

POLICY MANUAL

For

SERVICES, MATERIALS, AND EMPLOYEES

COVINGTON COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

Adopted On 4-4-2014 by the

Covington County Library System Board of Trustees

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	
Introduction to Policy Manual	7
Acknowledgement Form	8
Library Mission Statement and Goals	9
SECTION I. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION	
A. Board of Trustees	10
B. Library Director	11
C. Chain of Command	11
D. Communication	11
SECTION II. SERVICE POLICIES	
A. Who May Use the Library	12
B. Access to Circulation Records	13
C. General Service Policy	14
D. Specific Library Services	15
1. Materials/Loan periods	15
2. Equipment	15
3. Computers	15
a. Computer and Internet Use by Patrons	15
b. Consequences of Policy Violations	16
c. Disclaimer	16
4. Cooperation with School Libraries	16
5. Programming	16
6. Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped	17
7. Video/Audio	17
8. Interlibrary Loan	17
9. Service to the Homebound	18
10. Fax Service	18
11. Photocopy Service	18
12. Displays and Exhibits	19
13. Computer Software	19
14. Library Bill of Rights	19
E. Friends Groups and Sponsored Book Sales	19
F. Cooperation with Other Libraries	19
G. Disasters Policy	20
H. Gifts	21
I. Meeting Room Policy	21
J. Physical Facilities	22
K. Publicity/Public Relations	22
L. Patron Comments, Questions and Interaction	23
M. Volunteers	24

SECTION III. MATERIALS SELECTION POLICIES	
A. General Statement and Basic Criteria	24
B. Types of Material	26
1. Books and Other Print Materials	26
2. Non-Print Materials	26
D. Weeding the Collection	27
E. Controversial Materials	27
F. Reconsideration of Library Materials	27
SECTION IV. EQUIPMENT DISPOSAL POLICY	28
SECTION V. PERSONNEL POLICIES	
A. General Policies	29
1. Equal Employment Opportunity	29
2. Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)	29
3. Mississippi Employment Protection Act	29
B. Classification of Positions	29
C. Salary Schedules and Payment	29
D. Nepotism/Employment of Relatives	30
E. Selection	30
F. Appointment	31
G. Terms of Employment	32
H. Probationary Period	32
I. Working Conditions	33
1. Work Environment	33
2. Work Week	33
3. Work Breaks	34
4. Overtime	34
5. Drug Free Work Environment	34
J. Promotions and Transfers	35
K. Benefits	35
1. Insurance (Health and Life)	35
2. Social Security	36
3. Public Employees Retirement System of Mississippi (PERS)	36
4. Deferred Compensation Program	37
5. Holidays	37
6. Workers' Compensation	38
7. Approved Library Travel	38
8. Reimbursement of expenses	39
L. Employee Attitudes and Conduct	40
1. Attendance at Work and Meetings	40
2. Attitude Toward Public	40
3. Babysitting	40
4. Conflict of Interest	41

5. Conversation	41
6. Discussion of Library Policies, Administration, Budget	42
7. Discussion of Patrons/Gossip	42
8. E-Mail	42
9. Endorsements and Advertisements	42
10. Fees and Honorariums	42
11. Gifts from Vendors	42
12. Grooming and Dress	43
13. Harassment	44
14. Participation in Organizations/Professional Development	44
15. Personal Business	45
16. Policy Interpretation	45
17. Political Activities	45
18. Punctuality	45
19. Reading while on Duty	46
20. Relationships with Other Staff	46
21. Salesmen and Canvassers	46
22. Smoking	46
23. Time Sheets	46
24. Telephone Calls/Mobile Phones	47
25. Use of Computers and Internet Policy	47
26. Work Performance	48
 M. Types of Time Away from Job	 48
1. General Laws and Statements	48
2. Family Medical Leave Act of 1993	49
3. Annual Leave	49
4. Sick Leave	51
5. Administrative Leave	52
6. Compensatory Leave	52
7. Death (in the Family and Others)	53
8. Emergency/Disaster Leave	53
9. Jury/Court Witness	54
10. Leave Without Pay	54
11. Leave for Religious Holidays	54
12. Maternity/Paternity Leave	54
13. Military Duty	54
14. Unauthorized Leave	55
 N. Performance Appraisal and Review Process	 55
1. Job Descriptions	55
2. Appraisal and Review Process	55
 O. Disciplinary Process	 56
1. Offenses	57

a. First Group Offenses	57
b. Second Group Offenses	57
c. Third Group Offenses	57
2. Disciplinary Actions	58
a. Oral Warning	58
b. Written Reprimand	58
c. Probation	58
d. Suspension With Pay	59
e. Suspension Without Pay	59
f. Dismissal	59
3. Appeal	59
P. Separation From Service	60
1. Exit Interview	60
2. Types of Separation from Service	61
a. Retirement	61
b. Resignation	61
c. Reduction in Force (RIF)	62
d. Death	62
e. Release	62
f. Dismissal Resulting from Disciplinary Action	62
3. Payment to Separated Employees	62
Q. Demotions	63
1. Demotion for Inadequate Performance	63
2. Disciplinary Demotion	63
3. Reduction in Force Demotion	63
4. Voluntary Demotion	63
R. Grievance Procedure	63
SECTION VI. APPENDICES	65
Covington County Library Computer & Internet Policy	66
Safe Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy	68
Patron Code of Conduct	71
Privacy Statement	74
Library Bill of Right	79
Incident/Occurrence Report Form	80
Volunteer Release Form	82
Freedom To Read Statement	83
Reconsideration of Library Material Form	88
Exit Checklist	89
Exit Interview	90

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE POLICY MANUAL

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This Manual outlines service and employment policies for the Covington County Library System, hereinafter referred to as the Library.

It is impossible to anticipate every situation that may occur or every policy question that may arise. The Library reserves the right in its sole and absolute discretion to revise, supplement, interpret, or rescind any portion of the Manual as deemed appropriate.

Employees should familiarize themselves with the contents of the Policy Manual and forward any questions regarding content to the Library's Director. Each employee is expected to comply with the directives in the Manual.

Mississippi public libraries are authorized to operate by statute as established by the Mississippi Legislature in the *Mississippi Code 1972 Annotated* Title 39, Chapter 3. A link to the *Mississippi Code 1972 Annotated* is available on the website of the Mississippi Secretary of State's Office at http://www.sos.state.ms.us/ed_pubs/mscode/.

1.2 EMPLOYEE AT-WILL STATEMENT

All employees of the Covington County Library System are employed at the Covington County Library System's will and are subject to termination at any time, with or without cause or notice. All employees of Covington County Library System may also terminate their employment at any time for any reason.

Covington County Library System's at-will employment statement may not be modified by any statements contained in this handbook or any other employee manuals, handbooks, employment applications or other materials provided to applicants or employees in relation to their employment. None of these documents, whether alone or combined, may be construed to create either an implied contract of employment for a definite period, or an expressed or implied contract concerning any terms or conditions of employment. Furthermore, Covington County Library System's policies and practices with respect to any matter are not to be considered as creating any contractual obligation to Covington County Library System's part or stating in any way that termination of employment will occur only "for cause." Statements of specific grounds for termination are set forth in this manual and any other documents are guidelines and examples only, and not all-inclusive lists, and are not intended to restrict Covington County Library System's right to terminate an employee at will.

1.3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I acknowledge that I have access to a copy of the Library's Employee Manual. I understand that it is my responsibility to comply with all policies adopted by the Library's Administrative Board of Trustees and with all revisions adopted by the Administrative Board of Trustees.

I acknowledge that the Employee Guide is not a contract of employment.

A copy of this form will be maintained in the employee's personnel file.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

2. LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT AND GOALS

2.1. Covington County Library System Mission Statement

The mission of the Covington County Library System is to make available to all citizens of Covington County resources, services, and programs that will

- ~allow them to continue their education
- ~assist them to locate and take advantage of services and information in all fields
- ~help them to develop their creative potential
- ~enable them to become better citizens locally and nationally
- ~improve occupational skills
- ~promote opportunities and activities to allow them to reach their personal goals and individual potential.

2.2. Covington County Library System Goals

In order to achieve the mission stated above, the following goals and objectives are the focus of the Library's activities:

- a. To serve our citizens as a center where they can locate and obtain reliable, current, and unbiased information in order to continue their education regardless of economic status, level of education, ethnicity, or physical condition.
- b. To provide information and research for local governmental officials.
- c. To house and preserve educational and recreational resources to enlighten and enrich the lives of our citizens.
- d. To enhance the Library's online catalog as a resource for patrons to access local, state, national, and world-wide resources.
- e. To provide support for community educational, civic, and cultural groups and organizations.
- f. To continuously review and identify community needs, to provide programs and materials to meet those needs, and to partner with other agencies, organizations, and institutions to assist in meeting identified needs.
- g. To preserve local history in conjunction with the county historical/genealogical society and to assist in providing an historical understanding of the area.
- h. To provide on-going staff development that will enhance Library patrons' research activities.

SECTION I. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Covington County Library System, which serves Covington County, is organized under the laws of the State of Mississippi (Mississippi Code 1972, Annotated, 1989 Revision, Section 39-3-1 through Section 39-3-21). The system is governed by a Board of Trustees, hereafter referred to as the Board of Trustees or simply as the Board, consisting of five representatives, one from each district in Covington County. Trustees are appointed by the County Board of Supervisors and serve for a term of five years. The system began existence on August 15, 2011, with three branches -- Mount Olive, Collins, and Seminary, with Headquarters in Collins.

A. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Legal responsibility for Covington County Library System is vested in the Administrative Board of Trustees, which is the policy-forming body of the Library System. Subject to existing statutes and ordinances, it has the power to determine the rules and regulations governing Library services and personnel.

The specific duties and responsibilities of the Board are stated in the Mississippi Code 1972, Annotated 1989 Revision, Section 39-3-15, and are outlined as follows:

1. Adopt bylaws, rules, and regulations;
2. Meet at least quarterly;
3. Have the supervision, care, and custody of all Library property, including rooms or buildings constructed, leased, or set apart;
4. Employ a Library system director, and upon his/her recommendation, employ such other personnel as may be necessary, prescribe their duties, fix their compensation, and remove them for cause;
5. Employ, upon the recommendation of the Library system director, such other staff as may be necessary and fix their compensation;
6. Submit annually to the governing body a budget containing estimates for the ensuing year;
7. Have exclusive control of the finances of the Library system;
8. Accept such gifts of money or property for Library purposes as they deem expedient;
9. On recommendation of Library system director, purchase books, periodicals, maps, equipment, insurance and supplies for the Library system;
10. Dispose of equipment and discarded Library materials as provided in Section 19-7-5, *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated*;
11. At the close of each year, make a report to the governing body in the county or municipality wherein the Board serves, showing the condition of their trust during the year, the sums of money expended, and the purpose of the expenditures, the number of books and periodicals on hand, the number added during the year, the number withdrawn, the number loaned out, and such other statistics and information as they deem of public interest, as per Section 39-9-19, *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated*; and
12. Do all other acts necessary for the orderly and efficient management and control of the Library system. But no expenditure made or contracted by the Board shall be binding on any county or municipality so as to require any payment in excess of funds made available for Library purposes under this article.

B. LIBRARY DIRECTOR

The Library Director is the administrative officer of the Covington County Library System. Said Library Director shall have such educational qualifications as are prescribed by the Mississippi Library Commission. The Library Director shall administer and establish procedures according to policies established by the Board of Trustees. His or her duties shall include:

1. Employment of staff with the approval of the Board of Trustees;
2. Prescription of staff duties;
3. Removal of staff for cause;
4. Preparation of the budget;
5. Financial and statistical management;
6. Reporting to the Board of Trustees; and
7. Other acts necessary for the orderly and efficient administration of the library system.

Additionally, the Library Director shall, in conjunction with the President of the Board of Trustees, prepare the agenda for and attend all Board meetings. He/she has the right to speak on all matters under consideration. The Library Director is not a member of the Board and has, therefore, no vote on matters under consideration.

The Library Director is the representative and spokesman of the staff to the Board. He/she welcomes communication from staff members, which may lead to improvement of Library service or of personnel relationships and employment conditions. Branch Managers, each of whom is responsible for one of the public libraries in Covington County, are responsible to the Library Director. He/she also heads the system's headquarters, which is responsible for general administration, technical processing, and interlibrary loans.

C. CHAIN OF COMMAND

Branch Managers and the Head of Technical Services report to the Library Director. The Assistant Branch Managers report to Branch Managers, and volunteers, library assistants and student assistants report to the assigned supervisor. The chain of command is as follows:

Covington County Library System
Director
 Administrative Assistant
Head of Technical Services
 Technical Services Assistant
Branch Manager
Assistant Branch Manager
Library Assistant, Student Assistant & Volunteer

D. COMMUNICATION

Ideas, suggestions, and/or grievances are directed upward through the "chain of command." That is, passed from the originating level to the next highest level. For example, an idea for better Library service originating with an Assistant Branch Manager would be passed to the Branch Manager at that location and then by the Branch Manager to the Library Director for consideration. If such an idea needed a policy decision, it would be passed by the Library

Director to the Board for their decision. If it is felt that the Library Director has not given sufficient consideration to the matter, the staff member with the idea, suggestion, or grievance may be allowed to present this matter in written form to the Board for their consideration. The Board's decision shall be considered final.

SECTION II. SERVICE POLICIES

A. WHO MAY USE THE LIBRARY

1. The Covington County Library System serves all residents in the area. Library service will not be denied to anyone because of religious, racial, social, economic or political status; mental, emotional or physical condition; age; or sexual orientation. Children under the age of 8 may not be left unattended at the Library. The Library has adopted a Safe Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy. (See Appendices)

2. All materials may be used free of charge. To check out materials, individuals must apply for a library card. Documentation needed at the time of library card registration is:

(1) a form of government-issued identification (driver's license or other government-issued id cards) (NOTE: driver's license may be used as identification or address verification, *but not both.*)

(2) proof of residence (such as current utility statement of services, checkbook with name and address, or current tax receipt).

One must be at least 5 years of age to apply for a library card. Children ages 5-17 must have a parent show personal identification and proof of address. Children under age 18 must use parents or guardian's proof of address as listed above. Children ages 16-17 may produce a driver's license, birth certificate, school identification or computer-generated school schedule or report card if parent is not present. However, they will only be allowed to use the library computers or place items on hold. Check-out privileges will be withheld until a parent shows personal identification and proof of address. Children age 18 and older may produce a driver's license, birth certificate, school identification or computer-generated school schedule or report card if the parent is not present. Patrons who wish to only use the library computers may get an Internet-Use Only card with identification. This card will not allow one to check out materials.

3. The patron must have his/her library card to check out materials or to use the computer. If a person has possession of a library card, it is understood by the staff that the person has express permission to use the card, unless that card is reported lost or stolen. All library cards expire yearly. Renewal of the card requires verification of the patron's identification. Any outstanding fines and bills must be cleared in order to renew a library card.

4. If a patron loses his library card or it is stolen, it is the responsibility of the patron to notify the library. Upon notification, the library will immediately block all usage of the library card. If the patron does not notify the Library, any items checked out on this card will be the responsibility of the patron. A replacement card costs \$1.00 and requires proof of identification.

5. A citizen who does not live in Covington County (non-resident) may use materials while in the Library. He/she may also use the library's computers by leaving a current driver's license at the library desk during the period of use. A non-resident who resides in a zip code adjacent to or including Covington County (39119, 39428, 39479, 39111, 39116, 39168, 39480, 39459, 39402, 39482, 39421, 39474, and 39140) may apply for a library card by providing identification and proof of residence. Non-residents outside this area must also pay a yearly ten dollar out-of-system fee.

6. Covington County Library System reserves the right to deny or limit its usage and/or services to groups or individuals who make excessive demands on Library resources and staff. Such excessive demands may include students requesting assistance with homework, or patrons requesting individualized internet or computer training, inappropriate work space, or extreme demands for interlibrary loan services.

7. Covington County Library System reserves the right to limit the number of items checked out by one person at any given time, including items in heavily used subject areas.

8. Covington County Library System follows these policies regarding overdue and lost materials. Patrons with bills of \$5.00 or more cannot check out materials until bills are either paid in full or are reduced to less than \$5.00. Patrons are mailed an overdue notice after 2 weeks and overdue materials that are not returned are assumed lost after 30 days. When the 30 days have passed, patrons are mailed a letter stating replacement costs for the item. Replacement charges include the item price (either the actual list price or the default price of \$15.00) and a \$5.00 processing fee per item. If the item(s) are returned, the patron is only responsible for the overdue fines incurred to date. If the patron does not respond in any way, the item(s) are declared lost and the patron is billed for replacement charges. If the patron insists the item(s) were returned, the library staff request searches be conducted at every branch. Should the items be found, all charges are either removed or adjusted on the patron's record accordingly. If the item(s) are not found, Library staff document the event in the patron's user record. If the patron fails to return item(s), refuses to pay incurred fees, and insists item(s) were returned on more than two occasions, the patron's circulation privileges may be revoked. If the patron returns an item with damage so great that the item cannot be used, that patron must pay the replacement cost plus a \$5.00 processing fee.

9. Patrons aged 5 and older are eligible to use public computers. Refer to pp. ____ for additional, detailed information on Computer and Internet Usage.

