

## Otselic Valley Library Policy Manual

### 1. Conflict of Interest Policy

The Library depends on the trust of the community to achieve its mission. It is therefore crucial for all employees to strive to maintain the highest ethical standards when conducting business on behalf of the Library. The standard of behavior at the Library is that all staff and Board members shall avoid any conflict of interest between the interests of the Library on one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding actual conflicts of interest as well as perceived conflicts of interest.

#### Definitions

Unless the context clearly provides otherwise, the terms set forth below shall have the following meanings for this policy:

#### Interest:

A direct or indirect pecuniary or material benefit accruing to an officer or employee as a result of a contract with Otselic Valley Library. For the purpose of this policy, a Library officer or employee shall be deemed to have an interest in the contract of:

- A spouse, minor children, and dependents, except as to a contract of employment with the Library.
- A firm, partnership, or association of which such officer or employee is a member or employee.
- A corporation of which such officer or employee is an officer, director, or employee.
- A corporation of which more than five percent of the outstanding stock is owned by any such officer, employee, or his/her relative.

#### Legislation:

A matter which appears on the agenda of the Library Board of Trustees or on a committee thereof, on which any official action will be taken and shall include proposed or adopted acts, local laws, ordinances, or resolutions.

#### Officer or Employee:

An elected or appointed officer or employee of the Library whether paid or unpaid.

#### Relative:

A spouse, child, stepchild, parent, stepparent, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, or legal guardian of any of said persons of an officer or employee.

#### Spouse:

The husband or wife of an officer or employee unless living separate and apart pursuant to:

- A judicial order, decree, or judgment of separation.
- A legally binding written agreement of separation in accordance with the Domestic Relations Law.

#### Standards of Conduct

Every officer or employee of the Library shall be subject to and abide by the following standards of conduct:

- Gifts: No officer or employee shall directly or indirectly solicit or receive any money, whether in the form of cash, check, loan, credit, or any other form in any amount, or solicit any gifts, or accept or receive any individual annual gift, having a value of \$75 or more, whether in the form of money, services, loans, travel, entertainment, hospitality, thing or promise, or any other form, under circumstances in which it could be reasonably inferred that the money or gift was intended to influence or could be reasonably expected to influence him/her in the performance of his/her official duties or was intended as a reward for any official action taken by such officer or employee.
- Confidential information: No officer or employee shall disclose confidential information acquired in the course of official duties or use such information to further a personal interest.
- Disclosure of interest in legislation: To the extent known, any officer or employee of the Library who participates in the discussion or gives an official opinion to the Library Board on any legislation before it shall publicly disclose on the official record the nature and extent of any direct or indirect financial or other private interest he/she may have in such legislation, including any involvement in current or past legislation.
- Disclosure of interests in contracts: Any officer or employee of the Library who has, will have, or subsequently acquires any interest in any actual or proposed contract with the Library shall publicly disclose the nature and extent of such interest in writing to the Library Board as well

as to his/her immediate supervisor as soon as he/she has knowledge of such actual or prospective interest.

- Investments in conflict with official duties: No officer or employee shall invest or hold any investment, directly or indirectly, in any financial, business, commercial, or other private transaction which creates a conflict.
- Private employment: No officer or employee shall engage in, solicit, negotiate for, or promise to accept private employment or render services for private interests when such employment or service creates a conflict with or impairs the proper discharge of his/her duties.
- Prohibited conflicts of interest: No Library officer or employee shall have an interest in any contract between the Library and a corporation or partnership of which he/she is an officer or employee when such Library officer or employee has the power to:
  - Negotiate, prepare, authorize, or approve the contract or authorize or approve payment thereunder;
  - Audit bills or claims under the contract; or
  - Appoint an officer or employee who has any of the powers or duties set forth above, and, no chief fiscal officer, treasurer, or his/her deputy or employee shall have an interest in a bank or trust company designated as a depository, paying agent, registration agent or for investment of funds of the Library of which he/she is an officer or employee.
- The provisions of this action shall in no event be construed to preclude the payment of lawful compensation and necessary expenses of any Library officer or employee in one or more positions of public employment, the holding of which is not prohibited by law.
- Certain interests prohibited: No officer or employee of the Library who has an interest in any real property, either individually or as an officer or employee of a corporation or partnership shall participate in the acquisition or plan for acquisition of said property or any property adjacent to said property by the Library. The term participation shall include the promotion of the site as well as the negotiation of the terms of acquisition.

