



**Meherrin**  
Regional Library  
Discover. **Imagine.** Connect.

# **Policy Manual and Bylaws**

Updated March 2026

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Meherrin Regional Library Strategic Plan – Follows other appendix materials

## **1.0 Mission, Roles, and Five Year Strategic Plan**

### **1.1 Mission, Vision, Core Values**

**Mission:** The mission of Meherrin Regional Library System is to serve as an essential public resource, a treasury of knowledge, providing evolving information, promoting reading, lifelong learning, and enjoyment for all.

**Vision:** Meherrin Regional Library System bridges community learning, education, opportunity and enjoyment for all.

#### **Core Values:**

- Integrity
- Diversity
- Equal Access
- Service
- Excellence
- Lifelong learning
- Growth and development
- Building relationships & partnerships
- Fun and enjoyment

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, July 13, 2005.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, October 14, 2007, October 12, 2008, and November 9, 2011.

### **1.2 Library Roles**

The Library Board of Trustees, in conjunction with survey data from the general public, has established the following roles for the Library System in order of priority:

#### **Reference Library**

The Library actively provides timely, accurate, and useful information for community residents in their pursuit of job-related and personal interests.

#### **Educational Support Center**

The Library assists students of all ages in meeting educational objectives established during their formal courses of study and their pursuits as lifelong learners.

#### **Popular Materials Library**

The Library features current, high-demand, high-interest materials in a variety of formats for persons of all ages. The library actively promotes and encourages the use of its collection.

#### **Preschoolers' Door to Learning**

The Library encourages young children to develop an interest in reading and learning through services for children, and for parents and children together.

## **Resource and Depository for Local History and Genealogy Research**

The Library actively collects and provides access to local historical archives and family history resources for Brunswick and Greenville Counties, the City of Emporia, and other related localities, whose influence or history is pertinent to the collection.

**1.3 Five Year Strategic Plan:** Adopted and amended annually (See Appendix.)

## **2.0 Library Board Bylaws**

### **A. Appointment**

Pursuant to the requirements of the general Code of Virginia, the Board of Trustees of the Meherrin Regional Library shall be appointed by the governing bodies, chosen from the citizens at large, with reference to their fitness for such office. The governing body of any county or city entitled to representation shall appoint a member to serve for a term of four years, with no more than one additional term. Vacancies shall be filled for unexpired terms as soon as possible, in the manner in which members of the Board are regularly chosen.

### **B. Compensation**

A member shall not receive a salary or other compensation for services as a member, but necessary expenses actually incurred shall be paid from the library fund.

### **C. Removal**

A member of a Library Board may be removed for misconduct or neglect of duty by the governing body making the appointment. Any board member who fails to attend two consecutive meetings without just cause shall be subject to removal from the board.

### **D. General Duties**

The general duties of the board include:

- To secure adequate funds
- To hire Library Director
- To determine library policies
- To approve expenditures of library funds
- To receive gifts to the library
- To work actively for the improvement of all libraries by supporting library legislation in the state and union
- To become familiar with the State and Federal aid programs and with state and national library standards
- To attend board meetings regularly
- To become familiar with what constitutes good library service by reading, attending library meetings and visiting other libraries
- To support the library's service program in daily contacts with the public at large

## **E. Library Director**

The Library Director shall be the executive director of the policies adopted by the board. Among his or her duties and responsibilities shall be the hiring, firing, direction and supervision of all staff members in the performance of their duties, the submission to this board of regular reports and recommendations of such policies and procedures as in the opinion of said Library Director will promote the efficiency of the library in its service to the community. The general duties of the Library Director include:

- To administer the Library
- To serve as technical advisor to the Library Board
- To hire or terminate the staff for established positions according to the recommendations of the State Library Board. The Library Director notifies the MRL Board of Trustees of all appointments and terminations
- To direct the activities of the staff
- To prepare the budget in consultation with the Library Board
- To keep financial records of the Library
- To select and purchase books, library materials, equipment and supplies
- To prepare and release library publicity
- To stimulate growth of library service
- To keep the Library Board informed about changes in library legislation and standards
- To attend library meetings
- To assume accountability for library operations as outlined in the job description of the Library Director

## **F. Meetings**

### **Date and Place**

Regular Meetings shall be held bi-monthly on the second Wednesday in the library or at such other time and place as the Board may determine. The meeting place shall alternate between the Brunswick County Library and the Richardson Memorial Library.

### **Notification**

Notices of regular meetings are sent to all members at least five days before the meeting.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, November 10, 2010.

