

## **Chickasha Public Library**

### **Safety Policy**

**January 2025**

For the safety of all people in the library, and for the security of property, the Library Director will institute a program that incorporates the following components.

#### **I. Building Security**

- A functioning alarm is in effect.
- The code for disarming the alarm is changed when the Director determines it is necessary.
- The Director is responsible for keys and maintains an up-to-date record of who has keys.
- Employees shall wear visible nametag identification while in the building. Vendors will report to staff and introduce themselves before entering any non-public area.
- The library staff and volunteers shall observe all OSHA rules and guidelines, which are posted in the employee lounge, to make a safe workplace.
- Fire extinguishers are placed in locations recommended by the Chickasha Fire Chief and are regularly serviced to make sure they are in working order. All library staff are aware of the location and proper operation of all fire extinguishers through OSHA-approved online training.
- A first aid kit is available and is checked regularly.
- All library staff should be aware of the location of the first aid kits. If a customer sustains a minor injury, a staff member may provide first aid within the limits of his/her training. If the customer is a child, staff will consult accompanying parents. The staff member will call 911 in case of serious injury (such as a fall, apparent stroke, seizure or heart attack, profuse bleeding, unconsciousness) or when requested by a customer. Under no circumstances will a staff member offer or administer any oral medication (such as aspirin, cough syrup) to a customer. The

staff member will complete the Customer Accident/Incident Form (Attachment 1) and forward it to the Director.

- A panic/duress signal system exists for emergencies. The alarm sounds at the alarm company which immediately notifies the Chickasha Police Department.

## **II. Emergency Plans**

- A Fire Evacuation Plan was developed with the advice of the Chickasha Fire Chief. Regular training and mock fire drills for staff on their role in the evacuation plan are held.
- In case of a bomb threat, the staff member will obtain as much of the information on the Bomb Threat Report (Attachment 2) as possible. Staff will immediately report the incident to the Chickasha Police Department and provide the information from the form. The staff will notify the Director. The building will be evacuated only if advised by the Chickasha Police Department.
- If a person threatens customers or staff, staff will push the panic button or call 911, as appropriate. Staff not in the immediate threat area will exit the building and take as many customers with them as possible. After evacuating the building, staff will go to the south side of the next building and brief police on the situation when they arrive. Tornado safety precautions will include cancelling all meetings/activities for the day in the event a tornado outbreak is forecast. Notice will be posted on the door, given to parents, and posted on social media regarding this precaution. In case of a tornado alert, the building will not be evacuated. Staff will escort all unaccompanied children to the Conference Room. Adults will be invited to follow the group. Those who decline to come into the Conference Room must leave the building as no staff will be available to monitor them, and, at this time, the doors will be locked. The group will remain in the area until an all-clear signal is given. A battery radio and flashlights, both with additional batteries, are to be available in the Conference Room.

## **III. Package Control**

To assure the safety of the library's customers and staff, it is necessary to prevent anyone from bringing a weapon, a bomb, or other harmful thing into the building. The policy on package control is designed to prohibit such items from being brought in while allowing customers as much freedom as possible.

**1.** The staff on duty at the circulation desk will observe people coming into the library and determine if items they are bringing in are allowable.

a) Allowable items include book bags, diaper bags, briefcases, purses, shopping bags.

b) Non-allowable items include guns, baseball bats, gun cases, knives, or anything else that looks like a serious weapon.

**2.** If customers are attempting to bring in non-allowable items, staff will immediately intercede and advise the customer of the policy.

**3.** Customers who are not allowed to bring in items will be asked to take them to their cars. The library does not provide lockers nor can the staff "hold" items for customers.

**4.** Staff members are encouraged to use their own best judgment in determining what may be brought into the library.

a) The two factors to consider are the customers' right to carry their possessions with them and the customers' right to be safe in the library.

b) A pocketknife kept in someone's pocket will not be considered a weapon. A huge Bowie knife on someone's belt would be considered a weapon and not allowed in the building.

c) Circumstances must be taken into account. If an elderly person comes in using a cane as an obvious assistive device, the cane would not be considered a weapon. If an able-bodied person comes in swinging a heavy cane, that might be considered a weapon.

5. When a staff member prohibits a customer from bringing something into the library, he/she will fill out a Package Control Report (Attachment 3) for the Director. Such a report will include the nature of the item prohibited and any other pertinent information.

#### **IV. Disruptive Customers**

For any type of incident described in this section, staff will fill out a Disruptive Customers Report (Attachment 4) for the Director.

##### **1. Verbally Abusive Customers**

If staff observe verbally abusive behavior or if such is reported to them, they will intervene. They will remain calm but will approach the customer and tell him that such behavior is not allowed. The staff member will give customers a chance to explain fully what he needs without interruption. Staff will then restate what was said to assure that the customer's question is understood. Staff will proceed to assist the customer. If the customer continues to use abusive language contact the Director. If the Director is out, call the Police. If the Director is out, and the Police have been called, and the incident is likely to attract public attention, notify the City Manager.

##### **2. Physically Abusive Behavior**

For the safety of customers and staff, acts of violence will not be permitted in the library or on its property. Such acts are defined as rough, or injurious physical force, action, or treatment, and include striking, using a weapon, or threatening another person.

