident. The examination may include the review of various interior and exterior cameras to capture the movement of individuals involved in the incident.
8. Authorized staff may capture, save and share through encrypted email distribution with Library staff both still and video images related to incidents for the purpose of identifying people responsible for Library policy violations, safety issues or the disruption of library operations.
9. Video data recorded through the camera systems will be retained for no more than 14 days on continuous record systems. Retention periods at locations served by motion activated video systems vary based on storage device capacity as well as motion driven recording. On a regular basis Library Technology staff will review data and manually delete files older than 14 days.
10. Video images related to incidents will be archived through the inclusion of individual images on the Incident Report documenting the specific event. The Incident Reports will be retained for a period of 5 (five) years at the Central Library in both digital and print formats. Library policies governing patron privacy and confidentiality will be enforced with regards to the use of archived still and video data files.
11. Library staff may share access to review video recordings with law enforcement when related to a crime investigation such as a theft, drug trafficking, assault or traffic accident.
12. Library staff will direct members of the public, including insurance investigators and attorneys, who request access to review video surveillance data files related to an incident involving a criminal act, accident or altercation with Library Staff or Library users, to the Schenectady County Office of Public Information. The public will need to file a Freedom of Information request to obtain a copy of the recording, if such recording exists.

13. The video surveillance system management and monitoring equipment and components will be located in staff-access only areas at each library location. The computer technology associated with the system will be maintained in accordance with current Information Security practices and will be secured from outside intrusion and misuse.
14. The use of video surveillance will not eliminate the potential for criminal activity or accidents. The Schenectady County Public Library is not responsible for loss of property or personal injury, and the public and staff should take action to safeguard themselves and their possession while using Library facilities.

## **6. Circulation**

The Library may limit loan periods, renewals, number of items loaned and hold requests for the various Collections within the Library. The Library will provide patrons with a current list of circulation limits. Materials purchased with Central Library Aid (adult nonfiction) are available to all libraries and patrons of MVLS. Enforcement of this policy is the responsibility of the Director.

## **6. 1 Library Cards**

Library cards may be issued at no cost to individuals who reside or own property within Schenectady County or the service areas of the Mohawk Valley, Southern Adirondack or Upper Hudson Library Systems.

Current proof of identity and address must be presented to obtain a library card. For minors who do not have their own current proof of identity and address, an adult caregiver may provide theirs on behalf of the minor.

### **Types of Library Cards:**

1. SCPL card – issued to Schenectady County residents and taxpayers, those employed by Schenectady County, and those living in an unserved area of the Mohawk Valley Library System and provides full access to all SCPL resources.
2. Non-resident card – issued to individuals living outside the service areas of MVLS, SALS and UHLS who pay a non-resident card fee. Provides full access to all SCPL resources.
3. MVLS/SALS card – issued to those who live in the service area of another Mohawk Valley Library System or a Southern Adirondack Library System library and provide the same level of access a card from the individual’s home library would provide.
4. Core card – Schenectady County residents or taxpayers who do not have current proof of address with them may be issued a card that allows limited access to some library services and provides time to bring in proof of eligibility. Upon presentation of current proof of address, these cards will be converted to a SCPL card.
5. E-card – issued to residents of the MVLS/SALS service areas at least 13 years of age and provides temporary, limited access to some library services, primarily digital collections.
6. Agency card – issued to agencies, businesses, organizations and schools located in Schenectady County and provides full access to all SCPL resources.

## 6.2 Fees

This policy establishes the right of the Board to determine and modify Library fees as deemed necessary.

The Schenectady County Public Library does not charge late fines for any overdue circulating materials. The Library does assess some fees for lost or damaged materials, whether it is owned by SCPL or another loaning library. Please review our updated fees information below for details.

### Replacement Fees

Borrowers are responsible for returning or renewing the items they check out before the due date. If they do not, the item will be labeled as overdue and the patron will be notified. Items are declared lost after they have been overdue for 21 days and a replacement fee will be charged to the patron account.

A replacement fee is determined by the official vendor's pricing of the lost item and will vary depending on the type of material that is lost.

If patrons return the item, even after it has been declared lost, the Library will remove the replacement fee from their account.

If patrons pay to replace an item owned by the Library but later find and return the item within 90 days past its due date, they may receive a refund for the replacement fee from the Library.

Borrowing privileges will be suspended for cardholders with replacement fees totaling \$100, or more. This suspension only applies to borrowing physical materials. Patrons with blocks on physical material borrowing can still use their library cards to access e-books and Library computers.

The Library shall have available to the public a current statement of charges and fees. Payments can be made at any Schenectady County Public Library branch.

### Responsibilities:

Library patrons are responsible for notifying the Library if their card or cards of family members are lost, stolen, or misplaced.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing reasonable fees. Procedures related to collection and waiving of fees are the responsibility of the Director.

Revised 3/24/2022 (*Overdue item and replacement card fines discontinued*)

Approved 6/2018