10. All patrons are required to follow the Patron Code of Conduct Policy while in the library. (See Appendices) Patrons who violate this code will be asked to refrain from the behavior on the first offense. If the patron continues to violate the Code, the patron will be asked to leave the Library for the remainder of the day. If the patron does not leave the Library, the librarian is authorized to seek assistance from the authorities. All events of Policy violations will be documented by Library staff. If a patron habitually violates the Patron Code of Conduct, the Board of Trustees will be alerted to the situation. In extreme cases, the Board of Trustees reserves the right to ban patrons from the Library for a specific period of time or indefinitely.

B. ACCESS TO CIRCULATION RECORDS

Covington County Library System follows the American Library Association policy on confidentiality of library records and will not make inquiry into the purposes for which a patron requests information. (See Appendices for Privacy Statement). For this reason, each library patron shall be assigned a library card number to be used when checking out materials. Any records made in loaning books or in answering reference questions are for the sole and express purpose of protecting public property. If a staff member receives a request for information relating to circulation or registration records, the following procedure should be followed:

1. The Library staff member receiving the request to examine or obtain information relating to circulation or registration records will explain the policy on confidentiality. If the person or group making the request is not satisfied and insists in repeating demands, the staff member should immediately refer the person making the request to the Library Director who shall explain again the confidentiality policy.
2. If further action is desired, the Library Director, upon receipt of such process, order or subpoena, shall consult with the Board and/or attorney to determine if such process, order or subpoena is in good form and if there is a showing of good cause for its issuance.
3. If the process, order or subpoena is not in proper form, or if good cause has not been shown, insistence shall be made that such defects be cured before any records are released.
4. Any threats or unauthorized demands, i.e. those not supported by a process, order or subpoena, concerning circulation or registration records shall be reported to the Library Director.
5. Any problems relating to the privacy of circulation and registration records which are not provided for above shall be referred to the Library Director. Without the consent and approval of the Library Director, under no circumstances should any information from patron files or about patrons be given to anyone. This is a violation of that patron's right to privacy. Anyone seeking such information should be referred to the Library Director.

C. GENERAL SERVICE POLICY

1. The Library will select and organize for easy public access those books, equipment, and materials which best meet the needs and demands of the community. (See "Materials Selection Policy")
2. The Library will provide trained staff to provide guidance for patrons in obtaining the information they need.
3. The Library will provide programs, book lists, orientations and/or exhibits needed to stimulate the use of Library materials for all ages.
4. The Library will cooperate with other agencies and organizations in determining the educational needs of the community and in providing such services as programs, workshops, discussion groups, bibliographies or requested subjects, leadership training, materials and/or exhibits.
5. The Library realizes and accepts its responsibility for securing information beyond its own resources through the use of interlibrary loans and/or assistance of the Mississippi Library Commission. Use of electronic products will be provided as finances allow.
6. The Library shall, in turn, lend any materials, free of charge, requested by other libraries. Patrons of the Covington County Library System do, however, have priority in the use of materials.

7. The Library will seek to provide a balance of services and materials to young and old, women and men. The public library will cooperate with, but cannot perform, the functions of school or institutional libraries which are designed to meet certain curricular needs.
8. The Library will provide services in the branch during the hours and days which best meet the need of the majority of the community, within budgetary constraints.
9. The Library will provide an online catalog and electronic access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
10. The Library shall review and update or discontinue services on a periodic basis in an effort to meet the changing needs of the community.

D. SPECIFIC LIBRARY SERVICES

1. Materials/Loan Periods

The Library will aim to provide its patrons with dependable sources of information. Books, periodicals, audio and video, online databases, Internet access and office software shall be provided in adequate supply and of the highest affordable quality as budget allows. There is a limit of 10 items per checkout per patron except when items are part of a known school assignment; then the limit is 2 items per patron. Additionally, new card holders are limited to 2 items for the first two weeks, after which the limit becomes 10.

The following loan periods are in effect:

- Books -- 2 weeks with 1 renewal
- Audio/video -- 2 weeks with 1 renewal
- Reference books -- 2 weeks at manager/director's discretion
- Periodicals -- 2 weeks with 1 renewal
- Interlibrary Loan materials -- due on date from lending library
- Special Collections/High Demand Materials -- period established by director.

2. Equipment

The Library shall provide equipment necessary to use the library materials such as computers, printers, copiers and FAX machines for use in the library as funding permits.

3. Computers

a. Computer and Internet Use by Patrons

CCLS provides computer and Internet access privileges to library patrons. Internet access expands and enhances the Library's existing collections by providing additional informational, educational, leisure, and cultural resources. A library patron should have read and signed an Internet agreement form when registering for a library card. Library staff is available for general assistance in using the computers. However, staff time cannot be used to train patrons in the use of computer programs.

- ~ Computers are checked out to a library patron on a first-come, first served basis for a thirty-minute (30) session. If there is no patron waiting for the service at the end of a session, the patron may have another session.
- ~ No child under the age of five (5) is allowed to use a networked computer.
- ~ Children ages 5-17 have the same right to use public computers as adults. However, children ages 12 and under must be supervised by a parent or guardian.
- ~ Staff reserves the right to remove anyone who is violating the Library's code of conduct.

- ~ Parents are responsible for supervising children who use computers. Also, children may not be left unattended while the parent uses the computer.
- ~ Computer users are permitted to use mass storage devices or diskettes or may purchase diskettes from the library. Because of viruses and copyright and licensing laws, users are not permitted to install programs on library computers.
- ~ Computer users shall not alter computer configurations and shall not deliberately or willfully cause damage to computer equipment, programs, or parameters.
- ~ If a library patron or the patron's child should damage, through abuse or misuse, the hardware or software of library computers, the patron will be responsible for any repairs or replacement.
- ~ Printouts from the computer are available for twenty-five (25) cents per page. Printouts made in error are the responsibility of the patron.
- ~ Online class work is permitted, but the Library cannot guarantee that a computer will be available for specific coursework timeframes.
- ~ Per Mississippi Code of 1972, Section 97-5-29, it is illegal to publicly display graphic, obscene, or pornographic materials.
- ~ Computer users are expected to follow copyright laws and all other applicable laws and regulations and shall respect the privacy of others and the rules of network etiquette.

b. Consequences of Policy Violations

Any violation of these policies, laws, rules and regulations will result in the suspension or revocation of Internet use privileges. A first violation will result in the termination of the patron's current computer session. A second violation will result in the permanent suspension of the patron's computer/Internet privileges. Any and all computer and/or Internet policy violations are documented in the patron's record file or on an incident form should the user be a guest. Unlawful activities on the Library's computers will be dealt with in accordance with local, state and federal laws

c. Disclaimer

The Covington County Library System provides Internet filtering in compliance with the Child Internet Protection Act. However, Internet filters are not failsafe. The Covington County Library System does not monitor, nor does it have control over, the information accessed on the Internet. The Library System cannot be held responsible for Internet content, and assumes no responsibility for the quality, accuracy or currency of any Internet resource. The Internet allows users to connect to networks and resource databases not selected or reviewed by the Library. The Internet can contain material of a controversial nature, which some may deem inappropriate for themselves or their children. All users need to be aware that some content available on the Internet can contain material that is illegal, defamatory, potentially offensive, and/or disturbing to other library users. All users are responsible for their and their children's Internet use.

4. Cooperation with School Libraries

The Library will cooperate with school libraries whenever possible. Workshop and other forms of staff development will be made available to school librarians as space and finances allow. The public library will present materials necessary for self-study and materials necessary to furnish additional reading required for academic study. The Library will not, however, provide materials needed for formal courses of study, such as text or workbooks.

5. Programming

The public library shall provide programming for all ages. A "program" is a planned interaction between the library staff and library patrons for the purpose of promoting library materials, facilities, or services, as well as offering the community an informational, entertaining, or cultural experience.

This programming may take the form of story hours for preschool children, summer reading programs for older children, book talks for young adults, book clubs and/or programs on current interest topics for adults. These programs will be open to the public. A program may be conducted at the library, at the local school, daycare, or headstart center.

Each branch manager is expected to plan a minimum of one (1) children's program during the months of September - May and a four to six week summer reading program.

6. Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Covington County Library System assists the Mississippi Library Commission Service to the handicapped by providing applications for such service, by providing the toll-free number for assistance, by returning materials upon request, and by offering other assistance as needed.

7. Video/Audio

Covington County Library System provides videos and audio materials for patrons holding a current library card. The Library is not responsible for use of copyrighted materials.

8. Interlibrary Loan

As Borrower: Covington County Library System (CCLS) provides interlibrary loan services to registered patrons whose user record circulation status is "OK." Patrons whose circulation status is either "BARRED," "BLOCKED," or "DELINQUENT" are not eligible for interlibrary loan services until action is taken to clear their circulation status.

The requesting patron incurs any fee that is charged by the lending library. Postage is paid for by CCLS. If requested items are not picked up by the requesting patron after five days, on the sixth day the Branch Manager sends item(s) to Headquarters so that item(s) may be returned to the lending library and the patron will incur a fee of \$5.00 to recoup postage and processing fees.

The patron interlibrary loan period is based on lending library's due date. Library staff will adjust the patron due date accordingly, allocating adequate time for mailing. The overdue fee for interlibrary loan materials is \$1.00 per day per item.

At the Branch Manager's discretion, a patron who repeatedly disregards or abuses CCLS interlibrary loan policy can have interlibrary loan privileges either restricted or revoked. When this situation occurs, the Branch Manager should consult with the Director. If it is determined that privileges are to be restricted or revoked, notation is

made in the patron's user record. Notation should include date, staff initials, and reason for restriction/revocation of interlibrary loan privileges. A detailed record of the interlibrary loan requests involved should also be documented.

As Lender: CCLS lends material to member libraries requesting material on behalf of their patrons. CCLS reserves the right to deny any request.

CCLS lends, as interlibrary loans, books from its general fiction and nonfiction collections in the Adult and Juvenile locations. The interlibrary loan lending period is six weeks. Any materials designated as reference, home schooling, genealogy, local history, or other special collections may not be eligible to lend as interlibrary loans.

Magazine articles and book pages or sections may be photocopied for a requesting member library on behalf of its patron. The same photocopy fees that are established for CCLS patrons are also applicable to interlibrary loan photocopying requests.

9. Services to the Homebound

Covington County Library System will provide library services to those patrons who are homebound and desire reading materials through the mail by serving as a liaison between the Blind and Physically Handicapped Library and by returning materials to the BPHL on their behalf.

10. FAX Service

Covington County Library System will provide fax service for patrons for a fee determined by the Board of Trustees.

11. Photocopy Service

Covington County Library System provides photocopying services in all three branches. The Library charges a fee determined by the Board of Trustees to recoup paper, ink, and maintenance costs. The Library reserves the right to regulate usage and is not responsible for use of copyrighted materials.

12. Displays and Exhibits

Covington County Library System encourages displays and exhibits of local interest. The purpose of Library exhibits is to stimulate interest in books and reading and to relate the library collection and services to the community. Displays are devoted to practically every aspect of community life, and from time to time opportunity is given for the display of traveling exhibits, private collections, works of public institutions or those of amateurs in many fields.

Use of exhibit or display space is granted to any individual or group whose display promotes the welfare or educational enlightenment of the community. Use of the space is scheduled by the Branch Manager.

It is the policy of the Library to avoid commercialism or "excessive emphasis on profit." The Branch Manager shall post a notice as to who is displaying materials but no buying or selling of artwork or other materials is allowed on library property for the profit of the owner. Furthermore, it is the policy of the Library not to advertise commercial endeavors (except those sponsored by the Friends of the Library group), partisan politics, or sectarian religious matters. The Library is responsible for any and all advertisements of displays.

Under no circumstances should library staff engage in the selling of items on display. The staff may refer any interested buyers to the person whose works are on display. No money is to be exchanged on library premises (unless involving Friends of the Library fund-raising activities).

Prior to the items being placed on display, the Branch Manager should discuss with the Library Director any questions as to what constitutes commercialism or what types of displays and exhibits are acceptable. The Branch Manager shall immediately notify the Library Director of any complaints or concerns about a display or exhibit.

The Library will try to protect materials displayed but cannot be responsible for loss or damage to such materials. For and in consideration of the use of the exhibit or display space, any person or groups using the same hereby agrees to hold Covington County Library System harmless from any and all actions, suits, causes of or relating to, its use of such space.

The general public is always welcome to view such displays and exhibits free of charge.

13. Computer Software

Covington County Library System patron-use computers have software available such as Microsoft Office products and Adobe Reader. Unauthorized software from outside sources may not be downloaded or installed.

14. Notary Services

The library will provide notary services free of charge if a staff member who is also a certified notary is present and another staff member is available to serve other patrons during the notarizing process.

15. Library Bill of Rights

Covington County Library System subscribes to the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association. (See Appendices)

E. FRIENDS GROUPS AND SPONSORED BOOK SALES

Ongoing book sales sponsored by the Friends of the Covington County Library System are permitted in each of the three branches of the Library System. CCLS staff is not part of the monetary transactions concerning the book sales. Friends' monies are stored in a separate container to be managed and recorded by the Friends.

Each library branch in the CCLS will have an area designated specifically for the ongoing book sales. These areas will be clearly marked with appropriate signage to distinguish these materials from the rest of the Library collection.

Friends of the Library groups may also conduct special book sales on library premises in order to sell surplus materials that cannot be accommodated by the perpetual book sales.

F. COOPERATION WITH OTHER LIBRARIES

In order to better meet patron needs, Covington County Library System may participate in sharing materials, resources, and services with other libraries.

CCLS will maintain membership in the Mississippi Library Association and the American Library Association. Participation by individual staff members is encouraged. On May 25, 2007, the Attorney General released an opinion concerning the use of public funds to pay for membership dues in a professional association. Attorney General Jim Hood opined that public funds may be used to pay the membership dues of Library Trustees and the Director.

The consulting services of the Mississippi Library Commission and the Mississippi Library Association are used as needed by CCLS.

G. DISASTERS POLICY

Fire

At the first indication of smoke or flame, the staff should investigate to determine location and extent of the fire. If the fire can be contained and extinguished quickly and safely, the staff should do so. If there is any doubt about control of the fire, the staff should immediately call 911 or the fire department and then clear the building.

The staff should work with the fire department before experiencing a problem so that they are familiar with and can use a special foam extinguisher that should be less damaging to books than water.

The Library Director/and/or library board members should be notified when the fire department has been called.

Health Emergencies

Staff members should exercise caution when administering first aid of even a minor nature because of the safety of the injured individual and the potential liability of the staff. No medication, including aspirin, should ever be dispensed to the public.

The local police and ambulance should be called immediately in the event of any serious problem.

The Library Director should be notified in any such emergencies. If a staff member is involved, then workman's compensation may apply. (See Appendices)

Weather

The Library Director and/or Board of Trustees are authorized to close any library because of threatening weather conditions. Staff should keep in contact with the Library Director during such times.

All staff should keep the Library Director's home/cell telephone numbers at home, and the Director and administrative staff should keep a listing of all home/cell/emergency numbers for all staff members both at work and at home.

H. GIFTS

Within the guidelines of Mississippi State Law, the Covington County Library System Board of Trustees sets forth the following policies:

1. Gifts of books and other materials become the sole property of the Covington County Library System and are accepted as donations to be added to the collection, donated to the Friends of the CCLS, or disposed of as deemed appropriate by the Library Director and/or professional staff. This includes books and other materials donated in memoriam to the Library. Upon request from the donor, items may be returned if they are not deemed appropriate. (See "Materials Selection Policy")

2. Gifts of money, real property, and/or stock certificates will be accepted if conditions attached to such gifts are acceptable to the Board and/or other governing bodies involved.

Section 39-3-17 of the *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated*, states, "The trustees of the administrative board shall . . . (h) accept such gifts of money or property for library purposes as they deem expedient. . . The administrative board has the final authority as to how memorial funds are expended."

A November 11, 1990, Attorney General's ruling states that "Public library boards have the authority to accept private gifts and donations tendered in support of public libraries. The authority includes authority to agree to any attendant restrictions provided the restrictions are lawful and concern matters the governing authority for the library has the authority to act on."

3. The Library will not accept materials that are not outright gifts, with the exception of special exhibits or collections which, upon approval of the Library Director, may be set up by the owner for a limited, specified period of time at the owner's risk.

4. Processed gift materials will be placed in the branch library of the donor's choice.

5. When so requested, appropriate plaques are placed in gift books and letters of appreciation are sent to both donor and honoree. In the case of memorial books, letters of appreciation are sent to both donor and family of honoree.

6. Gift books will be shelved with the regular collection.

7. The Library reserves the right to decline any gift.

8. The Covington County Library System does not give value estimates on gift materials. Such estimates, to be accurate, require expert knowledge. CCLS will give receipts for any gifts for income tax purposes; such receipts will identify and acknowledge gifts without appraising value.

I. MEETING ROOM POLICY

The Library Meeting Room in Collins is available for two types of uses:

(1) Library programs and functions (i.e. literacy) which take precedence over all other activities; and

(2) Civic, cultural, or educational activities sponsored by community groups.

