

S P O K A N E C O U N T Y L I B R A R Y D I S T R I C T

Policy Title	HR06 – Employee Conduct		
Approval Date	01/01/1982	Revision Date	01/01/2025
Related Policies	HR01 Inclusion HR02 Hiring and Employment HR12 Searches and Inspections Standards of Conduct		
Purpose	To set forth the Spokane County Library District (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 Working with Minor Children and/or Vulnerable Adults

When working with minor children and/or vulnerable adults who are participating in District-sponsored library programs occurring in District facilities, employees shall conduct activities with the following combinations of adults in the room or space at all times:

- Two or more District employees, OR
- One District employee and one or more other adults

If either of those requirements cannot be met, activities shall be moved to a public area of the District facility. If activities cannot be moved to a public area, the library program shall be canceled.

6.03 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, worldviews, and backgrounds.
- Avoiding jargon, slang or idioms that do not translate across cultures or languages.
- Considering and constructively address decisions or behaviors of others that appear to be based on conscious or unconscious biases.
- Being open-minded and actively listening when given constructive feedback regarding others' perception of your conduct.

6.04 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.

6.05 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.

6.06 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 compensation 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.

6.07 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 authorization or notification on a scheduled workday is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

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

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 gossiper 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. Not speak of or insinuate 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 the employee's medically prescribed and/or 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.

- 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

All District employees are issued an identification badge (ID badge) that is to be worn and visible while working.

The badge should be replaced when the information is no longer correct (e.g. name change) or the badge is outdated or in disrepair.

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 come 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.

In the event of the amendment of any law, regulation, or ordinance incorporated into these policies or upon which these policies rely, these policies shall be deemed amended in conformance with those changes. In cases where these policies conflict with any local ordinance, state or federal law, the terms of that law, and its underlying rules or regulations shall prevail. In all other cases, these personnel policies and practices prevail.