No Library officer or employee shall use or permit the use of property

owned or leased to the Library for other than official purposes or for activities not otherwise officially approved.

### Responsibilities

It shall be the responsibility of the Library Director to ensure that:

- All staff (including the Director), and Board of Trustees members are given a copy of this policy to read and to sign the policy attestation.
- All employees and Board members will sign the policy attestation upon election, hiring, or appointment.
- Board members and employees who are in a position to make hiring or purchasing decisions will sign the policy attestation annually.

The signed attestations will be kept on file.

## 2. Sexual Harassment

The Board of Trustees affirms its commitment to non-discrimination and recognizes its responsibility to provide for all District employees an environment that is free of sexual harassment, including sexual violence. Sexual harassment including sexual violence is a violation of law and stands in direct opposition to District policy. Therefore, the Board prohibits and condemns all forms of sexual harassment by employees, school volunteers, students, and non-employees such as contractors and vendors which occur on school grounds and at all school-sponsored events, programs and activities including those that take place at locations off school premises and in another state. Since sexual violence is a form of sexual harassment, the term "sexual harassment" as used in this policy will implicitly include sexual violence even if it not explicitly stated.

Generally, sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- a) Submission of such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment;

- b) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individuals; and
- c) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Sexual violence is defined as physical sexual acts perpetrated against a Person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent. Sexual violence as defined by New York Penal Law includes but is not limited to acts such as:

- a) Rape:
- b) Sexual assault:
- c) Sexual battery
- d) Sexual coercion.

The Board acknowledges that in determining whether sexual harassment has occurred, the totality of the circumstances should be evaluated. The Board recognizes that sexual harassment can originate from a person of either sex against a person of the opposite or same sex, and from co-workers as well as supervisors, and from a third party such as a school visitor, volunteer, or vendor.

In order for the Board to enforce this policy, and to take corrective measures as may be necessary, it is essential that any employee who believes he/she has been a victim of sexual harassment in the work environment, as well as any other person who is aware of and/or who has knowledge of or witnesses any possible occurrence of sexual harassment, immediately report such alleged harassment to the Director through informal and/or formal complaint procedures as developed by the Library. Such complaints are recommended to be in writing, although verbal complaints of alleged sexual harassment will also be promptly, thoroughly and equitably investigated in accordance with the terms of this policy. In the event that the Director is the alleged offender, the employee should report his/her complaint to the Board of Trustees President.

Upon receipt of an informal/formal complaint (even an anonymous complaint), the Director will conduct a thorough, prompt and equitable investigation of the charges. However, even in the absence of a complaint, if the Director has knowledge of or reasonably should know of or suspect any occurrence of sexual harassment, the Director will investigate such conduct promptly, equitably, and thoroughly. All procedures developed by the District will provide for the

prompt and equitable resolution of the sexual harassment.

To the extent possible, within legal constraints, all complaints will be treated as confidentially and privately as possible. However, disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation of the charges, and any disclosure will be provided on a "need to know" basis. The Director will inform the Board of Trustees of investigations involving findings of harassment.

Based upon the results of the investigation, if the Board of Trustees determines that an employee has violated the terms of this policy and/or accompanying regulations, immediate corrective action will be taken, as warranted, up to and including termination of the offender's employment in accordance with legal guidelines, Library policy and regulation and the Libraries's Code of Conduct.

Third parties (such as volunteers, vendors, etc.) who are found to have violated this policy and/or accompanying regulations will be subject to appropriate sanctions as warranted and in compliance with law.