- The meeting room is reserved on a first come, first served basis by adults only. Reservations are made with the Branch Manager.
- No group may use the meeting room more than twice within a month's time.
*****Negotiable*****
- Light refreshments may be served in the room but no meals.
- No smoking is allowed in the room.
- The group using the room shall leave it in neat, clear, orderly condition; if not, the group/individual will be given notice that continued offense will result in denied access to the meeting room.
- The Library is not responsible for any equipment, supplies, materials, clothing, or other items brought to the meeting room by any group or individual attending a meeting
- The meeting room may be used for book signings and the author may sell his/her books during the book signing. HOWEVER, the Library is not responsible for any money from such book sale and no books may be left at the library for future sales.
- No group may sell its products on library property, whether in the meeting room or outside the building. No fee may be charged nor any collection taken up without the approval of the Library Director. In the case of a workshop or class, the library or an instructor may charge for materials, with the understanding that such materials are not a necessary requirement for attendance. Any such charges must be approved by the Library Director.
- The meeting room may not be used as temporary office space by any agency/business or as a permanent place of worship by a religious group.
- Use of the meeting room by any group does not constitute an endorsement of the group's policies or beliefs by the Library staff or Board.
- The Library reserves the right to deny use of the meeting room if, in the opinion of the Branch Manager or the Director, the group does not follow Library policy.

J. PHYSICAL FACILITIES

The Covington County Library System Board of Trustees, in an effort to achieve good library service to all patrons, accepts the responsibility to see that public library facilities are maintained in a manner that will meet the qualifications necessary for modern library service. These facilities are maintained in cooperation with county and city governments in such a manner as to invite patrons to enter, browse, read, and learn.

The Board accepts the responsibility for securing funds necessary for such maintenance of library facilities through county and city governments. Grants can also be explored.

The Library Director, the Board, and the architect, when required, will serve as a planning team and will strive to plan facilities designed to meet existing needs as well as changing needs of the community served.(See Appendices)

K. PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

1. With regard to public relations, the Library sets forth the following goals:
 - (a) To make city and county officials, civic leaders, and the public in general aware of the services available to them in their local library through information in local news media, programs, bibliographies, web pages, flyers, promotional items, and other forms of communication.
 - (b) To promote understanding of the Library's goals and objectives by city officials, by civic leaders, and by the general public.
 - (c) To encourage people of all ages to avail themselves of the many services provided by the Library.
2. All staff members and Board members should remember that they represent the Library in every public contact. Good service supports good public relations, and good public relations depend upon everyone.
3. The Library Director and staff members will be expected to give book reviews, book talks, class tours, talks concerning library events and/or services, etc., and to participate in community affairs. Library staff and materials will be utilized in making press releases and advertising library events, all subject to the approval of the Library Director. A reasonable amount of work time to prepare for these events will be allowed.

L. PATRON COMMENTS, QUESTIONS and INTERACTION

The primary duty of the Library is to serve the public. The Board of Trustees and the administration welcome the public's suggestions for improvement in the Library's operation and/or improvement in Library service.

The policies of the Covington County Library System and the minutes of the Board of Trustees are public records, and any patron is welcome to examine these documents upon written request to the Board of Trustees allowing ten (10) days for a response. There will be a charge of \$1.00 per page to cover cost of printing and staff time for those wishing copies of CCLS records. Such material may be read at no charge providing it is not removed from CCLS library premises.

If a patron has a question concerning policies, administrative procedures, library finances, etc., staff members shall forward the patron's name, address, and telephone number to the Library Director or ask the patron to visit or call the Library Director. The Library Director will call or visit the patron within five (5) working days to discuss the identified issues. If a patron wishes to file a complaint in a branch library, the Branch Manager shall offer the patron the "Patron Grievance Form" to complete. The Branch Manager should inform the patron that this form will be forwarded to the Library Director and that the Library Director will contact the patron within five (5) working days of receipt of the form. The Branch Manager will then forward the complaint immediately by mail to the Library Director and also

call the Library Director to inform him/her of this formal complaint.

Within five (5) working days of notice of a complaint, the Library Director shall arrange to contact the dissatisfied patron to resolve the matter if possible. If resolution can be achieved, the Library Director shall submit a written report to the Board of Trustees at the next regularly scheduled meeting, stating the name(s) of the dissatisfied patron(s), description of the facts of the matter causing dissatisfaction, summary of the efforts made to resolve the matter, and resolution. If resolution cannot be achieved, the Library Director shall inform the patron(s) that the matter will be brought to the immediate attention of the Board of Trustees. The Library Director shall arrange a meeting of the Board to consider the complaint and shall notify the dissatisfied patron(s) of the Board's decision.

Anonymous complaints shall be forwarded to the Library Director who shall in turn forward them to the Board of Trustees. Anonymous complaints shall be investigated but cannot be considered as seriously as complaints presented in signed written form for they do not allow for further discussion with and/or clarification by the dissatisfied patron(s).

M. VOLUNTEERS

The Covington County Library Board of Trustees recognizes that volunteers are a valuable resource for the Library. Their energy and talents help the Library meet its commitment to providing quality service to the public. Volunteers enhance, rather than replace, adequate staffing. Their services aid the Library in making the best use of its fiscal resources and help connect the Library to other community groups and organizations. Volunteers can also be valuable advocates for the Library in the community. The Library and its volunteers must work together to ensure a successful relationship. Library staff will continually work to recognize the contributions of Library volunteers and seek to expand the Library volunteer group as needed.

Covington County Library volunteers are coordinated by the Director and must be at least 14 years of age. Each volunteer must complete an application which will be kept on file in the Library. Application forms are available at the Library. In some cases, volunteers will also be interviewed to better determine their interests and levels of experience. Volunteer talents, experience, availability and interests will be considered in placement and job assignments. Covington County Library volunteers are bound by rules contained in all Library policies and guidelines as applicable, especially as they relate to patron privacy and confidentiality. Volunteers working in the Library do not have liability coverage insurance and are responsible for their own insurance coverage.

Covington County Library volunteers are recognized by the public as representatives of the library and shall be guided by the same work and behavior codes as employees. They work with the status of "at-will" employees

Volunteers are asked to record their hours of service in the Volunteer Log Book located behind the Circulation Desk as these statistics are reported on a monthly basis to the Board of Trustees.

The Library accepts volunteers requiring court ordered community service at the discretion of Library management. Court ordered community service volunteers are required to be interviewed by Library management prior to being accepted for service.

Junior volunteers under the age of 14 required to perform service for specific programs are accepted on a short-term basis. Parents of junior volunteers must sign consent forms for their children to perform service hours at the Library.

SECTION III. MATERIALS SELECTION POLICIES

A. General Statement and Basic Criteria

The main purpose of the library is to obtain, organize, preserve, and make available materials to support the mission statement. With this purpose in mind, the Covington County Library System's Board of Trustees has adopted the following materials selection policies:

The Library Board and Library Director recognize the importance of basic materials of permanent value as well as timely materials on current issues. In providing materials, the Library will purchase the best quality materials for immediate use as funding within the county permits. The format that best suits patron needs will be purchased. While selection is delegated to trained staff, the ultimate responsibility for material selection rests with the Library Director, who operates within those policies set forth by the Board of Trustees. Selection is based on the particular needs and interests of the community. Every library on a limited budget must, of necessity, employ a policy of selectivity in acquiring materials. Materials may be limited on the basis of cost, demand, and availability in other libraries. Each type of material must be considered in terms of its own merit and intended audience. All selections, both purchases and gifts, must meet some of the following criteria:

1. Relation to other materials and existing areas of coverage in order to maintain a well-balanced collection.
2. Accuracy of information.
3. Authoritativeness of the work.
4. Timeliness or permanence of the work.
5. Clear presentation and readability.
6. Author's reputation and significance as a writer.
7. Appeal to the interests and needs of individuals in the community.
8. Suitability of physical form to library use.
9. Contemporary significance.
10. Technical quality in selection of non-book materials.

As requested by patrons, Covington County Library System attempts to interlibrary loan material if it is a year or more old as most library systems will not lend their new material. Covington County Library System accepts patron requests to purchase items. The Library reserves the right to reject any request deemed inappropriate to the Library collection.

Covington County Library System can only afford a small proportion of the thousands of materials published each year. Moreover, the librarians responsible for selection cannot possibly read all of the materials published annually, and in most cases, the Library would not be allowed to return to the vendor materials found to be nonessential. Therefore, the librarians responsible for selection depend upon professional reviews appearing in such trade journals as *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal*, and *Booklist*. Catalogs that list recognized works can be used to check the Library's holdings against such standardized recommendations. The following are typical catalogs used by librarians and which can be borrowed by the library from other systems:

B. TYPES OF MATERIALS

The following is a presentation of the various types of materials the Library shall acquire as well as additional criteria that must be considered.

1. Books and other print materials

The content of a work as a whole and without regard to the personal history of the author will be the basis for individual title selection. In no case will any item be included or excluded merely because of the race, nationality, political or religious views of the author. Books and other materials may be excluded on the basis of cost, availability elsewhere, slight demand, and lack of adequate reviews. Serious works of high quality, which deal with a subject or aspect of life honestly and fairly, are not to be excluded on the basis of course or explicit language or frankness of expression. The liability of certain materials to mutilation or theft may affect their selection or purchase. Large print books for adults are purchased by the Covington County Library System and borrowed on extended loan from the Mississippi Library Commission.

The following criteria for print materials are to be considered:

1. Non-fiction: Accuracy and reliability of information presented, quality of writing, cost, format, amount of material already available on the subject in the library collection, suitability of material to needs within the community, social significance, timeliness and permanence.
2. Reference Materials: Basis of authority, cost, treatment of subject, existing holdings, format, scope and usage.
3. Fiction: Standards are the same as those of non-fiction with representation of all styles and types of writing to provide reading for recreation and leisure of patrons.
4. Children's Collection: Fiction materials that offer adventures in good reading for the growing child, that cultivate an appreciation for both prose and poetry, and that encourage reading as a creative use of leisure time. Children's non-fiction should meet the same criteria as adult non-fiction.
5. Periodicals: A basic collection of popular magazines will be selected to supplement the book collection.

2. Nonprint materials

Various types of non-print materials are important as a supplement to the Library's book collection. The following criteria will be used in selecting non-book materials:

1. Video and audio: Content, educational value, classic entertainment value, skill and social teaching materials will be bought whenever cost does not prohibit.

2. Electronic formats: Currently the Library provides access to the Internet at all three branches. The Internet provides an enormous supplement to the information and entertainment desires in a community; however, the Library acknowledges that it has no power to control the Internet. Each branch will strive to "bookmark" reputable sites so that patrons can feel that the information provided by the librarians is authoritative. Through the MAGNOLIA Project, funded by the Mississippi Legislature beginning in 1997, all libraries have access to thousands of magazines and scholarly journals through the Internet. The librarians responsible for selection of materials will also consider for purchase appropriate, authoritative, and reasonably priced CD-ROMs and online databases. Inclusion in consortiums with other libraries or sharing of databases will be considered.

D. WEEDING THE COLLECTION

Due to limited funding, the Library does not automatically replace all materials withdrawn because of loss, damage, or wear. The Libraries adhere to the CREW method of weeding. The need for replacement is weighed with regard to number of duplicate copies, existing holdings, later and/or more authoritative materials, and current demand for the particular subject area or title. To maintain effective library service and provide patrons with the best available collection, the Library will systematically remove materials that are no longer useful. The Library will use the following discard policy in weeding the collection.

Material will be discarded or withdrawn when it is determined to be:

1. Superfluous: Duplicates; unsolicited and unusable gifts; unused, unneeded volumes or sets.
2. In poor condition: Worn, irreparable, missing pages, brittle paper, defaced.
3. Obsolete: Contains information that is outdated, misleading, inaccurate, or superseded.
4. Unused: No checkout of materials in a three-year period. Shelf space is valuable and books can be borrowed through interlibrary loan as needed.

If books and other materials purchased or donated in memoriam are found to be superfluous, in poor condition, obsolete, and/or unused, these items are subject to removal from the collection.

E. CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS

The Library does not practice censorship. Materials that present all points of view will be selected whenever cost and availability are not factors.

Patrons requesting titles and/or materials not included in the collection are encouraged to request what they want to fill their needs. Selection of materials will not be determined by pressure from any groups or individuals. The Library ascribes to all aspects of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights (see Appendices) as well as to the ALA Council's statement on Freedom to Read (See Appendices).

F. RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

If a patron objects to any library material, the Library Director should establish the specific nature of the objection with the patron. If the patron wishes to have the material formally reconsidered with respect to its place and purpose in the collection, the Library Director should:

1. Provide the patron with a copy of the Materials Selection Policy.
2. Provide a Patron's Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form if, after reading the Materials Selection Policy, the patron still wishes to register a formal complaint.
3. Assure the patron that the material will be reviewed by the Library Director and the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
4. Notify the patron that he/she will receive a letter from the Library Director describing the results of this review of material. (See Appendices)

SECTION IV: EQUIPMENT DISPOSAL POLICY

Equipment is defined as anything, other than collection materials, listed in the physical inventory (i.e., desks, major computer components, telephones, etc.)

Equipment is disposed of when it is: irreparably damaged/broken; obsolete; unusable; or of no intrinsic value to the Library System.

Equipment falling into any of the categories above will be disposed of at the discretion of the Library Director and carried out on the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Redundant equipment will be reported to the Library Board of Trustees at regularly scheduled meetings and will be recorded in Library Board of Trustees meeting minutes.

Equipment will be disposed of in accordance with Mississippi State Law as described in Sections 19-7-5 and 39-3-17 of the Mississippi Code of 1972.

SECTION V. PERSONNEL POLICIES

A. GENERAL POLICIES

1. Equal Employment Opportunity

It is the Library's policy to provide equal opportunity in employment for all individuals regardless of race, color, creed, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, or political affiliation.

2. Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)

The Library only hires persons who are legally authorized to work in the United States. IRCA requires employers to verify the employment eligibility of all new employees. Employees must complete an I-9 form within three (3) days of starting to work. This form is used to verify identity and authorization to work.

3. Mississippi Employment Protection Act

Pursuant to *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated*, Section 71-11-3, the Library participates in E-Verify, the federal government's voluntary employment verification program. The Library is registered for and utilizes the Department of Homeland Security's E-Verify System by submitting social security numbers of new hires to verify their immigration status and employment eligibility. The E-Verify program is used to verify new hires only after an I-9 form has been completed. The program does not pre-screen applicants or re-verify the employment eligibility of current employees.

B. CLASSIFICATION OF POSITIONS

Currently the Covington County Library System recognizes the positions listed below:

Library Director
Head of Technical Services (future position)
Technical Services Assistant (future position)
Branch Manager
Assistant Branch Manager
Branch Associate (future position)
Volunteer

C. SALARY SCHEDULES AND PAYMENT

The Board of Trustees determines salary and increments in accordance with

1. The total budget appropriate with which the library must operate in a year;
2. Job content, workload and the level of responsibility involved; and
3. Satisfactory job performance, growth, and experience within a particular job.
4. The Personnel Incentive Grant program through the Mississippi Library Commission is used for administrative salaries and to supplement salaries.

Salary payments are made by check or direct deposit on a twice monthly schedule. Deductions for federal taxes are made in accordance with federal regulations and the number of exemptions claimed and the exemption status for federal withholding.

Deductions for state taxes are based on state regulations, the dollar amount claimed as an exemption and the exemption status for state withholding. Staff members are asked to submit new forms on a yearly basis or as needed to make changes. Social Security and state retirement deductions are made in accordance with the Public Employee's Retirement System of Mississippi. Upon authorization of the staff member, deduction is also made monthly for insurance coverage, deferred compensation, state credit union, and/or other optional payroll deductions. A staff member may elect to participate in optional payroll deductions at the time of employment or during open window registration for certain benefits.

Regular staff members are paid for the time period in which they work with adjustments being made the following time period if needed, based upon time sheets submitted.

D. NEPOTISM/EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES

In compliance with *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated*, Section 25-1-53, prohibiting nepotism, the Covington County Library System will not appoint to library positions members of the families of the Library Director or the members of the Board of Trustees. Members of families include those related to the public official or trustee by blood or marriage within the third degree as computed by civil law.

The Covington County Library System will not hire relatives of a current employee or persons residing in the same household as a county library employee to work in the same branch or division as the current employee. For the purpose of this statement, relatives will be considered as: spouse, aunt or uncle; child; grandfather or grandmother; parent; grandson or granddaughter; brother or sister; stepchildren; stepbrothers/sisters; great-grandparents and grandchildren.

E. SELECTION

Selection is based solely on merit with due consideration given to educational and personal qualifications as well as training, experience, and aptitude for the position. Race, creed, sex, age, national origin, political affiliation, or marital status shall have no bearing in the consideration of a candidate. Political preferment or pressure, or the fact that the candidate is recommended by influential persons, has no weight in library appointments. Local residents are considered on the basis of their qualifications and are shown preference only when credentials warrant.

The authority and responsibility for the selection and appointment of the Library Director rests solely with the Board of Trustees, whose activities are governed by the Laws of the State of Mississippi. The Library Director shall be responsible for the selection and appointment, pending confirmation by the Board of Trustees, of all other staff positions.

The library recruits primarily at the entrance level of each class of position, but it may actively seek applicants, both internally and externally, for vacant positions at all levels. It is the library's policy to fill vacancies in all positions with the best-qualified people available.

When a position becomes vacant, the Library Director shall prepare a written statement containing both a job description and employment requirements concerning experience, special training, skills and/or education. The Library Director shall advertise all professional positions in any or all of the following places: staff memorandums, local newspapers, library website; bulletins in library facilities; publications of the Mississippi Library Commission (MLC); online job page of the MLC; placement offices of graduate schools of library science; and professional journals. Non-professional positions shall be advertised in any of the following: by staff memorandums, library website, bulletins in library facilities, various listservs, and local newspapers.

