

POLICY: HR06 – Employee Conduct

APPROVAL DATE: 01/01/1982

REVISION DATE: 12/19/2023

Purpose

To set forth the District's policies for employee conduct.

Scope

Applies to all District employees

The Board reserves the right to change and/or modify this policy at any time, as circumstances dictate and in accordance with applicable law.

Employees are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a professional and courteous manner and shall refrain from behavior or conduct that interferes with their ability to do their job or reflects negatively on the District. They are expected to adhere to all District policies and procedures; comply with all local, state, and federal laws and comply with lawful direction from supervisors, managers, and directors.

Failure to follow policy and meet District expectations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

6.01 Ethics

Employees must avoid any act of impropriety in their role as public servants, including, but not limited to, unauthorized possession or access to District property and/or confidential information, dishonesty, or the appearance of impropriety, and must never use their District position or authority for personal gain or in breach of the public trust.

Employees are expected to uphold the highest standards of ethics at all times while working for and/or representing the District.

6.02 Inclusion

All employees are expected to support an inclusive workplace by:

- Treating others with dignity and respect at all times.
- Addressing and reporting inappropriate behavior and comments that are discriminatory, harassing, abusive, offensive, or unwelcome.
- Fostering teamwork and employee participation, encouraging the representation of different employee perspectives.
- Seeking out insights from employees with different experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds.

- Avoiding slang or idioms that might not translate across cultures.
- Constructively confronting the decisions or behaviors of others that are based on conscious or unconscious biases.
- Being open-minded and listening when given constructive feedback regarding others' perception of your conduct.

6.03 Conflict of Interest

A "conflict of interest" occurs when an individual's private interest conflicts with, or appears to conflict with, the best interests of Spokane County Library District. Accordingly, no conflict of interest, either real or perceived, shall be allowed between an employee's private or personal interests and the interests of the District.

6.04 Abuse of Authority or Position

Employees may not use the power or authority of their position for personal gain, or to obtain any improper personal benefit for themselves, their family, or for any other person. For example, employees are expected to abide by District policies governing circulation and renewal of library materials. In addition, employees may not use professional work cards for personal use. Overriding of any limit is not allowed without the approval of a supervisor or manager.

6.05 Gifts or Additional Compensation

Employees may not ask for or receive any additional compensation, gift, loan, discount on goods or services, or accept any other things of value, over and above their salary and benefits, for performing their official duties. However, gifts of nominal value, such as an honorarium or compensation for performing work that is related to the library profession, but is outside their official duties, or gifts of food for a group or work unit at holidays or other special occasions are allowed as long as they do not constitute a conflict of interest.

6.06 Motor Vehicles

Use of District-provided vehicles is limited to activities benefiting Spokane County Library District. Minimum use of assigned vehicles for personal purposes, such as purchasing lunch or dinner while on business away from the worksite, or personal stops en route to or from work, or while traveling between facilities, is allowed. Transporting individuals who are not District employees in a District provided vehicle is prohibited.

Employees driving Spokane County Library District vehicles are responsible for all violations, tickets, or fines incurred while operating a District vehicle. Employees receiving a violation, ticket, or fine while operating a District vehicle are required to report it to their supervisor/manager and the Finance Director within one (1) business day of occurrence.

Failure to notify, or failure to pay a fine or ticket in a timely manner, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees driving Spokane County Library District vehicles are required to report any damage to a District vehicle to their supervisor/manager and the Finance Director within one (1) business day of occurrence. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees whose duties include operating a personal or District-provided vehicle, must report the suspension, revocation, or loss of driver's license and/or insurability within one (1) business day of occurrence.

6.07 Attendance

Punctual and consistent attendance is a condition of employment and is considered an essential job function for all District employees. Employees are expected to report to work punctually, as scheduled, and be at the proper workstation, ready for work, at the assigned starting time. They shall give proper advance notice whenever unable to work, or report for work on time, or when they need to leave work unexpectedly.

An employee that has demonstrated an inability to report to work on time and when scheduled to work may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

An employee who is absent without notification or authorization for three (3) consecutive scheduled workdays normally shall be considered as having abandoned their job and may be terminated.

An employee who is absent without authorization or notification on a scheduled workday is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employees may also be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for failing to report to work without notice or with insufficient notice, for excessive absenteeism or tardiness, or for other attendance and tardiness problems.

6.08 Gossip

Gossip is defined as rumor or talk of a personal, sensational, or intimate nature. A gossip is a person who habitually spreads intimate or private rumors or facts. Gossip can be spread through talking or writing, and writing includes email. Gossip almost always involves a person who is not present. Gossip can consist of unwelcome and/or negative criticism of another person. Gossip often is about conjecture that can injure another person's credibility or reputation.

Maintaining a gossip-free workplace:

In order to maintain a gossip-free workplace, employees are expected to:

- a. Refrain from speaking or insinuating about another person when that person is not present unless it is to compliment or reference work matters.
- b. Refuse to participate when another mentions a person who is not present in a negative light. Change the subject or voice their commitment to not gossip.

- c. Choose not to respond to negative email or use email to pass on private or derogatory information about any employee, volunteer, Board member, Friends of the Library member or customer of the District.
- d. Refrain from speaking derogatorily about co-workers to other co-workers, both on and off the job site.
- e. Use proper channels to report to a person in authority any first-hand knowledge of another employee's unethical, incorrect, or disruptive job performance.

6.09 Use of Controlled Substances

Reporting to work and/or working while under the influence of any substance that impairs performance or impacts safety is prohibited. Moreover, manufacturing, distributing, possessing, or selling controlled substances (as defined in RCW 69.50) is also prohibited at any time on District premises, including District vehicles.

The possession and use of medically-prescribed and over-the-counter medications during work hours is permissible, provided they do not prevent the employee from safely performing their duties or create a safety threat to the employee or others.

If any of the following conditions are met, the employee may be sent to a local drug testing company via taxi or similar means of transportation. The Human Resources Director, or their designee, has sole discretion and authority regarding the transportation and testing of any employee. Reasons for testing include, but are not limited to:

- There are specific, objective grounds to believe the employee's work performance is impaired due to the presence of such substances in the body and the impairment poses a risk to the employee, others, and/or the District.
- While on duty, the employee is involved in an accident or incident.
- The District believes the employee presents a risk to the employee, others, and/or the District.
- Other conditions, as determined by the Human Resources Director or designee.

The District will cover the cost of transportation as well as the testing. The employee will be placed on paid Administrative leave until the results of the tests are returned.

Failure to promptly comply may be grounds for immediate termination.

6.10 Workplace Violence

Conduct or behavior that constitutes violence or threats of violence will not be tolerated.

6.11 Personal Appearance

Employees are expected to dress in a manner representing their position and job responsibilities. They should present a clean and neat appearance appropriate to their work assignment. All employees should present to work free of excessive scent.

In accordance with the mission of the District to provide information in a neutral manner, while at work or on District business, staff may not wear political paraphernalia or attire that displays political slogans, statements, or endorsements while on the job.

The Executive Director will establish administrative procedures necessary to implement this policy. In accordance with the administrative procedures, any appeal of an administrative action under this policy will first be made in writing to the Executive Director.

Any subsequent appeal of Executive Director action and/or decision will be made in writing to the Board of Trustees.

The District will make a good faith effort to implement this policy in a fair and consistent manner.