#### Prohibition of Retaliatory Behavior (Commonly Known as "Whistle-Blower" Protection)

The Board prohibits any retaliatory behavior directed against complainants, victims, witnesses, and/or any other individuals who participated in the investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment. Follow-up inquiries shall be made to ensure that sexual harassment has not resumed and that all those involved in the investigation of the sexual harassment complaint have not suffered retaliation.

#### Finding That Harassment Did Not Occur

At any level/stage of investigation of alleged harassment, if a determination is made that harassment did not occur, the Compliance Officer will so notify the complainant, the alleged offender and the Superintendent of this determination. Such a finding does not preclude the complainant from filing an appeal pursuant to District policy or regulation and/or pursuing other legal avenues of recourse.

However, even if a determination is made that harassment did not occur, the Superintendent/designee reserves the right to initiate staff awareness and training, as applicable, to help ensure that the school community is not conducive to fostering harassment in the workplace.

In all cases, the Superintendent will inform the Board of Education of the results of each investigation involving a finding that sexual harassment did not occur.

#### Knowingly Makes False Accusations

Employees and/or students who knowingly make false accusations against another individual as to allegations of harassment may also face appropriate disciplinary action.

#### Privacy Rights

As part of the investigation, the District has the right to search all school property and equipment including District computers. Although rooms, desks, cabinets, lockers, computers, etc. are provided by the District for the use of students and staff, the users do not have exclusive use of these locations or equipment and should not expect that materials stored therein will be private.

#### Development and Dissemination of Administrative Regulations

Regulations will be developed for reporting, investigating and remedying allegations of sexual harassment. An appeal procedure will also be provided to address any unresolved complaints and/or unsatisfactory prior determinations by the applicable Compliance Officer(s).

Such regulations will be developed in accordance with federal and state law as well as any applicable collective bargaining agreement(s).

### 3. Internet Use Policy

#### Purpose:

The purpose of this Internet Use Policy is to ensure the responsible, safe, and ethical use of the internet by patrons of Otselic Valley Library. This policy aims to provide equitable access to digital resources while protecting the rights, privacy, and safety of all individuals using the library's internet services.

#### Policy Statement:

##### 1. Access to Internet:

a. Internet access at Otselic Valley Library is provided to support research, education, and information needs of the community.

b. Internet access is available to all patrons, regardless of age, background, or affiliation, subject to compliance with this policy and any applicable laws and regulations.

## 2. Acceptable Use:

a. Patrons are expected to use the internet for lawful and ethical purposes, including research, education, and information seeking.

b. Unacceptable use includes but is not limited to:

i. Accessing or distributing illegal, obscene, or explicit materials.

ii. Engaging in activities that violate copyright or intellectual property rights.

iii. Harassing, defaming, or intimidating others.

iv. Engaging in unauthorized or malicious use of computer systems or networks.

v. Intentionally introducing viruses or malware.

vi. Using the internet for any activity that disrupts or interferes with library operations or other patrons' use.

## 3. Content Filtering:

a. Otselic Valley Library may implement content filtering software to block access to websites or materials that are illegal, inappropriate, or harmful.

b. Content filtering is a proactive measure to ensure compliance with acceptable use guidelines and to maintain a safe and welcoming environment for all patrons.

c. While content filtering strives to be effective, it may occasionally block legitimate websites or fail to block objectionable content. Patrons are encouraged to report any concerns or access issues to library staff.

## 4. Personal Responsibility:

a. Patrons are responsible for their own actions and conduct while using the internet at Otselic Valley Library.

b. Patrons should respect the privacy, rights, and sensibilities of others when viewing or sharing information.

c. Personal information, such as passwords, credit card numbers, or social security numbers, should not be shared or entered on public computers.

## 5. Minors' Access:



- a. Parents and guardians are responsible for their minor children's internet use and must ensure that it is appropriate and complies with this policy.
- b. The library encourages parents and guardians to supervise their children's internet use and discuss responsible online behavior.