Applicants will be screened through interviews, examinations, appraisal of the information contained in the application for employment, reference inquiries and other measures of ability as may be considered appropriate.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the library will not discriminate against qualified persons regardless of their disability with regard to job application procedures, the hiring, advancement, or discharge of employees, employee compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. The library will reasonably accommodate the disabilities of qualified applicants or employees unless undue hardship would result. As the library promotes a drug-free work environment, any individuals who engage in the illegal use of drugs or individuals currently using alcohol or drugs will not be covered by this compliance.

Rejection of applicants may include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. They do not meet minimum qualifications;
2. The application contains a false statement;
3. They are addicted to the use of narcotics or intoxicants;
4. They are not physically able to perform required duties; and
5. They are not 18 years of age.

F. APPOINTMENT

All staff appointments are made by the Library Director, under authority vested in him/her by the Board of Trustees. All staff appointments are confirmed by the Board of Trustees. All pertinent information, including applicant skills, references and interview questions/answers will be presented to the Board to aid in the final decision.

The Library Director will notify a successful candidate by letter which shall include the job title, the place of work, the job description, the name and title of the candidate's immediate supervisor, the terms of salary and probation and a request for a written acceptance of the position to be addressed to the Library Director. This letter shall also contain the Employer At-Will Statement. Such acceptance on the part of the employee is in the nature of a contract and carries with it a moral obligation to abide by the terms specified in the letter.

All unsuccessful candidates shall be notified in writing of a negative decision.

New staff members will be given a copy of the policy manual and shall be asked to read it and sign that they have done so during the first six weeks of employment. If there is an offense, employees will be requested to re-read the manual.

G. TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Employment with the Covington County Library System is expected to be a long and rewarding experience. All new employees are considered probationary for the first six months. It is recognized that circumstances change with the passage of time and that some employees may seek job opportunities elsewhere or choose to leave for other reasons. Others may not fulfill the operational needs of the Covington County Library System or changed circumstances may reduce available employment opportunities, either of which may result in involuntary termination. It is sincerely hoped that none of these situations occur, but realistically it must be acknowledged that the possibility does exist. Therefore, the right of the employee of the Covington County Library System to terminate the employment relationship "at will" is recognized and affirmed as a condition of employment. It is also the right of the employer, the Covington County Library System, to terminate the employment relationship "at will." This does not represent a departure from policy and is only referred to here so that there are no misunderstandings.

All staff members must complete state and federal withholding forms, and must present their Social Security card in accordance with FICA regulations. All staff members who work 20 hours or more a week and are not full time students must fill out application forms for the Public Employees Retirement System of Mississippi.

All staff members shall furnish necessary documentation to conform to the Department of Immigration requirements and sign the I-9 form.

All staff members must acknowledge receipt of an adherence to the policy concerning Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988.

All staff members must acknowledge receipt of and adherence to Covington County Library System policies by signing that they have read same. The Director will meet with each new employee to discuss policies and procedures and to get forms filled out on the first day of employment.

H. PROBATIONARY PERIOD

All staff members are on probation during the **first six months** regardless of position or salary. This probationary period is the final phase of the appointment process for all employee appointments. It is used by library administration to determine the probationary employee's capabilities, compatibility with staff and organization, and adjustment to the philosophy of the library system. During the probationary period, new staff members are trained for effective performance on the job.

A probationary employee whose performance, attitude, or personal philosophy of public service does not meet the standards, requirements, and philosophy of service of the

Covington County Library System may be dismissed at any time during the probationary period without right of appeal or hearing.

Termination may be initiated by either party during the probationary period for any reason or for no reason.

Each new staff member and each staff member in a new position is appraised by the immediate supervisor after three (3) months of employment. This appraisal of strengths and weaknesses of the performance on the job is discussed by the new staff member and the supervisor. The supervisor will report the substance of the evaluation to the Library Director. The probationary employee should then work to correct any deficiencies prior to the next appraisal while maintaining his/her strengths. At the end of the probationary period, employees may be recommended for permanent employment, for dismissal, or for an extension of the probationary period not to exceed an additional three (3) months.

Probationary employees are eligible to receive all employee benefits as set forth in these personnel policies during the probationary period. However, during the probationary period the employee will not be eligible for the same raises as permanent employees.

After the completion of the probationary period, the employment (but not necessarily the job assignment) of the staff member is considered to be continuous and permanent as long as performance evaluations are satisfactory and as long as funding permits.

I. WORKING CONDITIONS

1. Work Environment

The Library provides staff members with a work site and equipment necessary to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of each position. The Library also provides a work environment free of safety hazards. Any condition in the work environment which prevents a staff member from performing effectively should be reported to the immediate supervisor.

The Library provides a work environment free from sexual harassment, political influence, coercion, and drugs.

2. Work Week

Full-time staff members work forty (40) hours per week. Full-time staff members may be required to work evening hours and/or Saturdays as part of their regular schedule. The staff member's own time is allowed for lunch, and staff members are required to take the allotted time. Part-time staff members' hours are determined by the work load and/or the open hours of the library branch. Part-time staff members may be required to work evening hours and/or Saturdays as part of their regular schedule. In the absence of the Branch Manager, the Library Director will attempt to send a staff member from another location to fill in. On occasion the replacement staff member may need to change his/her schedule to fill in and then be off so that his/her hours do not exceed their normal schedule. These extra hours are not to exceed forty (40) hours for full-time positions and twenty (20) hours for part-time positions. No employee may work more than forty (40) hours per week without permission from the Library Director.

3. Work Breaks

A staff member may take a rest period not to exceed a maximum of fifteen (15) minutes per each four (4) hours worked. The purpose of a work break is to provide a short relaxation period enabling staff members to perform their work more effectively. Break periods may not be combined. Break periods may not be added to meal time or taken to leave early or to make up lost time. Meal times vary based on the operational hours of the library branch. For those with nine (9) hour schedules, a lunch break of one hour is permitted. For those with 8.5 hour schedules, a thirty (30) minute lunch is permitted. For those working at least six (6) hours, a thirty (30) minute lunch is permitted. Those working less than six hours may take a fifteen (15) minute break.

4. Overtime

Under ordinary circumstances, staff members will not be expected to work overtime. Under emergency circumstances, unusually heavy workloads, and during leave periods, staff members may be asked to work overtime. Any full-time (40 hours per week) employee required to work more than his/her regularly scheduled work week will be compensated in compensatory time leave. (See Compensatory Time Leave)

5. Drug Free Work Environment

In compliance with the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Covington County Library System has adopted the following policy:

All employees must sign an agreement stating that they agree to the following:

"The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace. Use of alcohol or unlawful possession of controlled substances while on the job constitutes a Third Group Offense. This offense is of such serious nature that first occurrence may result in suspension without pay up to thirty (30) days or DISMISSAL."

In further compliance with the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, the following procedure must be followed:

1. Employee will abide by the Drug Free Workplace Agreement.
2. Employee must notify the immediate supervisor of any criminal drug statute conviction for violation occurring in the workplace no later than five (5) days following such conviction.
3. Immediate supervisor must notify the Library Director within ten (10) days after receiving notice from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction.
4. The Library Director shall take appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination OR require such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a Federal, State, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency. The rehabilitation program will be paid for by the employee with the approval of the Library Director and the Board of Trustees. Accumulated annual leave, accumulated sick leave, or leave without pay may be used for such rehabilitation purposes.
5. Upon completion of rehabilitation, the employee must furnish the Library Director and/or Board of Trustees with certification of having satisfactorily completed a drug-rehabilitation program.

6. If the employee does not satisfactorily complete such rehabilitation program, the Library Director and/or Board of Trustees shall terminate the employment.

J. PROMOTIONS AND TRANSFERS

When vacancies occur it is the Library's policy to evaluate staff members for possible promotion or transfer. However, the Library is also free to seek candidates from other sources in an effort to ensure that the vacancy is filled by the best qualified person available. Request for promotion or transfer should be submitted in writing to the Library Director.

Promotions are based upon evidence of satisfactory performance, promise of future development, and educational, technical and personal qualifications. Staff members who obtain higher degrees are not automatically guaranteed promotion or salary increases. Length of service, unaccompanied by efficiency and interest in work is a reason against, rather than in favor of, promotion. Seniority is a determining factor only when two or more candidates have equal qualifications. Promotions are provisional for one year, permanent appointment to the higher grade being dependent upon satisfactory service during this year.

Under no condition should it be assumed that promotion is automatic.

Transfers are changes in assignment in which the job level and salary rate remain the same. Transfers are made for the good of library service and the development of staff member potential.

When a vacancy occurs, an assistant may be asked to serve as "acting branch manager" until someone can be hired. This does not indicate any job favoritism nor does it guarantee the assistant the job of branch manager.

K. BENEFITS

1. Insurance (Health, and Life)

a. Health Insurance

All Covington County Library System employees who are working in positions of twenty (20) hours or more weekly are eligible for enrollment in the State and School Employees' Health Insurance Plan. The Library pays the entire premium for "Select" health insurance coverage for all eligible active employees hired before January 1, 2006, as a Legacy Employee. The Library pays the entire premium for "Base" health insurance coverage for all eligible active employees hired after January 1, 2006, as a Horizon Employee. Additional coverage is available for staff member's spouse and/or dependent children with the staff member paying 100% of the additional premium cost through payroll deduction. Employees working less than twenty (20) hours per week do not receive the benefit of health insurance.

Eligible staff members who do not join the group insurance plan at the time of employment must sign a waiver stating that he/she does not choose to be covered. The

staff member may join at a later date but will be subjected to a medical questionnaire and pre-existing conditions may be exempted from coverage.

Insurance deductibles are for the calendar year. Each employee may fill out new application forms in October to make changes in their insurance. Application forms are available from Library Administration.

Staff members who leave the employment of Covington County Library System may, under certain conditions, convert or continue group insurance under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). The employee must apply directly to the health insurance company and assume all costs. Additional information regarding this limited, extended coverage is available from Library Administration.

b. Life Insurance

Life Insurance and Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) insurance is available to Library employees who work twenty (20) or more hours per week. An employee's group term life insurance amount is equal to two times his/her annual salary, then rounded up to the next highest thousand. The minimum amount of life insurance is \$30,000 and the maximum amount is \$100,000. The Covington County Library System pays half the monthly premium for full-time (forty hour per week) employees and the employee is responsible for paying the other half.

2. Social Security

Every employee of the Covington County Library System is required by law to participate in the Federal Social Security program. Both the employer and the employee contribute an equal percentage of wages to the individual's account, which can be drawn upon at retirement, or with certain disabilities. Information regarding Social Security can be obtained from Library Administration or the area Social Security office.

3. Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi (PERS)

All employees working twenty (20) hours or more per week, unless full-time students, are required to participate in the Public Employees Retirement System of Mississippi with employer and employee each paying a percentage of the cost. Employees may not enter membership in the system if they are over 60 years of age when first employed in a position covered by the system. Employees working less than twenty (20) hours a week do not receive the benefit of PERS.

It is the employee's responsibility to notify the Retirement System when he/she desires to make application for retirement. This should be done approximately two months before the termination date of employment or as soon as possible after the employee determines his/her inability to continue employment.

No maximum accumulation limits exist for sick leave. Unused leave for which an employee is not compensated upon termination or retirement shall be transferred and certified by the employee's agency to the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) and be counted by PERS as creditable service for the purpose of the retirement system. In computing unused leave for creditable service, twenty-one (21) days of unused leave shall constitute one (1) month of creditable service and in no case shall credit be allowed

for any period of unused leave of less than fifteen (15) days. In order to receive creditable service for the months of unused leave, the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) must receive certification of such leave balances from the governing authority of the employee's agency.

Upon termination of employment, other than retirement, the employee has the option of leaving his/her money on deposit with the retirement fund or withdrawing such monies. A "Termination Request" is available from Library Administration if withdrawal of monies is desired.

For further information please contact:
Public Employees Retirement System of Mississippi
429 Mississippi Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39201-1097
Phone: (601) 359-3589

4. Deferred Compensation Program

All members of the Mississippi Public Employees Retirement System are eligible for participation in a deferred compensation plan. This plan allows employees to set aside a portion of their salary which will be invested and receive its value upon retirement. The amount of current earnings deferred will not be considered as income for tax purposes until its value is paid as provided in the plan. At that time, it will be taxable as ordinary income. Earnings may be removed from this plan based on certain guidelines. Application should be made through Library Administration.

5. Holidays

In accordance with the legal holidays of the State of Mississippi, as listed in Section 3-3-7 of the Code, Annotated, and based on library usage during holidays, Covington County Library System observes the following holidays upon which all libraries are closed:

New Year's Day	(January 1)
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	(3rd Monday in January)
President's Day	(3rd Monday in February)
Confederate Memorial Day	(last Monday in April)
Memorial Day	(last Monday in May)
Independence Day	(July 4th)
Labor Day	(first Monday in September)
Veterans' or Armistice Day	(November 11)
Thanksgiving Day	(fourth Thursday in November)
Christmas Day	(December 25)

Holidays which fall upon a Saturday will be taken on Friday; holidays which fall upon a Sunday will be taken the following Monday.

Staff Members receive their regular pay for the designated holiday if the designated holiday falls upon a regularly scheduled workday. If a holiday falls on a day not regularly scheduled as a workday for an employee, holiday pay will not be received, i.e., if an

employee is not normally scheduled to work on Thursdays, then holiday pay for Thanksgiving is not granted that employee. Employees working less than 20 hours a week do not receive the benefit of holiday pay.

Holidays falling during a vacation period are not counted against annual leave.

The Governor of Mississippi has the authority to, and does occasionally grant state employees additional holidays (i.e., the governor may grant Christmas Eve as a paid holiday). Covington County Library System will observe the above holidays and will be notified of any special called holidays. Staff members will be notified of any special called holidays and closing schedules as soon as possible by the Library Director.

In the event that a staff member has already planned annual leave in conjunction with a scheduled holiday and a special called holiday is observed, the called holiday may be observed in lieu of using annual leave.

6. Workers' Compensation

All Library employees are covered by the Mississippi Workers' Compensation Law, *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated*, Section 71-3-1-35, which provides certain benefits in the event an employee suffers a work-related injury or illness. In case of a work-related fatality, the law guarantees payment of benefits to the spouse and dependents of the deceased.

Workers' Compensation benefits are provided at no cost to the employee or dependents. For injury/illness, benefits may include payment of all reasonable and necessary medical expenses, as well as partial compensation for wages lost due to the injury or illness. In certain cases, vocational rehabilitation may also be available.

Wage-loss benefits for injury/illness are not paid for the first five (5) days of disability unless the disability extends fourteen (14) more days. These benefits are payable at the rate of two-thirds of the employee's average weekly wage. These benefits may also be subject to a weekly maximum set by law.

Workers' Compensation claims are time-sensitive. If an employee is injured, no matter how minor the injury, he/she should report the injury to his/her supervisor immediately. Reports must be filed with Library Administration within 24 hours. It is not necessary that the employee seek medical attention immediately, only that the report be filed in case of later complications.

If an employee is receiving Workers' Compensation, he/she may also request available sick and/or annual leave to cover portions of absences not paid by Workers' Compensation. Requests for such leave will be granted in accordance with provisions contained in those policies.

7. Approved Library Travel

Official Library System business travel includes, but is not limited to, branch managers meetings, in-house staff development, outside workshops, conferences, and promotional

presentations. Official Library System business travel does not include travel to and from staff's place of work, whether the place of work is their regularly assigned branch, or a temporarily assigned branch.

8. Reimbursement of expenses

Insofar as the Library System budget permits, the Board of Trustees will approve reimbursement of expenses incurred by the System's staff members, or Board members as follows:

1. Transportation: The mileage reimbursement rate is set by the Board of Trustees at the beginning of each fiscal year, and is based on the currently established state mileage reimbursement rate. When personal vehicles are used, staff members are encouraged to car-pool whenever possible.
2. Registration: The Library System will reimburse the lowest possible registration fee (early registration or member registration, for example).
3. Meals: The Library System will reimburse expenses for meals in accordance with the laws of the State of Mississippi.
4. Lodging: The Library System will reimburse expense for lodging at the single room rate.

A signed Mileage Reimbursement form (See Appendices) and copies of supporting documentation (registration forms, receipts, etc.) must be submitted to the Library Director for reimbursement. The Library System will not reimburse a staff member without proper documentation.

Section 25-3-41, *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated*, as amended, regulates travel reimbursement rates for all public officials, including county elected officials and employees. That section also requires the Department of Finance and Administration to set the maximum expenditures for meal reimbursement. The Library System will reimburse based on the Department of Finance and Administration rates at the time of travel and according to state and federal regulations.

Staff members will not be reimbursed for meals unless there is an overnight stay involved. The amount of reimbursement shall be determined by state and federal regulations and at those rates set by the Department of Finance and Administration, provided that the cost does not exceed maximum daily expenditures.

Any fees charged for attending the official meetings of a convention, seminar or similar convocation where the meeting includes a meal are excluded from the maximum daily expenditures above. However, claims for reimbursement for these fees must be supported by a receipt if these fees cause the total daily reimbursement claimed for meals to exceed the maximum daily expenditures set above.