### **Special Meetings**

Special Meetings may be held at any time at the call of the Chairman or at the call of any two members of the Board, provided that notice be given to all members of the Library Board, at least twenty-four hours in advance of the special meeting.

### **Quorum**

A quorum at any meeting shall consist of a simple majority.

## **G. Officers**

### **Election and Terms**

The officers of the Board shall be a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary. Their term of office shall be for one year, coinciding with the fiscal year, with no more than one additional term. They shall be elected at the last regular meeting in each fiscal year and shall remain in office until their successors are elected and qualified, with no more than two additional terms.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, June 22, 2011.

### **Duties**

The duties of all officers shall be such as by custom and laws devolve upon such officers in accordance with their names.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, September 13, 2001.

### **2.1 Library Board of Trustees: Creating or Amending Policies**

Because the Policy Manual and By-Laws of the Meherrin Regional Library provides legal protection and guidance for both staff and users, library policies must be written in such a way as to withstand judicial procedures and review. All policies must be valid and legally enforceable, as well as reflective and consistent with the library's mission, vision and core values.

It is recommended that all written policies be considered with respect to legality, reasonableness, non-discriminatory application, and measurability. The acceptable process for creating or amending a library policy will be as follows:

- A written policy proposal or amendment will be distributed to the Meherrin Regional Library (MRL) Board of Trustees prior to a scheduled meeting being called to order.
- At a MRL board meeting, the proposed policy will be read, discussed, and amended as recommended by the trustees.
- Approval and adoption of the policy will be determined by a motion, second, and majority vote by MRL Board of Trustees, in favor of the policy.

Upon approval of a new or amended policy, the current Chairperson of the Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees and the Library Director will sign and date a written draft of the policy. The policy will then be distributed to department heads, who will be responsible for explaining its ramifications to their staffs. The policy will be added to the Library's Policy Manual and By-Laws.

Periodic review of the Meherrin Regional Library Policy Manual and By-Laws should occur at least every three years.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, November 3, 2002.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, September 14, 2005, January 14, 2009, November 10, 2010, June 22, 2011.

### **3.0 Operating Policies**

#### **3.0.1 Hours of Operation:**

Meherrin Regional Library's normal hours of operation are as follows:

Monday 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM

Tuesday -- Friday 9:30 AM -- 5:30 PM

Saturday 9:30 AM --12:30 PM

Holidays, inclement weather, and other various events may alter this schedule. To insure prompt closure, some library services, including fax, copy, and computer access may be restricted up to 20 minutes before closing.

#### **3.1 Collection Development Policy**

##### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Meherrin Regional Library System is to serve as an essential public resource and a treasury of knowledge, providing evolving information, promoting reading, lifelong learning, and enjoyment for all.

##### **Vision Statement**

The Meherrin Regional Library System bridges community learning, education, opportunity, and enjoyment for all.

##### **Collection Development Policy Purpose**

The Collection Development Policy, approved by the Meherrin Regional Library's Board of Trustees, is a fundamental policy document of the Meherrin Regional Library System. The policy outlines the philosophies that create and shape the Library's collection, the practices that maintain it over time, and the guidelines which help the collection respond to community needs while protecting the collection from societal and political pressures. The Collection Development Policy ensures that the Meherrin Regional Library System's collection will remain on course, reflecting the needs of our communities and our mission statement.

##### **Philosophy and Collection Scope**

MRLS selects and acquires a wide variety of materials for access by all library customers. MRLS promotes equal access to all materials in our library collections. MRLS supports the guidelines established by the American Library Association in its Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and Freedom to View Statement.

The Meherrin Regional Library System collects materials, in a variety of popular formats, which support its function as a major information source for the demanding information needs of a population which contains rural, town, and city populations. The collection also serves the popular and recreational needs of the general public and reflects the ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of our communities.

Customer use and the Library's Strategic Plan are the most powerful influences on the Library's collection. Circulation, customer purchase requests, and reserve materials requests are all closely monitored. These figures may trigger the purchase of new items and additional copies of high demand items. Selections are made to provide depth and diversity of viewpoints to the existing collection and to continually strengthen the local history and genealogy collections. Inherent in the collection development philosophy is an appreciation for each customer of the Meherrin Regional Library System. The Library provides materials to support our mission and vision.

Materials for children and teens are intended to: broaden their vision; support recreational reading; encourage and facilitate literacy skills; supplement their educational needs; stimulate and widen their interests; lead to recognition and appreciation of literature; and reflect the diversity of the communities of Brunswick County, Greenville County, and the City of Emporia. The reading and viewing activity of children is ultimately the responsibility of their parents/legal guardians, who guide and oversee their own children's development. The Meherrin Regional Library System does not intrude on that relationship.