If the violence is from one adult to another adult or a child, the staff will call the Police immediately and then the Director (in the event of the Director's absence the Assistant Director will be informed of the situation.) If it seems feasible, they will offer assistance to the victim. "Staff should assess whether their intervention will help the victim or potentially escalate the situation. If appropriate, staff will provide first aid within their abilities."

If the violence is from one child toward another child, staff will intervene to stop any unarmed fighting. If parents of the children are in the library, they will be asked to intervene. If intervention does not work, or if the children are armed, staff will immediately call the Police and notify the Director. As appropriate, staff will offer assistance and first aid to the victim(s).

In all violent situations, staff must use common sense. It is reasonable to keep a six-year-old child from kicking a three-year old. It may not be reasonable to try to disarm a fourteen-year-old with a gun. The first priority is always the welfare of the customers and staff.

### **3. Sexual Misconduct**

Sexual misconduct is a crime. Sexual misconduct is defined as exposure, sexual solicitation, "peeping," stalking, or physical contact of a sexual nature. If the staff observes an act of sexual misconduct or if such an act is reported to them, they will call the Police and notify the Director. They will proceed to assist the victim by moving him to a private space such as an office to await the Police and offer any other appropriate assistance. If the alleged perpetrator is leaving the building, staff will note his appearance to aid the police in apprehending him.

#### **4. Sexual Harassment**

If customers are sexually harassing staff, staff will first tell the harasser that his actions are annoying and tell him to stop. Staff will notify the Director who will initiate the city's policy on sexual harassment complaints.

If a customer reports to staff that the customer is being sexually harassed by another customer, staff will call the police and notify the Director.

#### **5. Nuisance/Annoying Behaviors/General Disruption**

a) If staff observe a customer annoying others or making a nuisance, making excessive noise, running, or engaging in horseplay, following people around, attempting to engage in unwanted conversation, entering a staff work area without permission, making unauthorized use of supplies and equipment, using non-prescription inhalable vapor products, i.e., e-cigarettes, or creating any other type of nuisance, staff will intervene. If the customer is an adult, staff will inform the customer that the actions are unacceptable, and that the customer must desist. If the customer does not desist, staff will ask the customer to leave. If the customer refuses to leave, staff will notify the Director. If the Director cannot get the customer to leave, staff will call the police.

- If the customer is a child, staff will ask the child to desist and suggest alternate activities. If the child's disruptive behavior continues, staff will locate the parents in the library and inform them of the behavior and ask them to correct the behavior. If parents refuse to assist or are unable to control their child, they will be asked to take their child and leave. If they refuse to leave, staff will notify the Director. If the Director cannot get the customers to leave, staff will call the police.

b) Nuisance calls are those which call and hang-up, call and say nothing, call and say something not relevant to library business, or make obscene remarks. Staff will just hang up the phone immediately and report the incident to the Director and will alert

other staff members. If calls persist, staff will notify the telephone company and the Director and call the police.

c) Customers who fail to maintain bodily hygiene that is tolerable by other customers and staff may be asked to leave.

## **6. Mentally Disturbed**

Staff will treat a mentally disturbed customer like any other customer. On the advice of mental health professionals, staff will also give a mentally disturbed customer some space so that the customer does not feel crowded. Staff will offer the customer assistance. If the customer begins to be disruptive, staff will try to calm the customer. If this is unsuccessful, staff will ask the customer to leave. If the customer refuses to leave, staff will call the police and notify the Director.

## **7. Intoxicated**

If a customer has been drinking alcohol but is not disruptive, staff will treat the customer like any other customer. Staff will offer customer assistance. If a customer is disruptive, staff will ask the customer to leave. If the customer refuses to leave, staff will call the police and notify the Director.

If a customer is extremely intoxicated and unable to conduct regular library business, staff will call the police and notify the Director.

## **8. Cell Phone Users**

In order to maintain a calm, quiet atmosphere for all customers of the library certain guidelines have been established for the use of cell phones:

- a. Cell phones must be turned off or to vibrate before entering the library.
- b. Headphones/earbuds must be used if engaging in an activity on the phone which requires sound.
- c. A customer will be asked to leave the building if carrying on a conversation in a loud or disruptive manner.

#### **V. No firearms allowed.**

Handguns, concealed or unconcealed, are not allowed on the library premises according to 21 OS Section 1277.

Further, Chickasha City code states:

Sec. 36-35 Sec. 36-35 - Entering on certain posted public property.

(a) No person who has possession of any firearm, other than a person exempted in subsection (b) of this section, shall enter or remain on any public property, on which signs have been posted prohibiting the possession of any weapons on the public property.

(b) The provisions of this section shall not apply to commissioned peace officers or duly CLEET-licensed armed security personnel who are employed by or under contract with the posting entity, which owns, controls, leases or operates the posted premises.

#### **VI. Staff Training**



A Library Safety Training Program is part of the regular orientation given to all new employees. Such training will be scheduled following the completion of the new employee's hiring procedures.

The Library Safety Training Program will include the following:

- OSHA rules and guidelines
- Building evacuation plan for fire, tornados, and other emergencies
- OSHA-approved online fire extinguisher training and "live" training when offered by the Fire Department
- Location of fire extinguishers
- Procedures for handling violence in the workplace
- Procedures for handling bomb threats and similar panic situations
- Procedures for handling disruptive customers
- Procedures for package control

Safety Training will be an ongoing part of the employee's regular training program. The Director will have responsibility for the design and implementation of the training program, and for documenting that such training has been provided. Experts from the community will be utilized as appropriate.