High-cost areas are those cities outside the State of Mississippi designated in the Federal Register as having a prescribed maximum per diem daily rate of \$75.00 or higher. The Department of Finance and Administration, Bureau of Financial Control authorizes the reimbursement of actual meal costs in those cities on a sliding scale not to exceed the rates set by these agencies.

L. EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES AND CONDUCT

1. Attendance at Work and Meetings

Employees are expected to report to work and leave work at the time designated for their schedules. Frequent or habitual tardiness or absence is unfair to other employees and will not be tolerated.

Attendance at staff and Branch Managers meetings is mandatory. These meetings provide a forum where staff can share ideas, discuss professional issues, explore new trends, and discuss Library System policy, operations, and procedures. They foster open communication which is critical to the success of the Library System. Staff can participate in these meetings by submitting discussion items for the agendas. Documentation of non-attendance will be made a part of a staff member's personnel records. Failure to attend a meeting or to notify the Branch Manager or Library Director will result in disciplinary action.

Attendance at any meeting or event where staff members act on behalf of the Library System to inform the public of library resources, programming, or services is a valid instance of official Library System business. Examples of promotional presentations include, but are not limited to, SRP (summer reading program) promotions, local club presentations, school visits, and Library System representation at community events. The Library Director must authorize the participation prior to a staff member's involvement.

2. Attitude Toward the Public

The primary duty of the Library is to serve the public. All patrons, regardless of sex, race, creed, or age, are to be given the same standards of service. All contacts with the public are to be handled in a courteous and business-like manner. Serving the patron is the Library's first priority; staff members should never ignore a patron in order to complete other tasks.

All staff members are public relations representatives of the Library. Accuracy, courtesy, and good taste are expected in your dealings with the public and with other staff members. Rudeness or loss of temper is never permitted. At all times staff members must show respect and regard for the reputation of the Library and fellow workers.

As a tax-supported institution, all activities of the library are motivated by the idea of public service. Paramount in the staff member's mind should be that he/she is a public employee and that the operation of the library in providing quality services, insofar as funds permit, is his/her first concern.

3. Babysitting

Babysitting while on duty is not allowed. Babysitting applies to any person, toddler or adult, who stays at the library on a regular basis for any length of time. Staff members, volunteers, and summer workers are all expected to make arrangements for their spouses, children and/or grandchildren while they work. Staff members also should not

have to consider themselves babysitting for a child belonging to a member of the public who is doing research, etc., while in the library. Members of the public who habitually drop their children off at the library while the adult shops, runs errands, etc., should be discouraged from this activity.

4. Conflict of Interest

Library employees are expected and required to:

- Maintain the highest standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality, and conduct;
- Avoid any misconduct and/or conflicts of interest;
- Be impartial in all decision-making and not give unjustified preferences to other staff or patrons;
- Avoid using, or appearing to use, their position for personal gain (other than the remuneration received pursuant to employment) or for family members' personal gain.

No act shall be committed by an employee that could result in the questioning of the Library's integrity. Associations, dealings, relationships, or interests that could affect, or reasonably appear to affect, an employee's objectivity in performing his/her job or in making decisions required of his/her position must be avoided. Any potential conflict of interest or situation that could be reasonably viewed as a conflict of interest must be immediately reported to the immediate supervisor or Library Director.

A library employee cannot serve in elected or appointed positions that have decision-making authority over the Library. A current Library employee must immediately resign if he/she accepts an elected or appointed position of this type.

The Library recognizes the potential conflict of interest associated with employment of relatives, friends, or co-workers in a dating relationship. Potential claims of favoritism, partiality, and conflict-of-interest are detrimental to the effective operation of the Library and a violation of Library policy. The immediate supervisor or the Library Director will take prompt action to address any actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflicts of interest that arise involving employees.

Employees are not to engage in any activity in either a private or official capacity where a conflict of interest may reasonably exist. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Employees are required to comply with all state ethics laws governing conflicts of interest, *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, Section 25-4-101 et.seq.*

Solicitors, sales of tickets or chances, or circulation of petitions are prohibited in the public service areas of the Library. The Library Director may give permission for these activities if library business is involved.

5. Conversation

Conversation with patrons or fellow staff members should be kept within bounds and not become mere visiting. Loud conversations are disturbing to everyone and should, therefore, be avoided. This includes personal telephone conversations.

6. Discussion of Library Policies, Administration and Budget

Staff members may not discuss policies, administrative procedures, Library finances, etc., with the public, board members, or elected officials. Any questions regarding policy, library operations, budget, etc., should be directed to the Library Director. Public criticism of the Library, its policies, its employees or patrons is to be avoided at all times. Complaints should be channeled through established "Grievance Procedures."

7. Discussion of Patrons/Gossip

Staff members should not discuss a patron or the patron's attire or reading habits with other staff members or with other patrons. Any information about users and their reading habits is considered personal and therefore private information. Staff members should also refrain from discussing gossip with other staff or patrons, whether at work or at home and whether in person or on the telephone. If there is a problem with a patron, it should be discussed privately with the Library Director.

8. E-Mail

Each branch library has its own e-mail account for library-related e-mail communication only. Staff should avoid personal use of e-mail while at work. The Library Director has the authority to monitor all e-mails. Personal use of e-mail, especially if it violates library policies, may result in immediate termination of employment.

9. Endorsements and Advertisements

Advertisement of current local events should be kept on a bulletin board and thrown away after the event occurs. No political or religious event should be advertised or endorsed in the library as we are non-partisan.

10. Fees and Honorariums

Fees and honorariums for talks, lectures, workshops, etc., conducted by staff members are permitted if done on the staff member's personal time. No fee may be received by the staff member if the lecture, workshop, etc., is performed on Library time or on the Library's premises, or is sponsored by the Library, or is conducted in the name of the Library.

11. Gifts from Vendors

Any rebates, refunds, coupons, merit points, gratuities or any article of value tendered or received by any library staff member from any vendor of material supplies, equipment or other articles shall be used to the benefit of the library making the purchase. The Library may, in accordance with its best interest and with consent of the Library Director and/or the Board of Trustees, either take delivery of the article of value tendered and use the same or convert it to cash by selling it for its fair and reasonable value, making use of the proceeds from such sale for the exclusive benefit of the Library. (*Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, Section 37-7-23*)

12. Grooming and Dress

The dress and manner of the staff contributes directly to the overall image the Library projects to the community. Staff members, volunteers, and student workers including college interns, therefore, are expected to dress and conduct themselves at all times in a way suitable to the position and to the work to be performed. Careful personal hygiene is essential. Clothing should be fresh, neat, and wrinkle-free. Extremes should be avoided. Within this code there is room for the expression of individual taste and fashion. Specifically forbidden are the following:

- Political buttons, armbands or slogans
- Shorts or skorts
- Tank tops, halter tops, bandau tops, spaghetti straps
- Frayed or ragged or faded clothing and clothes with holes or stains
- Pants with beltline worn below the waist
- Sweatpants, wind suits and other athletic wear
- Visible midriffs
- See-through clothing, low-cut clothing and micro skirts
- Flip-flops and dirty, tattered sneakers
- Conspicuous tattoos and/or body piercing other than earrings
- Clothing with cartoons, advertisements, slogans, etc., except CCLS-approved logo
- Tights worn as slacks
- Visible undergarments

"Business casual" is the expected attire and is defined in the recommended dress styles listed below:

- Professional-looking blouses, shirts, turtlenecks or silk tops, with or without tie
- "Dressy" trousers, "tailored" jeans
- Skirts or dresses
- Leather shoes or clean, neat athletic shoes
- Jackets or vests
- Work smocks with CCLS logo and/or staff member name
- Hair kept neat

Fridays and Saturdays are OPTIONAL "dress down" days in which tee shirts and sweat shirts with CCLS logo or library/read logos can be worn with pants or jeans; however, once again, these tops and pants must follow acceptable rules in that they are clean and neat, not wrinkled, not frayed or ragged, displaying holes or stains.

Summer Reading Program tee shirts and good jeans or pants are acceptable on the day the branch holds its program.

Personal hygiene and attention to hair are still important even if "dress down" Friday and Saturday is observed.

13. Harassment

The Library is committed to a professional workplace, free from adverse working conditions and all forms of harassment. Harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability and/or age, and is strictly prohibited.

Harassment includes unwelcome conduct by supervisors or co-workers that is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive. The Library also strictly prohibits harassment of individuals in retaliation for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or lawsuit concerning a discrimination claim. The Library's prohibition against harassment includes, but is not limited to, remarks, slurs, epithets, gestures, physical contact, threats, display or circulation of written or electronic materials, pictures or objects derogatory to any person based on the characteristics listed above. The Library strictly forbids this type of behavior. Such will not be tolerated at any level of the organization.

The Library specifically acknowledges that sexual harassment is a form of discriminatory harassment and is strictly prohibited. Sexual harassment, which may consist of requests for sexual favors, unwelcome sexual advances, threats, actual bodily contact or other deliberate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature from coworkers and patrons, will not be tolerated, especially where the offending employee is in a position to affect the compensation or employment status of the person being harassed.

All employees are encouraged to report unwelcome, harassing conduct to any Library employee, the Library Director and/or Board of Trustees. The Library expressly prohibits any unwelcome harassing conduct and will take appropriate steps to prevent and promptly correct such conduct.

14. Participation in Organizations/Professional Development

Library staff members are urged to become members of civic, educational, or professional organizations, and to participate in these organizations' activities to as great an extent as library duties will permit. The Library covers membership dues for professional staff only in the Mississippi Library Association, the American Library Association or other professional associations.

Staff members are encouraged to attend job-related meetings, workshops, and library events appropriate to their job duties such as the Children's BookFest, the Mississippi Library Association Annual Conference, or the Society of Mississippi Archivists Annual Conference. Staff members wishing to attend meetings or conferences sponsored by a library or professional library organization should make application to the Library Director. Priority in attendance will be given to: 1) Board members, 2) the Library Director, 3) professional staff members, and 4) other staff members. Staff members are considered to be in work status while attending such meetings and may be reimbursed for reasonable registration and travel expenses. Travel expenses are based on state rates of reimbursement.

Professional development activities of branch employees are reported to the Library Director to be placed in the staff member's personnel file. It is the responsibility of the

Library Manager to see that all professional development is reported. Staff members are encouraged to also maintain a personal file of all professional development participation.

15. Personal Business

Staff members are expected to be meticulous in avoiding any careless or personal use of library time or property. Such personal use of library time and property includes, but is not limited to:

- * conducting personal business on library time
- * unauthorized use of stamps, supplies or equipment

Staff members are also expected to avoid conducting personal business while at work, for it creates an unprofessional impression with the public and with fellow workers. In emergencies, personal mail, phone calls and visitors may be received. Cell phones should be set to silent if carried in the library and staff members should refrain from answering or talking on a cell phone while in the public areas of the library. Family and/or friends should not habitually visit employees at the library as they can distract an employee from duties. Family and/or friends waiting for a staff member at a lunch hour or at the end of the day should wait in the public area and not at the staff member's desk. Family and/or friends should not bring food to the library to eat while waiting for the staff member. Please advise your family and friends of this regulation.

16. Policy Interpretation

Library staff members should be supportive of the policies and decisions made by the Board of Trustees. Questions concerning the basis and reasons for these policies should be referred to the Library Director and/or Board of Trustees. If a staff member has a question about policy interpretation, this question should be passed up to the Library Director through the chain of command.

17. Political Activities

Staff members may not participate in any political activity during working hours. Employees who wish to seek office may do so provided they shall not campaign during working hours. An employee may expect to work in an atmosphere that is free from political influence. Political candidates are prohibited from "politicking" in the library unless part of a program in which all candidates are given the opportunity to participate and patrons are given the opportunity NOT to participate. The Library wishes to provide an atmosphere free of political influence for patrons.

18. Punctuality

Staff members are expected to report to work on schedule and to adhere to the limits on breaks and lunchtime. If a staff member is going to be late for work or late returning from lunch for any reason, that employee must call his/her immediate supervisor. Time lost cannot be made up. Habitual or excessive tardiness will be reported to the Library Director who may dock a staff member's pay or charge the lost time against annual leave.

19. Reading While on Duty

Reading while on duty is limited to professional periodicals, book reviews, dust jackets, etc. A staff member may also be assigned to scan local newspapers for press recognition. The patron expects the staff to be familiar with the book collection, but the major portion of personal staff reading should be done during off-duty hours, i.e., leisure reading materials such as fiction or magazines.

20. Relationships With Other Staff

All employees should maintain a courteous and cooperative attitude toward other employees. Because of the importance of open communications and fair dealings, Covington County Library System is committed to an "Open Door Policy" which means any staff member may request a meeting with the Library Director to discuss issues. Because of respect for individuals and the strong desire to assist each other, we must talk with one another to get answers to questions, to communicate and to resolve problems.

It is always best to start with your immediate supervisor. Between the two of you, nearly all problems or misunderstandings can be resolved quickly. If you have difficulty communicating with your immediate supervisor, you are encouraged to contact the Library Director. Remember, it is our intent to communicate sincerely and honestly with each other at all times. Please exercise this right and obligation.

21. Salesmen and Canvassers

Salesmen, solicitors, and persons circulating petitions should be asked to see staff members outside the Library unless library matters are involved. Petitions are not to be left in the Library for gathering signatures. The Library prohibits solicitation in the Library so as to provide an atmosphere free of influence or coercion. Proselytizing, politicking, selling merchandise, tickets or chances of any kind in the library is prohibited unless conducted by the Friends of the Library and/or is approved by the Board of Trustees.

22. Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in library buildings including bathrooms or near patron entrances.

23. Time Sheets

In order to insure that a staff member receives due compensation, each member of the staff keeps a daily record of the time worked on a time sheet. This records the time the employee works as well as leave and holiday time, making a complete record of the working time for each person. At the end of the pay period, the employee signs the time sheet attesting to the accuracy of the entries and gives it to their supervisor who signs it and forwards it to the Library Director's office.

Any emergency closing should be indicated on the time sheets.

Any deliberate misrepresentation on the time sheet will result in disciplinary action against the responsible party.

24. Telephone Calls/Mobile Phones

Telephones are provided to conduct library business and are designated for the public's use in calling the library. Personal telephone calls are disruptive to the flow of work, inconsiderate of fellow workers, and poor public relations. Personal telephone calls and personal conversations will be made and received only in case of emergency. Emergency personal telephone calls should be kept as brief as possible. Family and friends should be advised of this policy.

Employees may not charge personal telephone calls to the library.

Cell phones may be carried by employees but must be silenced while in the public areas. Cell phones should not be answered or used in the public areas, including circulation, stacks, and children's areas. Excessive use of cell phones during the workday will not be tolerated.

25. Use of Computers and Internet Policy

Each person employed by the Library shall acknowledge and comply with the Computer and Internet Policy that governs the use of all computers, computer-based communications networks, and all related equipment. The electronic communications and facility of the Library are government property and by using these facilities, the user acknowledges consent to abide by library policies.

No communications or uses of the information systems resources are to be considered private or confidential and use of such systems may be monitored at any time. The Library prohibits the use of these technology resources in any manner which is disruptive, offensive, harmful to morale, and unethical or illegal under state and/or federal laws. It is the responsibility of each employee and volunteer to use these resources in a responsible, courteous manner following accepted standards of behavior and etiquette.

All e-mail, instant messaging or other communication composed, transmitted, or received via the Library's computers is considered to be part of the official records of the Library. As such, the information may be subject to disclosure to public records requests or law enforcement agencies should circumstances arise that require such action.

Any employee or volunteer found violating this policy may be restricted from, or denied, use of the information technology resources of the Library. If an employee or volunteer is found committing unlawful activities, the appropriate law enforcement agency/agencies will be notified.

26. Work Performance

A full day's work is expected for a day's pay. Employees are expected to apply themselves to assigned duties for which they are being compensated. Carelessness

which results in mistakes, slowness which results in tasks left undone, etc., places an unjust burden on fellow workers and detracts from the quality of library service given to the public. Staff members owe the library, the public, and fellow workers a full day's work of the best quality of which they are capable. Planned absences are to be arranged in advance and unexpected absences are to be reported promptly.

M. TYPES OF TIME AWAY FROM JOB (LEAVE)

1. General Laws and Statements

Effective August 15, 2011, Covington County Library System adopted the leave policies in accordance with the laws of the State of Mississippi. These laws are found in 25-3-61 through Section 25-3-101 of the *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated* and updated.

For purposes of annual leave, sick leave or death in the family, the State of Mississippi defines immediate family as: spouse, parent, step-parent, sibling, child, step-child, grandchild, grandparent, son or daughter-in-law, mother or father-in-law, or brother or sister-in-law.

Holiday pay, PERS (retirement), annual leave, and sick leave are benefits accruing only to permanent employees and temporary employees working twenty (20) or more hours per week.

All leave requests should be submitted to the immediate supervisor as soon as possible on the "Application for Leave" form. It is understood that, if the immediate supervisor has granted leave, that supervisor has made prior arrangements to ensure that the Library branch is staffed adequately to allow the leave. Appeals to the Library Director and/or Board of Trustees for issues dealing with leaves of absence should follow approved grievance procedures.

In accordance with Section 25-3-97 of the *Mississippi Code*, upon termination of employment, an employee who has given proper notice shall be paid up to a maximum of thirty (30) days annual leave. Any employee whose position is covered by State Retirement may request that any annual leave in excess of thirty (30) days be credited to his/her State Retirement. Employees who are dismissed for misconduct or insubordination are not entitled to an annual leave allowance.