6. Limitations and Time Restrictions:

- a. Internet access may be limited in duration or restricted during peak times to ensure fair and equitable use among all patrons.
- b. The library may establish time limits for computer use based on demand or other factors to accommodate all patrons.

7. Security:

- a. Patrons should be cautious when accessing sensitive information, such as personal accounts or passwords, on public computers.
- b. Otselic Valley Library is not responsible for any damages or loss of data resulting from the use of library computers or internet access.

8. Compliance:

- a. Failure to comply with this Internet Use Policy may result in a suspension or revocation of internet privileges, and in some cases, legal consequences.

9. Staff Assistance and Support:

- a. Library staff is available to provide limited assistance and guidance with internet use, including basic navigation and searching techniques.
- b. Staff members are not responsible for personal instruction or technical support beyond the scope of basic assistance.

By adhering to this Internet Use Policy, patrons contribute to creating a positive and respectful environment at Otselic Valley Library, where equitable access to information and responsible use of technology are valued. This policy will be reviewed periodically and revised as necessary to reflect changes in technology, internet usage, and applicable laws or regulations.

## 4. Confidentiality of Records Policy

### Purpose:

The purpose of this Confidentiality of Records Policy is to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of patron records and information at Otselic Valley Library. This policy aims to uphold the rights of library users to access information without fear of intrusion or unauthorized disclosure, while complying with applicable privacy laws and regulations.

### Policy Statement:

#### 1. Confidentiality of Patron Records:

- a. Otselic Valley Library recognizes that patron records, including circulation records, registration information, and any other personally identifiable information, are confidential and will be treated as such.
- b. Patron records will be protected from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure, except as required by law or with the explicit consent of the patron.

#### 2. Collection of Patron Information:

- a. The library collects and maintains patron information necessary for providing library services, including borrowing materials, accessing electronic resources, and communicating with patrons.
- b. Personally identifiable information will only be collected with the knowledge and consent of the patron, and the purpose of collection will be clearly communicated.

#### 3. Access to Patron Records:

- a. Access to patron records will be limited to authorized library staff who require access to perform their duties or provide library services.
- b. Staff members must adhere to strict confidentiality requirements and are prohibited from accessing or disclosing patron information for personal or unauthorized purposes.

#### 4. Use and Disclosure of Patron Information:

- a. Patron information will only be used for legitimate library purposes, including library operations, communication with patrons, and providing requested services.
- b. Patron information will not be shared, sold, or disclosed to third parties, except as required by law, court order, or with the explicit consent of the patron.

c. Exceptions to confidentiality may occur in cases of imminent harm, criminal investigations, or when required by applicable laws or regulations. Such exceptions will be managed in accordance with legal requirements and professional standards.

5. Online Privacy and Data Security:

a. Otselic Valley Library takes reasonable measures to protect the privacy and security of patron information collected and stored electronically.

b. Appropriate safeguards, such as encryption and secure data transmission, will be implemented to protect personal information from unauthorized access or disclosure.

6. Patron Rights and Responsibilities:

a. Patrons have the right to access and review their own records, subject to any legal restrictions or limitations.

b. Patrons are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of their personal information, such as login credentials, library cards, or passwords, and for promptly notifying the library of any unauthorized use or disclosure.

7. Staff Training and Awareness:

a. Library staff will receive training on the importance of confidentiality, privacy laws, and the library's policies and procedures regarding the protection of patron records.

b. Staff members will be regularly reminded of their obligations to protect patron privacy and the consequences of violating confidentiality.

8. Record Retention and Disposal:

a. Patron records will be retained in accordance with applicable laws and regulations governing record retention and disposal.

b. When records are no longer required, they will be securely and permanently disposed of to prevent unauthorized access or disclosure.

Otselic Valley Library is committed to maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of patron records, protecting the rights of library users, and upholding professional ethics and standards. This Confidentiality of Records Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its alignment with evolving privacy laws, regulations, and best practices.

