

Seymour Public Library District

Policy Title: SPLD Patron Complaints Policy

Policy Number _____

Effective Date: 08/23/2022

SCOPE: This Policy applies to all library staff, trustees, and fellow library users within the Seymour Public Library District (SPLD). This policy pertains to everything except complaints about what materials/resources we provide; in that case, please refer to the [Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials](#) form.

OBJECTIVE: This policy creates a fair and reasonable system for addressing complaints from the patrons of Seymour Library, investigating these complaints, considering the consequences and/or enacting changes, and ensuring that the complainant is informed of the decisions rendered.

SUBMISSION OF COMPLAINT: Any Seymour Public Library user, regardless of borrowing status is eligible to submit a complaint by completing the [Patron Complaint Form](#) located on the Library website. Library staff should redirect verbal complaints to the appropriate form, providing instructions as needed. NOTE: If the complaint contains allegations of a crime or misdemeanor, the Director of the Library may choose to involve relevant law enforcement officers; in that event, the Library shall defer to the processes and findings of Law Enforcement Officers instead.

INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINT: Investigating a patron complaint follows these steps:

1. The [Patron Complaint Form](#) is submitted to the Library Director.
2. Ad-hoc investigation team is organized: The Director of the Library will designate a minimum of three individuals to investigate the complaint. Any staff member or trustee named in the complaint cannot serve in this fashion. This team can be composed of library staff members or members of the Seymour Public Library Board (SPLD) of Trustees members, the Friends of SPLD board members, or a member of the Seymour Library Foundation Board of Directors.
3. Charge: The Director of the Library will charge the team with their task, including a deadline to meet. This deadline should not be longer than one month.
4. Team Investigates: The Team will use interviews, security footage, library records, consultations with experts, and any other reasonable method that does not infringe upon the privacy and good reputation of any person so named in the complaint or through subsequent investigation results. All information gained in this way is to be considered CONFIDENTIAL. In keeping with the tradition of American jurisprudence, anyone accused shall be considered innocent until the preponderance of evidence and testimony tips the scales of the matter. All library staff members are expected to, when asked (and only when asked) by the Team, to assist in these investigations truthfully, honestly, helpfully, and confidentially.
5. Presentation of findings: When the Team has concluded its investigation, it will present its findings to the Director of the Library both in writing and in person, and will submit all evidence gained in the

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course of the investigation to the Director of the Library. The Director of the Library will be the sole owner of these reports and pieces of evidence, the Team should retain no copies.

CONSIDERATION OF EVIDENCE: The Director of the Library shall in good faith consider the issues and findings. The Director of the Library may, in their own good judgment, consult with Trustees, professionals, and colleagues in a confidential manner to help them come to a concluding decision.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGES AND CONSEQUENCES: As a result of these considerations, the Director of the Library may implement changes to Library policies and procedures through the normal channels and may assign corrective consequences to Library staff and library patrons.

MESSAGING: The Director of the Library shall work with the Director of Communications & Marketing to ensure that both the complainant as well as the general library body (if appropriate) shall be made aware of the findings of the investigation, and of the relevant results and changes made. Any consequences levied against individuals will remain confidential.

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