No payment for accrued sick leave will be made except to an employee who presents medical evidence that his/her physical condition is such that he/she can no longer work. He/she may be paid for not more than one hundred twenty (120) days of earned sick leave. Any employee whose position is covered by State Retirement may request that any accrued sick leave above fifteen (15) days be credited to his/her State Retirement.

Should an employee die having accumulated annual leave, the wages or salary which would have been paid to such employee during his leave shall be paid to the person designated as "next of kin."

2. Family Medical Leave Act of 1993

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was enacted into law on February 5, 1993, and took effect August 5, 1993.

The FMLA entitles eligible employees (employees who have been employed by the state for at least a total of twelve (12) months and have worked for at least 1,250 hours over the prior 12 months) to take up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a 12-month period for specified family and medical reasons:

- Birth of a child and to care for the newborn child
- Adoption or foster care of a newly placed child
- Care of an immediate family member with a serious health condition
- A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform one or more of the essential functions of his/her job.

The law also makes it unlawful for any state agency to discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by the Act or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to the Act. Further, the appointing authority shall not interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of, or the attempt to exercise any right provided under the Act.

The employee must provide written notice setting forth the reasons for the requested leave, the anticipated duration of the leave, and the anticipated start date. If the request is for care of a seriously ill immediate family member or due to the employee's own serious health condition, the Library Director will require a doctor's letter.

The FMLA does not affect any other federal or state law that prohibits discrimination and does not supersede any state or local law which provides greater and more generous leave rights.

During FMLA, the employee is expected to continue to pay all voluntary deductions that are normally taken from his/her paycheck.

If any employee does not choose to substitute accrued paid leave, the agency may require him/her to do so.

3. Annual Leave

Annual leave is provided for the specific purpose of allowing a staff member a period of rest and recreation and thereby increasing his/her efficiency and fitting them for their duties. Annual leave is credited to employees monthly after the completion of each month of service. The Library Director cannot increase the accrual rate of annual leave in an amount greater than was earned and accumulated by the staff member. No annual leave may be requested until it is earned.

Accrued annual leave can be carried over to the next fiscal year. There will be a limit of 240 hours of accumulated annual leave. Any staff reaching that amount **should** take enough annual leave time off to keep the amount below 240 hours. However, staff members may not take more than the accumulated total of leave hours as leave.

Annual leave should be requested on the "Application for Leave" form. All requests for leave must be approved in advance by the immediate supervisor. If more than one day is being taken, the form should be sent to the Library Director at least one week in advance if possible. So far as possible, annual leave will be arranged in accordance with the staff member's request, subject to the needs of the library and fairness to other staff members.

No annual leave shall be taken during established library program times, such as summer reading or National Library Week.

In accordance with Section 25-3-93 of the *Mississippi Code*, full-time (40 hours per week) employees will earn leave based on the following scale:

<u>Continuous Service</u>	<u>Accrual Rate (monthly)</u>	<u>(yearly)</u>
1 month - 3 years	12 hours	18 days
37 months - 8 years	14 hours	21 days
97 months - 15 years	16 hours	24 days
Over 15 years	18 hours	27 days

Employees of the Pine Forest Regional Library System who were hired into the newly-created Covington County Library System in August 2011 will be considered as having continuous service since the beginning of their employment with Pine Forest Regional Library System for the purpose of determining annual leave with Covington County Library System. (The reasoning is that these employees were considered as separated by RIF-Reduction in Force-at Pine Forest Regional Library System, Pine Forest having no other jobs to assign these employees to. State of Mississippi employees who are RIFs and who go to work with another state agency get to keep certain benefits. Among them is the credit for annual leave accrued.) All other employees hired into Covington County Library System will be considered as new employees for the purpose of accruing annual leave.

Annual leave for employees working less than forty (40) hours per week will earn leave based on the following scale:

<u>Hours Worked/Week</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>20</u>
1 month - 3 years	11	9	8	8	6
37 months - 8 years	13	11	10	9	7
97 months - 15 years	16	14	13	11	9

Formula: Number of hours worked per week divided by 40 will equal what percentage of 40 those hours represent. The percentage is then multiplied times the number of hours allotted for a normal 40 hour week. This figure is the number of hours accrued in one

month. To find the yearly accrual rate, multiply the monthly figure by 12. Round all figures to the nearest hour.

Maximum annual leave hours that employees can take each fiscal year (October - September):

<u>Hours Worked/Week</u>	<u>Maximum Leave per Fiscal Year</u>
40 hours	240 hours
36 hours	216 hours
30 hours	180 hours
28 hours	168 hours
21 hours	126 hours
20 hours	120 hours
15 hours	90 hours
12 hours	72 hours

If an employee exhausts all annual leave for a fiscal year, it is not to be assumed that leave without pay will be automatically granted (see "Leave Without Pay").

4. Sick Leave

Staff members may use sick leave for illness, injury, exposure to contagious disease which could be communicated to other staff members, or because of illness or injury in the employee's immediate family. The first day of sick leave must be charged against annual leave.

Any combination of annual leave, sick leave, or leave without pay which results in an absence of more than three (3) days of regular scheduled workdays will need a written doctor's verification. Sick leave may be used to cover regularly scheduled visits to a doctor's office or a hospital for the continuing treatment of recurring illnesses.

A staff member may use up to three (3) days of earned sick leave in any fiscal year because of a death in the immediate family. Three (3) days of sick leave may be used for the death of each immediate family member.

In accordance with Section 25-3-95 of the *Mississippi Code*, full-time employees (40 hours per week) will accrue sick leave as follows:

<u>Continuous Service</u>	<u>Accrual Rate (monthly)</u>
1 month - 3 years	8 hours
37 months - 8 years	7 hours
97 months - 15 years	6 hours
Over 15 years	5 hours

To figure annual accrual rate, multiple monthly accrual rate by 12 months.

There shall be no limit to sick leave accumulation.

Sick leave for part-time employees is in accordance with the number of hours worked per week. Part-time employees will accrue sick leave as follows:

Hours Worked per week: <u>Continuous Service</u>	36	30	28	20
	<u>Accrual Rate (monthly)</u>			
1 month - 3 years	7	6	6	4
37 months - 8 years	6	5	5	4
97 months - 15 years	5	5	4	3
Over 15 years	5	4	4	3

Formula: Number of hours worked per week divided by 40 will equal what percentage is then multiplied times the number of hours allotted for a normal 40 hour week (i.e., 8 hours for those up to three (3) years employment). This figure is the number of hours accrued in one month. To find the yearly accrual rate, multiply the monthly figure by 12. Round all figures to the nearest hour.

For each absence due to illness of thirty-two (32) consecutive working days (combined annual leave and sick leave), sick leave shall be authorized only when certified by a medical doctor.

Staff members should submit an "Application for Leave" form whenever he/she knows sick leave is needed. When a staff member becomes ill and cannot report to work, he/she should arrange for coverage of position and should call the immediate supervisor or Library Director on or before his/her regularly scheduled work time. Preferably the staff member should contact the immediate supervisor or Library Director as soon as possible to allow for coverage of the branch.

If a staff member is ill and has no sick leave accumulated, time off will be leave without pay unless annual leave is available. If an employee exhausts all sick leave and annual leave for a fiscal year, it is not to be assumed that leave without pay will automatically be granted.

5. Administrative Leave

Employees may be granted administrative leave with pay. For the purposes of this section, "administrative leave" means discretionary leave with pay, other than personal leave or major medical leave. The Director may grant administrative leave to any employee serving as a witness or juror or party litigant, as verified by the clerk of the court, in addition to any fees paid for such services, and such services or necessary appearance in any court shall not be counted as personal leave.

6. Compensatory Time Leave

In certain circumstances, when Library operations cannot be fulfilled during regular working hours by staff, employees may be required to work in excess of normal working hours. When possible, advance notification of these assignments will be provided. All overtime worked must first be authorized by the Director. The Library will comply with all requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Compensatory time leave is paid time off the job that is earned and accrued by an employee instead of immediate cash payment for working overtime hours. Certain executive, administrative and professional positions may be designated by the Director with the approval of the Library Administrative Board of Trustees as exempt for the requirements of the FLSA.

Exempt staff earn compensatory leave time on an hour for hour basis, to be taken at any time. Non-exempt staff earn compensatory leave time at the rate of 1 1/2 hour for each hour worked. Non-exempt staff may not accrue comp time beyond one pay period; their time must be taken within the pay period it was earned. Compensatory time should be taken before sick or annual leave.

7. Deaths (in the Family and others)

An employee may use up to three (3) days of earned major medical (sick) leave for each occurrence of death in the immediate family requiring the employee's absence from work. The immediate family is defined as spouse, parent, step-parent, sibling, child, step-child, grandchild, grandparent, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, or sister-in-law. Child means a biological, adopted or foster child, or a child for whom the individual stands or stood in loco parentis.

When a death occurs, the employee should notify the Library Director as soon as possible and make arrangements for his/her position to be covered. The employee's time sheet should indicate that there was a death in the family.

In the event that the death is a current or former staff member, library board member, or city/county official, no time will be charged against leave time. The Library Director may close a library for a funeral depending upon the circumstances.

8. Emergency/Disaster Leave

The Library Director and Board of Trustees is authorized to close any or all libraries in the event of an emergency/disaster. During the period of emergency/disaster, all salaried employees will be paid their regular rate. Salaries during this emergency/disaster period may be ended by the Board of Trustees if, in their judgment, the length of time is an extreme financial burden to the Library system. The Library Director can also assign employees to other branch libraries or agencies if the emergency/disaster is lengthy and assistance is needed to serve the public at other locations.

9. Jury/Court Witness

In accordance with Section 25-3-92(1) of the *Mississippi Code*, staff members who are called to serve as a witness or juror or party litigant, as verified by the Clerk of the Court, shall be granted administrative leave for such duty.

10. Leave without Pay

Staff members may be granted leave without pay, if their absence can be covered by another staff member. Requests for leave without pay should be made to the Library Director in writing at least two weeks before time is to be taken. All leave without pay, except military duty, is considered individually and must be approved by the Library Director. Leave without pay may be used for professional purposes, maternity, adoption, illness or travel. While on leave without pay, the employee is not entitled to accrue annual leave, sick leave, or holiday pay. The Library Director has the authority to deny staff member's request for leave without pay if past abuse has been established or if library service would be affected adversely. In accordance with Section 25-3-61 of the *Mississippi Code*, employees can only use a total of three (3) months of leave without pay during the fiscal year. An employee must pay his/her own health insurance for this period unless the employee is entitled under the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993.

11. Leave for Religious Holidays

Upon arrangement with the Library Director, staff members belonging to any recognized national or international religious faith have the right to take up to a maximum of two (2) days of annual leave any calendar year to observe internationally and/or nationally recognized religious holidays such as Good Friday or Yom Kipper.

12. Maternity/Paternity Leave

No uniform period of absence for pregnancy shall be required. The amount of leave necessary shall be determined by the staff member's doctor. A staff member who becomes pregnant will be granted accrued sick and annual leave. At her request, she may also be granted leave without pay to be taken before or after childbirth. Total leave time should not exceed three (3) calendar months. At the end of this period, she may be reinstated in her former position or separated from service at her request.

Any male employee may request paternity leave following the same guidelines as the maternity leave.

The Covington County Library System administers maternity/paternity leave under the guidelines provided through the Family Medical Leave Act of 1993.

13. Military Duty

In accordance with Section 33-1-21 of the *Mississippi Code*, staff members who are members of the Armed Forces of the United States are entitled to leave for up to fifteen (15) working days in any one (1) fiscal year if they are required to perform military service. If the pay for military duty is more than the pay that would have been received for the time worked for the Covington County Library System, the staff member will be given the option of either using paid annual leave or time off without pay. A copy of the

staff member's military orders should be submitted to the Library Director and an "Application for Leave" form filed.

Staff members are granted a leave of absence without pay when they enlist or are drafted into the Armed Forces of the United States. A staff member on military leave who receives an honorable discharge and who applies for reinstatement within ninety (90) days of his/her release from active duty is entitled to reinstatement to his/her position or to a position of like seniority, status, and pay. Staff members returning from military service will be returned with the same privileges that would have been accorded them had they continued in their position, such as sick leave and annual leave accumulated and unused at the time of entrance into the military, adjustments in salary schedules, and opportunity for consideration for promotions which the staff member might have received had service been uninterrupted. A copy of the staff member's discharge or release paper should be submitted to the Library Director.

Employees requesting leave when ordered to military duty in excess of the fifteen (15) days allowed by law are entitled to leaves of absence from their respective duties without loss of time, annual leave, or efficiency rating until relieved from duty. If approved by the Library Director, the additional time needed may be charged against personal or compensatory leave, or leave without pay. The Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Act (USERRA) of 1994, a federal law, required employers to allow up to five (5) years of leave to a soldier who leaves employment to perform military duty, performs that duty satisfactorily, and requests his or her job back within the statutory time limits. The soldier must be reemployed without regard to whether the military duty was voluntary or involuntary.

14. Unauthorized Leave

Unauthorized leave will be without pay and subject to disciplinary action. An absence of two (2) consecutive days without authorization will be considered a resignation.

N. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND REVIEW PROCESS

1. Job Descriptions

Each Library position has a written job description that focuses on the essential functions of the job. The job description includes (1) position title and general summary, (2) key responsibilities, (3) core competencies, (4) working conditions, and (5) physical demands.

2. Appraisal and review

Formal staff evaluations will be done every three (3) months after employment during the first year and thereafter once a year. All employees must meet established performance standards. A performance appraisal is done to improve the quality and quantity of service, develop employee skills, motivate better performance, and increase communication between management and staff members. The Performance Appraisal and Review Process may be used to identify employees for salary increases/promotion, training and retention, or separation on the basis of performance or conduct.

These formal evaluations are the responsibility of the immediate supervisor and the Library Director. At the beginning of the appraisal period, the employee is given the job description for his/her position along with specific performance standards for those duties. Performance appraisals are administered in a fair and consistent manner, reviewing the employee's job performance during the entire appraisal period.

The employee and the immediate supervisor and/or Library Director will discuss the appraisal, identifying areas of positive contribution as well as those of deficient work performance and needed improvement. The employee will be given an opportunity to ask questions or make comments, after which the appraisal will be signed by the staff member and the immediate supervisor and/or Library Director. The appraisal will be placed in the staff member's personnel file. Appraisals may be seen upon request at any time by the person rated or by administrative personnel. Personnel appraisals are confidential and are not to be discussed with other employees. Each staff member shall be furnished with a copy of their performance appraisal.

The evaluation of the Library Director is the sole responsibility of the Library Board of Trustees.

O. DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

The Library is committed to ensuring fair treatment of all employees. Disciplinary action shall be applied in steps of increasing severity whenever practical in order to stimulate a change in conduct or performance. The primary purpose of any disciplinary action is to correct and prevent problems in a timely manner and prepare the offending employee for satisfactory service in the future.

If an employee exhibits unsatisfactory work performance, the supervisor should discuss the issue with the employee and document the discussion as an oral warning. If the employee continues to exhibit an unsatisfactory work performance after a verbal warning, the supervisor will need to issue the employee a written reprimand after discussing the situation with the Director. Copies of all documentation of verbal warnings and written reprimands should be sent to the Director. Upon issuance of a written reprimand, the Library Director may take disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may be taken prior to or during a probationary period.

Unauthorized absence from work, habitual or excessive tardiness, failure to attend staff meetings, or abuse of sick leave may result in the library's deducting the lost time from annual leave or docking the staff member's pay. Temporary suspension without pay (3 days for first instance and 5 days for second instance) may also be used as a disciplinary measure.

Disciplinary action may result from unsatisfactory job performance or conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the Library. Disciplinary action may be applied when any of the three categories of offenses occur.

1. Offenses

a. First Group Offenses

These offenses are less severe and will, under most circumstances, be corrected by oral and/or written reprimands. The accumulation of three (3) written notices of First Group Offenses within a twelve (12) month period will result in a suspension without pay not to exceed three (3) working days or reinstatement of the probationary period. Failure to improve performance or the receipt of a fourth written reprimand will result in dismissal.

First Group Offenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Unsatisfactory attendance or excessive tardiness;
- ii. Abuse of work time, such as unauthorized time away from work area or failure to notify immediate supervisor promptly on completion of assigned work; failure to perform routine duties relating to job specific tasks; performance of personal business or hobbies while on duty; abuse of sick leave policy;
- iii. Conviction of a traffic violation while operating a library-owned vehicle;
- iv. Failure to comply with plan for improvement after an unsatisfactory performance appraisal.

b. Second Group Offenses

Acts and behavior in this group are generally more serious than First Group Offenses. A written reprimand from the immediate supervisor or Library Director will be required for all Second Group Offenses. Disciplinary action may include (1) reinstatement of a probationary period; (2) suspension with pay; (3) suspension without pay not to exceed five (5) working days; or (4) dismissal.

Accumulation of one (1) Second Group Offense and three (3) written notices of First Group Offenses will result in dismissal.