5. Open Meeting Policy

New York State Open Meeting Law (OML) applies to all public libraries

Notice of Meetings: Notice (date, time, and location) of meetings must be given to the public and the news media not less than 72 hours prior to the meeting. When a meeting is scheduled less than a week in advance, notice must be given to the public and the news media “to the extent practicable” at a reasonable time prior to the meeting.

Board Documents: Documents to be discussed by the board must be posted to the library's website 24 hours before the meeting.

Minutes: A record or summary of all motions, proposals, resolutions and any matters formally voted upon must be prepared after each meeting and be available within two weeks of the meeting. If votes are not unanimous, minutes must include a record of which trustees voted in favor and which did not.

Meeting Locations: Meetings should be held at a location that offers “barrier-free physical access”.

Penalties: Violating the Open Meetings Law can result in litigation. A successful lawsuit against a library under this law could result in monetary damages and the reversal of board action.

## 6. Library Materials Policy:

### Purpose:

The purpose of this Library Materials Policy is to provide guidelines and procedures for the acquisition, organization, circulation, and maintenance of

library materials at Otselic Valley Library. This policy aims to ensure a diverse, relevant, and accessible collection that meets the informational, educational, recreational, and cultural needs of the community.

Policy Statement:

1. Collection Development:

a. The library will maintain a collection that encompasses a wide range of subjects, formats, and viewpoints to serve the diverse interests and information needs of the community.

b. Selection of library materials will be based on professional judgment, community needs, and the library's mission, with consideration given to quality, accuracy, relevance, and the availability of space and resources.

2. Materials Selection:

a. Library materials will be selected by qualified library staff, utilizing professional tools, reviews, recommendations, and input from the community.

b. Selection decisions will reflect a balanced representation of various perspectives, cultures, and formats to foster inclusivity and respect for diverse viewpoints.

3. Access and Availability:

a. Library materials will be accessible to all patrons, without discrimination or restriction, subject to applicable laws, licensing agreements, and age-appropriate considerations.

b. The library will provide equitable access to materials in various formats, including print, audiovisual, digital, and emerging technologies.

c. Materials that are temporarily unavailable or in high demand may be subject to circulation policies, including borrowing periods, renewals, and holds, to ensure fair access among patrons.

4. Weeding and Collection Maintenance:

a. The library will regularly review and evaluate materials to ensure the collection remains relevant, current, and aligned with community needs.

b. Weeding, the removal of outdated, damaged, or low-use materials, will be conducted according to established guidelines and professional standards to maintain a vibrant and up-to-date collection.

5. Intellectual Freedom and Censorship:

a. Otselic Valley Library upholds the principles of intellectual freedom, supporting the right of individuals to access information, regardless of content, format, or viewpoint.

b. The library will not engage in censorship or restrict access to materials based on personal beliefs or objections. Patrons are encouraged to exercise their own judgment in selecting materials.

6. Donations:

a. The library welcomes donations of materials that align with the collection development policy and meet the library's criteria for condition, relevance, and appropriateness.

b. Donated materials may be added to the collection or may be used to support fundraising efforts, subject to the library's discretion and the applicable laws and regulations.

7. Interlibrary Loan and Resource Sharing:

a. Otselic Valley Library participates in interlibrary loan programs and resource-sharing networks to expand access to materials beyond its collection.

b. Interlibrary loan services allow patrons to request materials from other libraries in the Four County Library System, subject to the lending library's policies and availability.

8. Patron Suggestions and Feedback:

a. Otselic Valley Library values the input and suggestions of its patrons in the ongoing development and improvement of the collection.

b. Patrons are encouraged to provide feedback, recommendations, or requests for specific materials, which will be considered within the scope of the collection development policy and available resources.

This Library Materials Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its alignment with evolving community needs, industry standards, and emerging technologies. Otselic Valley Library is committed to maintaining a dynamic and inclusive collection that enriches the lives of its patrons and supports lifelong learning, exploration, and cultural engagement.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees on 6/13/23