Materials and equipment for people with visual impairments, such as large print books, magnifiers, and audio books are acquired according to customer demand. The Library also encourages customers with special needs to use the resources of the Virginia Library and Resource Center, Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired.

The Library's online collection represents the diverse viewpoints and interests of our communities. This collection includes citation and full-text databases, e-books, e-audiobooks, downloadable, and streaming media, and instructional programs. Online materials are provided to the Library by regional library jurisdiction funding sources, through the Library of Virginia, and through the Library's membership in SoVALUe, Southern Virginia Libraries United Electronically.

### **Selection Criteria**

Collection development is provided by the Library Director and trained library staff members who use their training, knowledge, and expertise along with the following general criteria to select collection materials.

- Relevance to interests and needs of the community.
- Extent of publicity, critical reviews, and current or anticipated demand.
- Current or historical significance of the author or subject.
- Local significance of the author or subject.
- Relevance to the existing collection's strengths and weaknesses.
- Reputation and qualifications of the author, publisher or producer, with preference generally given to titles vetted in the editing and publishing industry.
- Suitability of format to Library circulation and use.
- Date of publication, physical durability, and quality of format.
- Price, availability and Library materials budget.

### **Customer Recommendations and Gifts**

Meherrin Regional Library System library card members may request items the Library does not own. Each request is reviewed for inclusion in the collection or for loan through the Interlibrary Loan Service. Library staff determine the best method for material delivery using the selection criteria.

Gifts to the Meherrin Regional Library System are considered on an individual basis and are added to the collection if they meet the Library's selection criteria. If gifts do not meet these criteria, they may be sold or otherwise discarded. The Library retains the right to accept or reject gifts. The Library Board of Trustees, Library Director, and designated library staff members make all decisions as to the use, housing, and final disposition of donations. The Library does not evaluate or appraise gift materials for tax purposes.

### **Reference Collection**

The Meherrin Regional Library System may choose to locate in a reference collection some items which are to remain inside the facilities. The decision to do so is based upon heavy use, cost of material, or staff need for frequent use. Selection criteria of particular importance for references sources are: accuracy; arrangement; ease of use; uniqueness of information; authority; documentation; and indexing.

### **Periodical Collection**

A collection of magazines and newspapers is maintained, both in-house for browsing purposes and online. Periodicals supplement other material types in the Meherrin Regional Library collection. Periodical selection is reviewed annually. General consideration is given to general interest appeal, preservation of a balanced viewpoint, and availability of content via online databases.

### **Local History collection**

The Meherrin Regional Library System maintains a collection of local history materials separate from the regular collections. These materials do not circulate. The collection contains information related to Brunswick County, Greenville County, the City of Emporia and selected materials relating to Virginia. The Library collects materials, both in print and non-print, which reflect the area's historical and cultural development. Information collected about contemporary times supports current library programs or services and serves as the basis for future historical research.

### **Requests for Reconsideration**

The Meherrin Regional Library System selects materials using established criteria and full consideration of the varying age groups and customer backgrounds. Requests for removal of items from the collection may be made by completing the Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form included in the Appendix of the MRLS Policy and Bylaws. For the request to be considered, the requestor must have a MRLS library card; be a resident of Brunswick, Greenville, or the City of Emporia; complete the Request for Reconsideration form; and address only materials owned by the Meherrin Regional Library.

To ensure a timely response, requestors may submit one Request for Reconsideration at a time to the Library Director. Upon receipt of a Request for Reconsideration, the Library Director with two other appropriate staff members will review the item and determine whether the item aligns with the MRLS Collection Development Policy. Once the review and decision is complete, the Library Director will respond in writing to the requestor regarding the item in question. Typical response time is within thirty business (30) days of receipt of the request, however this process may be subject to delays based on availability of the item, prioritization of other reconsideration requests, scope of the work/item, and staff availability or workload. The item will remain in the collection during the review process until a decision has been finalized. The specific item will be exempt from future requests for reconsideration for three (3) years after a decision has been made.

The Library reserves the right to seek an informal conversation (verbal or written) with patrons who express concerns about items within the library's collection before the formal Request for Reconsideration process is initiated.

The Request for Reconsideration of Library Material form is available at the public service desk of each library.

### **Collection Management**

The Meherrin Regional Library System's collection is a changing entity. As items are added, others are reviewed for their ongoing value and sometimes withdrawn from the collection. Great care is taken to retain or replace items that have enduring value to our communities. Decisions are influenced by use patterns, location capacity, and the

holdings of other libraries which may specialize in a given subject area. Library staff members review the collection regularly to maintain its vitality and usefulness to our communities.