Group Two Offenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Insubordination, including failure to follow supervisor's instructions, perform assigned work or otherwise comply with applicable established written policy;
- ii. Failure to report to work without giving proper notice to immediate supervisor;
- iii. Unauthorized use or misuse of library property or records;
- iv. Discussion of library policies, administration, personnel, or other library-related matters in a manner that is complaining, derogatory, sarcastic, etc., to the general public, board members, or to elected officials;
- v. Rude or abusive behavior toward public or library staff;
- vi. Conflict of interest, sexual harassment, or other violations of policy under "Employee Attitude and Conduct."

c. Third Group Offenses

Acts or behavior in this group are of such a serious nature that the first occurrence will result in immediate suspension without pay and/or dismissal (immediate or with notice) by the Library Director.

Group Three Offenses may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Unauthorized absence of leave in excess of two (2) days;

- ii. Reporting to work under the influence of, or when ability is impaired by, alcohol or the unlawful use of a controlled substance;
- iii. Falsification of records, such as, but not limited to, vouchers, reports, time sheets, leave records, daily financial logs, or other official library documents and/or records;
- iv. Willful or negligent defacement of library records or property, or of another employee's property;
- v. Acts of physical violence or fighting;
- vi. Unauthorized possession of or use of firearms, dangerous weapons or explosives;
- vii. Threatening or coercing employees or supervisors;
- viii. Criminal convictions for felonies or other acts of conduct occurring on or off the job which are plainly related to job performance or are of such nature that to continue the employee in the assigned position could constitute negligence in regard to the library system's duties toward the public or toward other library employees;
- ix. Engaging in prohibited political activity;
- x. Mismanagement of library funds;
- xi. Theft of library material such as books or money from fine and/or copy monies.

2. Disciplinary Actions

Authority for instituting all forms of disciplinary action related to the Library Director is vested with the Covington County Library System Board of Trustees. Authority for instituting all forms of disciplinary action related to subordinate employees is vested with the Board of Trustees and/or the Library Director. The Library Director may delegate the responsibility of implementing certain forms of disciplinary action to other administrative personnel.

The following disciplinary actions may be taken based upon an employee's offense(s):

a. Oral Warning

Oral warnings are considered to be "unofficial" disciplinary actions and are issued by an employee's immediate supervisor. The supervisor or the Library Director shall discuss the problem with the employee and ensure that the employee knows proper procedures. Oral warnings are applicable to First Group Offenses, and documentation of the oral warning shall be placed in the employee's personnel file.

b. Written Reprimand

Written reprimands are considered to be "official" warnings to an employee. They may be prepared by the immediate supervisor or by the Library Director. A copy of all written reprimands shall be filed in the employee's official personnel file. Written reprimands are applicable to First Group Offenses and to Second Group Offenses only.

c. Probation

The Library Director, with the consent of the Board of Trustees, may place an employee on a probationary status for a period of up to ninety (90) days. Benefits for which an employee is eligible shall continue during the employee's probationary period. Reasons for an employee being placed on a probationary status shall be provided to the employee in writing, along with specific corrective actions that may be needed. During this probationary period, the employee's performance will be continuously appraised. An employee shall return to normal status at the end of the probationary period if all specific corrective actions have been met.

d. Suspension with Pay

The Library Director, with the consent of the Board of Trustees, may suspend an employee with pay for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days while determining further action. "Suspension with pay" is applicable to First Group and Second Group Offenses. Employees may be suspended with pay prior to placement on probation or dismissal.

e. Suspension Without Pay

The Library Director may, with the consent of the Board of Trustees, suspend an employee without pay for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days while determining further action. "Suspension Without Pay" is applicable to Second and Third Group Offences. The reasons for the suspension shall be included in a memorandum to the Board and to the employee. A copy of the memorandum shall be placed in the employee's personnel file. The Board shall make the final decision as to whether to reinstate the employee. Employees may be suspended without pay prior to dismissal. Once placed on suspension without pay, the employee is no longer earning any paid leaves of absence or other benefits.

f. Dismissal

An employee may be terminated or dismissed from employment with the Library by the Library Director, with the consent of the Board of Trustees. The Director shall furnish the employee a written memorandum specifically setting forth the reasons for dismissal, with a copy sent to the Board Chairman. In the event an employee is terminated or dismissed, he/she is entitled to request a hearing before the Board of Trustees. (See "Appeal")

3. Appeal

The *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated*, Section 39-3-17 (3) provides that due process be given to library employees when being removed from employment for cause.

A staff member who has received such notice shall be entitled to:

- a. Written notice of the reasons for such action, together with a summary of the factual basis therefore, which notice shall be given at least five (5) days prior to any hearing;
- b. A hearing before the Board of Trustees at which to present matters relevant to the reasons given for the decision, including any explanation by the employee as to the reason for such action;
- c. Receive a fair and impartial hearing before the Board of Trustees;
- d. Be represented by legal counsel, at his/her own expense.

If the staff member does not request a hearing, the decision of the Director shall be final.

Employees may appeal all types of disciplinary action to the Board of Trustees in accordance with provisions of the Board-adopted "Grievance Procedure."

P. SEPARATION FROM SERVICE

This policy describes the library system's practices related to any separation from service. The intent of this policy is to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all employees leaving the service of the Covington County Library System.

Authority for instituting all forms of "Separation from Service" related to the Library Director is vested with the Covington County Library System's Board of Trustees. Authority for instituting all forms of "Separation from Service" related to subordinate employees is vested with the Board of Trustees and/or the Library Director. All separations from service will be reported by the Library Director to the Board of Trustees.

The appeal process applicable to "Separation from Service" actions by the Library Director and/or the System's Board of Trustees is described in "Disciplinary Action - Appeal" and/or "Grievance Procedure." These procedures have been adopted in line with the requirements of *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated*, Section 39-3-17.

1. Exit Interview

An exit interview will be conducted by the immediate supervisor for all employees leaving the service of the library system. The supervisor will complete an "Exit Interview Evaluation" form which will be forwarded to the Library Director. The form will be reviewed and filed in the employee's official personnel file.

Employees hired on a temporary basis, those who resign or quit and give no notice, and separation due to death will have no "Exit Interview Evaluation."

The exit interview serves several basic purposes:

- a. As a courtesy to the employee, promoting goodwill toward the system;

- b. As a means of conveying necessary information regarding termination benefits;
- c. As an opportunity to discover means by which the loss of a valuable employee may be avoided in the future;
- d. As a source of information dealing with the employee's attitudes and concerns;
- e. As a future job reference. (See Appendices)

2. Types of Separation from Service

a. Retirement

Retirement benefits are provided through the Public Employees' Retirement System of Mississippi for the full-time staff members, those working twenty (20) hours per week or more who are not full-time students, and those employed on a temporary basis. Voluntary retirement may occur at any time after a person reaches fifty-five (55) years of age. Additional information concerning retirement benefits is contained in the PERS Member Handbook. Information may also be obtained by calling PERS at 1-800-444-7377 or (601) 359-3589 or by visiting the PERS website at www.pers.state.ms.us.

b. Resignation

This shall include all separation of employees who voluntarily terminate their employment with the library system. Voluntary separation from service shall include, but not be limited to, the following: unauthorized absence of more than two days (see "Unauthorized Leave"); and employee resignation.

In order to ensure accuracy of personnel records and proper consideration for any application for re-employment with the library system, employees should notify the Library Director in writing, giving specific details of their resignation plans.

Administrative Support (Clerical and Branch Employees)

Submit a written resignation to immediate supervisor or to the Library Director at least ten (10) working days prior to the effective date.

Administrative/Professional Personnel

Submit a written resignation to Library Director at least twenty (20) working days prior to the effective date. Employees holding an ALA MLS degree should, if possible, give a longer notice.

The "effective date" of a resignation is the last day the employee will report for work.

An employee who resigns and then later returns to the staff does so as a new employee. Salary and benefits will be determined by the position accepted and not by the salary and benefits granted during any previous period of employment with the library system.

c. Reduction-in-Force (RIF)

If staff positions are eliminated as a result of library reorganization or because of insufficient funding, and the employees cannot be transferred to another position within the library system, employees will be released from service to the library by the Board of Trustees under this classification. Recall of RIF employees will be limited to those who, in the opinion of the Library Director, are able to perform the work in a satisfactory manner.

Reduction-in-Force due to periods of emergencies/disasters (see personnel policy dealing with "Emergency/Disaster Leave") are considered temporary layoffs if this period is not expected to exceed thirty (30) days. Salaries may be ended by the Board of Trustees. If, in the judgment of the Board of Trustees, employees will be returned to their former positions within thirty (30) days, the library system will continue to pay the employer's share of health insurance for those employees who wish to continue in the group plan. In addition, all eligible employees will continue to accrue sick leave and annual leave. Payment for this annual leave will be made to the employee in the event that recall does not occur within thirty (30) days after layoff.

d. Death

This shall include all separations of employees whose service is broken by death while on the active payroll. Upon the death of an employee, final payment of wages will be made to the estate of the deceased employee.

e. Release

A probationary employee whose performance, attitude, or personal philosophy of public library service does not meet the standards, requirements, and philosophy of the Covington County Library System may be released from service by the Library Director at any time during the probationary period without the right of appeal or hearing.

f. Dismissal Resulting from Disciplinary Action

The *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated* and Updated, Section 39-3-17 (3), provides that due process be given to library employees when being removed from employment for cause. See description of the appeal process under "Disciplinary Action - Appeal."

3. Payment to Separated Employees

Employees separated from service to the Library system shall be paid through the last day worked in addition to payment of earned but unused and unpaid annual leave. However, if the employee does not work the entire 10 days (clerical and branch employees) or 20 days (administrative/professional personnel) as described above under "Resignation," that employee will forfeit the entire earned, but unused and unpaid annual leave accumulated, even if that amount of annual leave is greater than the 10 or 20 days notice required.

Final payment is generally made the next pay period, unless time worked falls in two different pay periods. In this case, final payment is made in the payroll after the final pay period.

Q. DEMOTIONS

A permanent employee may be demoted because of inadequate performance, disciplinary reasons, a reduction in force, or a voluntary demotion. A written notice of demotion and the reasons for the action will be given to the employee at least ten (10) working days prior to the effective date of the demotion. The employee is given an opportunity for a conference with the Library Director and an opportunity to respond in writing to the action.

1. Demotion Because of Inadequate Performance

An employee may be assigned to a lower position, initiated by the Library Director, because that employee has displayed an inability to adapt to job requirements. The employee's salary is determined by the employee's experience applicable to the new position. Demotion to a previously held position will not result in a lower salary than that held by the employee while employed in that position.

2. Disciplinary Demotion

A demotion for just cause may be made to reduce the salary of an employee by twenty percent (20%).

3. Reduction-in-Force Demotion

An employee may be offered a lower position as a result of a reduction in force necessitated by economic condition, reorganization, lack of work, and/or job abolition. If library management must consider several employees in the same classification for reduction in force demotion, lowest tenured employees will always be demoted first.

4. Voluntary Demotion

An employee may be assigned to a lower position when the demotion is initiated by the employee. The same criteria applies for voluntary demotions that apply for demotions because of inadequate performance.

R. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Board of Trustees of the Covington County Library System guarantees to all staff members fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of employment. From time to time misunderstandings and problems arise in any organization. It is the intent of this policy to serve as a means for a peaceful settlement of all disputes that arise as expeditiously as possible.

A grievance is an allegation by an employee that there has been a breach, misinterpretation, or improper application of policy, practices, or procedure; or an

arbitrary or discriminatory application of terms and conditions of employment. The content of the policy, the content of the annual budget, organization structure, the establishment and revision of salaried, position classifications, benefits, and other responsibilities of the Board of Trustees as outlined in the *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated and Undated*, Section 39-5-15, are not issues subject to the grievance procedure.

It is the policy of the library to assure to every employee an opportunity to have the unobstructed use of this grievance procedure without fear of reprisal or without prejudice in any manner to employment status.

Step 1:

- A. Employee must identify the complaint verbally to immediate supervisor within five (5) days of becoming aware of the cause of the complaint.
- B. Immediate supervisor has five (5) working days from date of initial discussion before orally informing employee of his/her decision.

Step 2:

- A. If not satisfied with the Step 1 decision, the employee advances his/her written complaint to the Library Director within three (3) working days following receipt of the Step 1 supervisor's response.
- B. The Library Director is required to meet with the complainant employee within three (3) working days. Copies of the employee's complaint and the Library Director's response are put on file.
- C. The Library Director is required to give the complainant employee a written response within three (3) working days. Copies of the employee's complaint and the Library Director's response are put on file.

Step 3:

- A. If the Step 2 written response is not acceptable to the employee, the employee should specify in writing his/her desire to advance the complaint to the Board of Trustees for the Board's consideration. This must be done within three (3) working days of the employee's receipt of the Library Director's response.
- B. The Board of Trustees will meet with the Library Director and the complainant employee within twenty (20) calendar days after receipt of the written complaint. The employee may have a representative of his/her choice and the appropriate witnesses present at this meeting. The Board will respond with a written decision within five (5) working days.

SECTION VI. APPENDICES

Covington County Library System Computer & Internet Policy
Collins, Mississippi
August 3, 2012

a. Computer and Internet Use by Patrons

CCLS provides computer and Internet access privileges to library patrons. Internet access expands and enhances the Library's existing collections by providing additional informational, educational, leisure, and cultural resources. A library patron should have read and signed an Internet agreement form when registering for a library card. Library staff is available for general assistance in using the computers. However, staff time cannot be used to train patrons in the use of computer programs.

- ~ Computers are checked out to a library patron on a first-come, first served basis for a thirty-minute (30) session. If there is no patron waiting for the service at the end of a session, the patron may have another session.
- ~ No child under the age of five (5) is allowed to use a networked computer.
- ~ Children ages 5-17 have the same right to use public computers as adults. However, children ages 12 and under must be supervised by a parent or guardian.
- ~ Staff reserves the right to remove anyone who is violating the Library's code of conduct.
- ~ Parents are responsible for supervising children who use computers. Also, children may not be left unattended while the parent uses the computer.
- ~ Computer users are permitted to use mass storage devices or diskettes or may purchase diskettes from the library. Because of viruses and copyright and licensing laws, users are not permitted to download materials to library computers.
- ~ Computer users shall not alter computer configurations and shall not deliberately or willfully cause damage to computer equipment, programs, or parameters.
- ~ If a library patron or the patron's child should damage, through abuse or misuse, the hardware or software of library computers, the patron will be responsible for any repairs or replacement.
- ~ Printouts from the computer are available for twenty-five (25) cents per page. Printouts made in error are the responsibility of the patron.
- ~ Online class work is permitted, but the Library cannot guarantee that a computer will be available for specific coursework timeframes.
- ~ Per Mississippi Code of 1972, Section 97-5-29, it is illegal to publicly display graphic, obscene, or pornographic materials.
- ~ Computer users are expected to follow copyright laws and all other applicable laws and regulations and shall respect the privacy of others and the rules of network etiquette.

b. Consequences of Policy Violations

Any violation of these policies, laws, rules and regulations will result in the suspension or revocation of Internet use privileges. A first violation will result in the termination of the patron's current computer session. A second violation will result in the permanent suspension of the patron's computer/Internet privileges. Any and all computer and/or Internet policy violations are documented in the patron's record file or on an incident form should the user be a guest. Unlawful activities on the Library's computers will be dealt with in accordance with local, state and federal laws

c. Children Internet Protection Act Compliant

The Covington County Library System provides Internet filtering in compliance with the Child Internet Protection Act. However, Internet filters are not failsafe. The Covington County Library System does not monitor, nor does it have control over, the information accessed on the Internet. The Library System cannot be held responsible for Internet content, and assumes no responsibility for the quality, accuracy or currency of any Internet resource. The Internet allows users to connect to networks and resource databases not selected or reviewed by the Library. The Internet can contain material of a controversial nature, which some may deem inappropriate for themselves or their children. All users need to be aware that some content available on the Internet can contain material that is illegal, defamatory, potentially offensive, and/or disturbing to other library users. All users are responsible for their and their children's Internet use.

d. Adoption

Notice was given that the Covington County Library System would hold a public meeting on the Internet Safety Policy on August 3, 2012 during the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees adopted this Internet Safety Policy on February 3, 2012. The policy was amended and adopted following that public meeting on **August 3, 2012**.

Safe Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy

Our Safe Child Rules and Expectations

We want the Covington County Library System to be a welcoming, safe place for your children. Our staff has many duties to perform in order to serve all customers in the best way possible. For this reason, the staff cannot monitor the whereabouts or behaviors of our youngest patrons – your children. Staff cannot assume the responsibility of your children's care when they are in the library. No public place, including the library, can guarantee the safety of children. A child could be approached by a stranger, become ill, wander outside, or become lost or injured. We are primarily concerned with your children's safety, and we believe that our policy helps assure their well-being.

We expect parents/caregivers to be responsible for their children's behavior in the library.

We expect parents to understand and explain the library rules to their children. The rules and policies have been developed to safeguard the collection and ensure fairness for all library users.

We expect all children under the age of 12 to be accompanied by an adult at all times while visiting the library. Children of any age with special needs which affect decision-making skills must be accompanied by a caregiver at all times. Children 12 and older may be left unattended provided they understand and follow the rules of the library.

The library in no way assumes responsibility for any child left unattended in the building. We expect all children and teens to use appropriate language and behavior in the library. Those who do not will be asked to leave.

We expect parents to set reasonable time limits for their children's library visits. Parents/caregivers must remain in the library during programs if their child is under 12 years of age.

We expect parents to let us know if they or their children are unable to find the type of material they seek. We welcome suggestions for materials that will broaden our collection and improve our services.

We expect parents to be responsible for the types of materials checked out by their children and their selection choices. The library staff does not limit choices or censor materials.

