

7.03 Media Relations Policy

Library Spokesperson

In order to provide the most current and consistent information about the library, all contact with news media will be carried out through the Director of Library Services or Board President, although at times individuals occupying such positions may refer the media to specific staff members. The Board President is the spokesperson for the Library Board of Trustees. All inquiries from reporters or other media persons should be reported immediately to the Director of Library Services.

When asked by the public for information related to library business or policy, staff should respond in accordance with library guidelines regarding such requests and, in the case of doubt, should consult with the Director of Library Services.

Employees who represent the library as media spokespersons should avoid speculation on any topic and refrain from offering personal opinions about library policies or programs, even when asked to do so by a reporter.

Questions from the public regarding the general operations or direction of the library should be referred to the Director of Library Services. Inquiries related to the underlying principles of a policy that are open to interpretation from a political, constitutional, and/or legal perspective should be referred to the Director of Library Services who may refer questions to the Board of Trustees. Examples of such policies include but are not limited to those covering Internet Access, Filtering, Intellectual Freedom, and Meeting Room issues.

Inquiries regarding the library budget should be referred to the Director, Business Manager, and/or Board of Trustees.

Newsgathering in the Library

Members of the media who wish to conduct newsgathering in the library in any manner disruptive to, or interfering with, the operation of the library or its use by other customers or be inconsistent with its mission, must make themselves known to either the Director of Library Services, or to the staff member in charge of the building in the Director's absence. Examples of behavior that can be disruptive, or interfere with, the operation of the library or its use by other customers or be inconsistent with the library's mission, include (but are not limited to) interviewing at other than normal conversational voice level, photographing, video recording, or audio recording customers or staff. (See **Photography or recording by members of the public or media** below.) Staff members witnessing members of the media engaged in such activity must inform them of the policy and ask that they request and gain permission from the Director of Library Services before further conducting newsgathering in the library. This policy does not apply to a member of the media in his or her capacity as a customer using the library's resources.

Photography and Video or Audio Recording in The Library

Photography or recording by the library

Library staff has the right to photograph, film, and record library events and customers for promotional use. Visitors to the library, or participants in any library event being captured on film or by photograph, will be advised in advance, verbally or through signage, that their participation in the event acts as consent to being photographed, filmed, or recorded, unless they otherwise clearly indicate to the contrary to library staff. To ensure the privacy of all individuals, their images will not be identified using full names or personal identifying information without written approval from the photographed subject, parent, or legal guardian.

The above policy applies only to open, public events. Closed events such as class visits would require releases and/or permissions from the supervisor of the visiting organization.

Photography or recording by members of the public or the media

While the library is a public place, it is considered a “limited public forum” under federal law. Public libraries may reasonably restrict the exercise of free speech rights in their buildings, particularly when the conduct would be disruptive to, or interfere with, the other customers or staff or be inconsistent with the library’s mission.

Subject to the preceding paragraph: photography and video or audio recording by visitors to the library are generally permitted if it is strictly for personal use. Photography and video or audio recording for commercial purposes are permitted only if the activity has been expressly approved by the Director. In order to ensure that such activity would not be disruptive to, or interfere with, the library staff or customers, or be inconsistent with the library’s mission, all individuals proposing to engage in such commercial activities must request approval in writing and in advance.

All requests to use a library facility as a setting for photography, video or audio recording are to be referred to the Director of Library Services, who has the responsibility and authority to evaluate the requests and to monitor the recording. Requests will be evaluated in terms of their impact on library operations and services. The Director will seek approval and make arrangements with specific library departments and personnel in advance of the approved photography or recording.

In order to protect the rights of individual customers and to prevent disruptions, or interference with, staff or customers, or conduct inconsistent with the library’s mission, photographing and video or audio recording on library property are restricted as follows:

1. Under no circumstances may the public or members of the media take photographs or record video or audio without the express permission of any library customer who would be included within the composition. In the case of minors, permission must come from the parent or legal guardian.
2. Media are subject to the provisions of the Code of Conduct policy and may not disturb the normal operations of the library.
3. In the event of a critical incident or emergency requiring police or fire response, public and media access may be limited to allow emergency personnel to ensure safety and security.
4. The terms above apply to the media as well as to amateur photographers and audio/video creators.