The final authority for the Library collection rests with the Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees. Implementation of collection development policy and management of the collection is assigned to the Library Director. The Library Director designates, as needed, staff who are qualified by reason of education, training, and experience to develop selection and acquisition procedures and to make selection and withdrawal decisions. The Library Director allocates the materials budget annually.

The Meherrin Regional Library System disposes of materials which have been withdrawn according to the criteria for de-selection or weeding and withdrawal as outlined below. Items withdrawn from the Library may be sold to the public through library book-sales, through a book or auction dealer, or other method of disposal. Any proceeds from such sales are deposited into the Library's account. Other items withdrawn from the collection, but not sold or deemed too old or damaged for sale are disposed of through local recycling.

Criteria for the de-selection or weeding of particular items are listed below:

- Damaged or poor condition
- Number of copies held in the collection
- Relevance to the needs and interests of the community
- Current demand and frequency of use
- Accuracy and timeliness
- Local interest
- Relevance to the research or study needs of the community
- Availability elsewhere including other libraries or online
- Legal restrictions, possession of valid title, and donor intent
- Deemed to be of an enduring nature

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, May 13, 2015. Amended July 12, 2023.

### **3.5 Small Purchases Policy**

Any purchase of less than \$10,000 is deemed to be a "small purchase". Prior to making any small purchase greater than \$2,500, the Library Director shall seek bids from at least three suppliers, and shall accept the lowest bid from a responsive bidder. These may be verbal bids or from a catalog. If three or more bids are so solicited, the purchase may be made even if there is only one bid received. Any purchase in excess of \$24,999 shall be made in compliance with the Virginia Procurement Act. Amended March 14, 2018.

### **3.6 Circulation Policy**

#### **Books**

Most books may be checked out for three weeks and may be renewed twice if they are not reserved for another person. Holiday books and books in high demand are limited to fourteen days with no renewals.

#### **DVDs/Videos**

DVDs and videos may be checked out for seven days and may be renewed for another seven days if they are not reserved for another person. Patrons are limited to four videos per card.

### **Periodicals**

Current issues of periodicals do not circulate until the next issue is placed on the shelf. Periodicals may be checked out for fourteen days and may be renewed once.

### **Audio books**

Audio books may be checked out for three weeks and may be renewed twice if they are not reserved for another person.

### **Hotspots**

Hotspots may be checked out to adult cardholders for two weeks and may not be renewed. Limits include one hotspot per household.

### **Library of Things**

Items in the Library of Thing's collection may be checked out to adult cardholders for three weeks and may not be renewed. Limits include one "Thing" per household. A Library of Thing's item may be returned to either library. They may not be returned in the library book drop. Replacement fees for lost or damaged components of Library of Things may vary and will be assessed on a per item basis.

### **3D Printer**

The Meherrin Regional Library System maintains and furnishes a 3D Printer for sole use by library patrons (individuals with Meherrin Regional Library cards in good standing). The library strives to offer community access to new and emerging technologies, such as 3D printing, to inspire a new interest in creation and collaboration.

The library's 3D printer is available to the public for educational purposes to make three-dimensional objects in plastic using a design that is uploaded from a digital computer file.

The library's 3D printer may be used for lawful purposes only. Patrons will not be permitted to use the library's 3D printer to create material that is:

- Prohibited by local, state or federal law.
- Unsafe, harmful, dangerous or poses an immediate threat to the well-being of others. (Such use may violate the terms of use of the manufacturer.)
- Obscene or otherwise inappropriate for the library environment.
- In violation of another's intellectual property rights. For example, the printer will not be used to reproduce material that is subject to copyright, patent or trademark protection.
- The library reserves the right to refuse any 3D print request.
- Cost: 3D printing at the library will cost \$.25 a gram to offset the cost of the filament.
- Items printed from the 3D printer that are not picked up within 7 days will become the property of the library. Items must be picked up by the individual who printed them.
- Patrons may only use the printer alongside designated library staff.
- Patrons wishing to use the 3D printer must have a library card in good standing.
- Supervision of the use of the 3D printer by library staff does not constitute knowledge, or acknowledgement, of any unapparent final use of the 3D product, and the library specifically disclaims any knowledge thereof. (Adopted Board of Trustees March 11, 2026.)

### **School Assignments**

When there is high demand due to a school assignment, circulation periods may be restricted along with the number of books a patron may check out.

**Material Renewals**

May be renewed online or at either library location in person or by phone. Materials may be returned to either library.

**Fines**

Will be charged when material is not returned on time. An overdue notice will be sent when there are item(s) more than 14 days overdue. When necessary, a bill for replacement costs will be sent.