We expect parents to see that overdue fines are promptly paid. Parents are financially responsible for any damages to library materials, equipment, or property incurred by their children.

We expect parents to maintain control of their children while visiting the library—this includes times when parent/caregiver is using the computers. Please remember that the library staff's professional services do not include babysitting.

We expect parents to help their children arrive on time for programs.

We expect parents who attend children's programming with their children to demonstrate good listening habits.

We expect parents/caregivers of children between the ages of 12 and 15 to have a responsible plan for picking up children by closing time.

We expect parents to keep sick children at home and not bring them to the library, especially during children's programming when illness may easily be spread to other children.

We Care About the Safety of Your Child

A parent/caregiver is defined as someone 16 years and older.

If a child under the age of 12 is found unattended while the library is open, library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the library. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, law enforcement officials will be called, and the child will be placed in their care.

Within 30 minutes of closing time, library staff will conduct a walkthrough, inside or outside the library building, to ensure children between the ages of 12 and 15 have transportation home. If necessary, library staff will assist children in calling parents/caregivers.

If a child age 12 through 15 has not been picked up by a parent/caregiver by closing time, law enforcement officials will be called, and the child will be placed in their care.

If a child age 12 through 15 is found unattended when the library is open and the child has become ill or frightened, has become disruptive and will not respond to verbal warnings from library staff, is upset because of weather conditions, long hours out of contact with the parent/caregiver, or other special circumstances, law enforcement officials may be called, and the child may be placed in their care.

After a child has been placed in the care of law enforcement personnel, the staff will leave notes about the child's whereabouts at the front desk. If after library operating hours, parents will need to contact local law enforcement. Other emergency library numbers are posted on the front door of the library.

Under no circumstances will a staff member give a child a ride home, take a child

outside the building, or remain in the building alone with an unattended child (unless only one staff member is working at a particular branch.)

Parents who disregard library policy regarding this matter may be reported to the appropriate social services agency and may lose all library privileges.

Patron Code of Conduct

The following acceptable patron behavior policy has been approved and adopted by the Covington County Library System Board of Trustees.

All library patrons are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which enables other patrons, staff and themselves to accomplish their intended library tasks in a safe and orderly atmosphere. Library staff will listen to, and respond when appropriate, to complaints voiced by patrons. Staff will take appropriate action when patron behavior causes disruption or unreasonable interference in the delivery or receipt of library services.

The library reserves the right to require anyone who engages in disruptive behavior to leave the premises, the right to restrict privileges for a specified period of time, and the right to ban the individual from the library for a specified period of time or permanently. In most cases, a staff member will notify the individual that he or she is in violation of the standards of conduct and will provide one verbal warning. Unlawful activities will be reported immediately to the police. **If police must be called to handle a disruption or violation, those involved shall not return to the library until meeting with the Covington County Library System Board of Trustees at the next designated meeting. The Board reserves the right to deny reinstatement of privileges at that time.**

Disruptive behavior includes but is not limited to the following:

Illegal Behavior. Any staff member who witnesses illegal behavior will notify his or her immediate supervisor who will contact the police when necessary. Illegal behavior includes, but is not limited to the following:

Harassment. Threatens or annoys another person by physical contact or abusive or obscene language (including inappropriate tone of voice) or follows a person in or about a public place.

Drunk and/or Disorderly Conduct. Causes public inconvenience by fighting, unreasonable noise, abusive or obscene language or gestures, threatening behavior, hazardous or physically offensive condition.

Trespass. Knowingly enters or remains unlawfully on the premises.

Theft (Larceny). Wrongfully takes, obtains, or withholds the property of another.

Criminal Mischief. Intentionally damages the property of another (includes vandalism and mutilating library materials).

Assault. Approaching someone in a threatening manner, cursing or threatening person verbally.

Battery. Intentionally or by reckless conduct causes injury to another person.

Public Lewdness. Intentionally exposes the private parts of the body in a public place.

Controlled Substances. Includes using, selling, or possessing controlled substances on library property, and entering library property while intoxicated or under the influence of illegal controlled substances. The use of alcohol is prohibited on library property.

Abusive or Obscene Language or Gestures. Includes language or gestures that convey a sexually explicit message or are conveyed in a coarse or crude manner and any language that verbally abuses another individual.

Loitering. Defined as a person who wanders around the library without apparent legitimate reason and disturbs other customers.

Cellular or Portable Telephones. Use of cellular or portable telephones by patrons is restricted to the entry corridor of each branch. If the branch does not have an entry corridor, then the caller must step outside the building. All cellular or portable telephones should have the ringer set on silent in order to not disturb other patrons.

Playing Music. Includes playing music or other media at a level that is disruptive to other customers.

Solicitation. Includes selling anything for personal gain or a charitable cause, begging, panhandling, or circulating petitions among other patrons and staff members. Public petitions may be posted on the public bulletin board.

Loud Talking and Laughing. Sensitivity to noise varies from one person or group to another; however, if one person or group is heard above the general noise level in the library at a particular time, this person or group will be asked to lower their voices.

Fighting. Includes any type of fighting, whether real or pretend.

Throwing Objects. Includes wadded up papers, paper airplanes, other small objects, and larger objects that could cause injury.

Boisterous Behavior. Includes running, horseplay, and annoying other patrons.

Smoking or Other Uses of Tobacco Products.

Eating and Drinking. Allowed in designated areas of the library, (i.e., offices, meeting rooms) and during approved library functions.

Improper Attire. Patrons must wear shoes and shirt in the library building. Inappropriate displays of underwear or skin will not be tolerated.

Abuse of Library Equipment, Furniture, and Materials. Includes, but is not limited to placing feet on tables and chairs, standing on furniture, mutilating or defacing books or periodicals, and mistreating equipment or computers. For more information on computer abuse, see the library system's *Computer and Internet Usage Policies*.

Bikes, Rollerblades, Skateboards, and Scooters. Must not be ridden anywhere in the library or on library property including parking lots.

Blocking Aisles or Doorways. Includes obstructing aisles or doorways or in any way interfering with the free movement of any other persons.

Weapons. Carrying weapons of any type on library property is not permissible except by law enforcement officers.

Removing Library Materials or Equipment. Staff members must check out all circulating materials and equipment at the circulation desk before they can be removed from library property.

Excessive Displays of Affection. Includes any sexual conduct or physical

contact deemed inappropriate for a public place.

Hygiene. A person may be required to leave the library if his/her personal hygiene interferes with the orderly operation of the library or with the ability of other patrons to use and enjoy the facility.

Animals. Animals of any kind are prohibited unless serving as an aide animal or part of a library-sponsored program.

Unattended Children. A parent, guardian, or other responsible adult must accompany children under the age of 12 at all times in the library. Children may not be left unattended while parents/guardians use computers or browse the library. We do not consider older siblings to be appropriate caretakers of young children. If older children are being disruptive, staff may ask the parent/guardian to attend to them. For more information, see the library's *Safe Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy*.

Misuse of Restroom. This includes but is not limited to bathing, changing clothes, and bringing library materials into the restroom

Privacy Statement

I. Introduction

Privacy is essential to the exercise of free speech, free thought and free association. In this library the right to privacy is the right to open inquiry without having the subject of one's interest examined or scrutinized by others. Confidentiality exists when a library is in possession of personally identifiable information about users and keeps that information private on their behalf.

The courts have upheld the right to privacy based on the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution. Pursuant to the Mississippi Code of 1972 Annotated:

§ 39-3-365. Confidentiality of library user records.

Records maintained by any library funded in whole or in part by public funds, which contain information relating to the identity of a library user, relative to the user's use of books or other materials at the library, shall be confidential. Such records may only be released with the express written permission of the respective library user or as the result of a court order.

Sources: Laws, 1992, ch. 521, § 1, eff from and after July 1, 1992.

Numerous decisions in case law have defined and extended rights to privacy. This library's privacy and confidentiality policies are in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

User rights—as well as our institution's responsibilities—outlined here are based in part on what are known in the United States as the five "Fair Information Practice Principles." These five principles outline the rights of Notice, Choice, Access, Security, and Enforcement.

Our commitment to your privacy and confidentiality has deep roots not only law but also in the ethics and practices of librarianship. In accordance with the American Library Association's Code of Ethics:

"We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired, or transmitted."

II. Covington County Library System's Commitment to Our Users Rights of Privacy and Confidentiality

Notice and Openness

Your records are strictly confidential. Our system does not retain records of your previous materials checkouts. In all cases we avoid creating unnecessary records, we avoid retaining records not needed for the fulfillment of the mission of the library and we do not engage in practices that might place information on public view.

We do not ask for, nor do we keep, social security numbers on file.

Information we may gather and retain about current and valid users include user registration information, overdue fines, lost materials and circulations statistics.

We only give information about an account or check out materials if a library card is presented.

Your hold items will check out only to your card. If you want a friend or family member to pick up your hold items, be sure to give him or her, your card.

We give your hold/reserve information only to you. Specific details on your hold items will not be given to your answering machine, roommate or anyone else. You may call your branch library or log into your account online to get the titles, if you miss our call.

Someone else may pay your fines, but specific information will not be given to them. If someone returns or renews an overdue item for you, he or she may pay the fine, but your account history will not be disclosed.

Children's records are equally protected under state law. We ask parents to use the child's library card when checking out, renewing or paying fines on the items for their child.

Although your library account is protected from others, you can access information about it in a variety of ways.

Safeguard your card. Report any loss or theft of your card to the Library immediately.

Choice and Consent

This policy explains our information practices and the choices you can make about the way the library collects and uses information. We will not collect or retain your private and personally identifiable information, we will keep it confidential and will not sell, license or disclose personal information to any third

party without your consent, unless we are compelled to do so under the law or to comply with a court order.

If you wish to receive borrowing privileges, we must obtain certain information about you in order to provide you with a library account, including your name, phone number, and email address. When you apply and provide proof of your identity and address, you are accepting responsibility for you or your child's library materials.

We never use or share the personally identifiable information provided to us online in ways unrelated to the ones described above without also providing you an opportunity to prohibit such unrelated uses, unless we are compelled to do so, under the law or to comply with a court order.

Access by Users

Individuals who use library services that require the function and process of personally identifiable information are entitled to view and/or update their information. You either view or update your personal information online or in person. In both instances, you will be asked to provide a library card or card to ensure verification of identity.

The purpose of accessing and updating your personally identifiable information is to ensure that library operations can function properly. Such functions may include notification of overdue items, recalls, reminders, etc. The library will explain the process of accessing or updating your information so that all personally identifiable information is accurate and up to date.

Data Integrity & Security

Data Integrity: The data we collect and maintain at the library must be accurate and secure. We take reasonable steps to assure data integrity, including: using only reputable sources of data; providing our users access to your own personally identifiable data; updating data whenever possible' utilizing middleware authentication systems that authorize use without requiring personally identifiable information; destroying untimely data or converting it to anonymous form.

Data Retention: We protect personally identifiable information from unauthorized disclosure once it is no longer needed to manage library services.

Tracking Users: We remove links between patron records and materials borrowed when items are returned and we delete records as soon as the original purpose for data collection has been satisfied. We permit in-house access to information in all formats without creating a data trail. Our library has invested in

appropriate technology to protect security of any personally identifiable information while it is in the library's custody and we ensure that aggregate, summary data is stripped of personally identifiable information. We do not ask library visitors or Website users to identify themselves or reveal any personal information unless they are borrowing materials, requesting special services, registering for programs or classes, or making remote use from outside the library of those portions of the Library's Web site restricted to registered borrowers under license agreements or other special arrangements. We discourage users from choosing passwords or PINS that could reveal identity, including social security numbers. We regularly remove cookies, Web history, cached files, or other computer and Internet use records and other software code that is placed on our computers or networks.

Third Party Security: We ensure that our library's contracts, licenses, and offsite computer service arrangements reflect our policies and legal obligations concerning user privacy and confidentiality. Should a third party require access to our users' personally identifiable information, our agreements address appropriate restrictions on the use, aggregation, dissemination, and sale of that information, particularly information about minors. In circumstances in which there is a risk that personally identifiable information may be disclosed, we will warn our users. When connecting to license databases outside the library, we release only information that authenticates users as "members of our community." Nevertheless, we advise users of the limits to library privacy protection when accessing remote sites.

Cookies: Users of networked computers will need to enable cookies in order to access a number of resources available through the library. A cookie is a small file sent to the browser by a Website each time that site is visited. Cookies are stored on the user's computer and can potentially transmit personal information. Cookies are often used to remember information about preferences and pages visited. You can refuse to accept cookies, can disable cookies, and remove cookies from your hard drive. Our Library servers use cookies solely to verify that a person is an authorized user in order to allow access to licensed library resources and to customize Web pages to that user's specification. Cookies sent by our Library servers will disappear when the user's computer is logged off. We will not share cookies information with external third parties.

Security Measures: Our security measures involve both managerial and technical policies and procedures to protect against loss and the unauthorized access, destruction, use, or disclosure of the data. Our managerial measures include internal organizational procedures that limit access to data and ensure that those individuals with access do not utilize the data for unauthorized purposes. Our technical security measures to prevent unauthorized access include encryption in the transmission and storage of data; limits on access

through use of passwords; and storage of data on secure servers or firewalled computers.

Staff Access to Personal Data: We permit only authorized Library staff with assigned confidential passwords to access personal data stored in the Library's computer system for the purpose of performing library work. We will not disclose any personal data we collect from you to any other party except where required by law or to fulfill an individual user's service request. The Library does not sell or lease users' personal information to companies, universities or individuals.

Enforcement & Redress

Our library will not share data on individuals with third parties unless required by law. We conduct regular privacy audits in order to ensure that all library programs and services are enforcing our privacy policy. Library users who have questions, concerns or complaints about the library's handling of their privacy and confidentiality rights should file written comments with Director of the Library. We will respond in a timely manner and may conduct a privacy investigation or review of policy and procedures.

We authorize only the Library Director to receive or comply with requests from law enforcement officers; we confer with our legal counsel before determining the proper response. We will not make library records available to any agency of state, federal, or local government unless a subpoena, warrant, court order or other investigatory document is issued by a court of competent jurisdiction that show good cause and is in proper form. We have trained all library staff and volunteers to refer any law enforcement inquiries to library administrators.

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Incident Report

**COVINGTON COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
VOLUNTEER RELEASE FORM**

I agree to work as a volunteer for the Covington County Library System. By signing this document, I acknowledge the following:

1. I will not be compensated in any form for my work as a volunteer;
2. I will not be entitled to any benefits offered to the regular employees of the Covington County Library System;
3. I understand that the library system does not provide liability insurance coverage for any volunteers and that I am responsible for my own insurance coverage.

As a volunteer, I agree not to perform any activities unless they are authorized by the Branch Manager of the location where I am volunteering. I also commit to work the times decided upon by mutual agreement between the Branch Manager and myself and to contact the Branch Manager if I am providentially hindered from working at any expected time.

Please check one of the following:

Friends Group Member _____

Programming Helper _____

Library Supporter _____

Other Organization Member _____
(list name of organization: _____)

Signature _____ Date _____

Print name _____

Branch Location _____ Date _____

Branch Manager Signature _____

Director's Initials (for approval) _____

Freedom To Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

Covington County Library System
Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Title: _____

Author: _____ Publisher: _____

This is a: ____book ____magazine ____recording ____movie ____other: _____

Request initiated by (your name): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Do you represent?

____ yourself

____ an organization (name): _____

____ other group (name): _____

1. To what in the work do you object (please be specific; cite page numbers):
2. Did you read/view/listen to the entire work? ____yes ____no
If not, which parts have you read/viewed/listened to?
3. What do you feel might be the result of reading/viewing/listening to this work?
4. For what age group would you recommend this work?
5. What do you believe is the theme of this work?
6. Are you aware of judgments of this work by literary critics? _____
7. What would you like the library to do about this work?
8. In its place, what work would you recommend that would convey as valuable as a picture and perspective of the subject treated.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Covington County Library System Exit Interview

Name of Employee:

Branch Name:

Why have you decided to leave CCLS?

Was a single event responsible for your decision to leave?

What does your new company offer that encouraged you to accept their offer and leave CCLS?

What do you value about CCLS?

Covington County Library System Exit Interview

What did you dislike about CCLS?

What could your supervisor do to improve his or her management style and skill?

What would you recommend to help us create a better workplace?

Can you offer any other comments that will enable us to understand why you are leaving, how we can improve, and what we can do to become a better library system?

This document is to be placed and maintained in the former employee's personnel file upon completion.

Employee to Complete

Name of Employee: _____

Date: _____

- () 1. Keys Returned
- () 2. Name Badge Returned
- () 3. Employee Handbook Returned
- () 4. Library Record Cleared
- () 5. Separation Notice Completed
- () 6. Personal Items Retrieved
- () 7. Correct Address and Telephone Number Verified
- () 8. Final Paycheck: _____ Mailed _____ Picked Up
- () 9. Leave Remaining:
 - a. Medical: _____
 - b. Personal: _____
- () 10. Post-Employment Forms Discussed
 - a. COBRA (Health Insurance)
 - b. PERS
 - c. Life Insurance

I understand I have an obligation to maintain the confidentiality of any Library Patron records which I may have knowledge. I also agree to refrain from discussing any Library-related business with Library Patrons.

Employee Signature

Date

This document is to be placed and maintained in the former employee's personnel file upon completion.