**Fees**

When an item is not returned or returned damaged, patron will be assessed replacement costs of the item along with a \$4.00 processing fee.

**Holds**

Any circulating item in the library system may be placed on hold along with new materials on order. Holds are filled in the order in which they are placed. Holds are placed through staff at the service desk or patrons may place a hold themselves. Patrons will be notified by phone, email, or text when their item is available for pickup. If the item is not picked up by the patron within seven days, it will be returned to the shelves or given to the next person on the list.

**Interlibrary-Loan**

Items not available in our collection may be available through interlibrary loan from another library. A fee of \$5.00 is charged for postage. Fines for overdue interlibrary loan items are \$.25 per day with no maximum cost limitation. The library may refuse interlibrary loan requests from patrons who have been delinquent in returning materials on time.

**Loss of Borrowing Privileges**

A patron may temporarily lose his or her borrowing privileges if a fine of more than \$2.00 is accumulated or mailed library notices have been returned. Borrowing privileges may be restored when materials are returned or an address change has been verified.

**Staff Borrowing Privileges**

Staff may borrow materials with the same circulation period as the public. Fines will not be charged to Library Staff for overdue materials. Replacement charges for lost items on a Library Staff Member card are still assessed. Staff receives no special consideration when reserving materials.

**Teacher Loans**

Teachers may borrow materials for 60 days for classroom use. Materials must be returned before the end of the school year. Teachers are responsible for all materials checked out on Teacher Cards.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, July 11, 2001.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, November 9, 2011, March 10, 2021, September 11, 2024.

**3.7 Registration Policy**

The purpose of the Meherrin Regional Library registration policy is to make the resources of the public library available to individuals. The Meherrin Regional Library provides services for the residents of Brunswick County, Greenville County, and the City of Emporia. Anyone residing in or owning property in any of these three jurisdictions may receive a library card without charge.

Non-residents of these two counties and the city may apply for borrowing privileges through an annual fee payment of \$25.00. Library Card Membership fees are nonrefundable.

By signing the library card registration form, a person agrees to comply with all library rules and pay whatever fines or fees may be incurred through damages or losses of library materials.

Library borrowing privileges and access to other library services may be suspended for the failure to return overdue items, failure to pay library fines, or failure to pay for lost/damaged materials.

In accordance to the American Library Association's Bill of Rights; no one will be denied access to library materials because of origin, age, background, or views.

### **Address Verification**

Address verification is essential as the Library has a responsibility to protect the taxpayer's investment in the Library's collection; therefore, identification and verification of residence is required to obtain a library card. The Library follows this requirement in compliance with the Code of Virginia 42.1-55.

A valid street address is required as a post office box does not provide acceptable residency address verification.

A government issued photo identification is required for registration. Photo identification can be established with an up-to-date Commonwealth of Virginia driver's license, a United States of America passport, a local school identification card which contains a picture from one of the three funding jurisdictions, or other valid picture identification issued by a government agency.

An up-to-date address verification is also required. A prospective patron may present any of these documents showing an address within any of the three local funding jurisdictions' - a printed tax bill, a voter's registration card, a local utility bill, a mortgage deed or rental lease agreement.

Each library membership card holder should notify the Library when there is a change in address or phone number.

### **Patron Privacy**

Meherrin Regional Library supports every patron's right to confidentiality regarding their library records. Library records include patron registration records, circulation records, library program participation records, record of library visits, video surveillance records, computer use, and/or any data that contains information that links a specific patron to specific library materials or services. Library personnel have authorized access to library records as needed in the administration of their regular duties.

According to provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VA Code 2.2-3705.7.03), access to library records, including borrowing records of patrons under 18 years of age shall not be denied to the parent, including a noncustodial parent, or guardian, of such a library patron.

Library records shall not be made available to any agency of state, federal, or local government or individual except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized under the authority of, and pursuant to federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or administrative discovery procedures or legislative investigative power. Upon receipt of any inquiry, process, order, or subpoena seeking library records, the matter will be turned over to the Library Director. The Director and Meherrin Regional Library legal representation will determine if such inquiry, process, order, or subpoena is in proper legal form.

To ensure accuracy and confidentiality of library records a valid current library membership card which is in good standing must be presented at the time of use for checking out library materials, checking out library public use

computers (exceptions to this requirement may be made by Library Administration on an as-needed basis). Occasionally a person may request a library staff member look up their library card membership number for use in checking out materials, but when making such a request the person must provide a current valid governmental issued picture ID or school picture ID to the staff member.

### **Privacy Statement on Library Notifications**

The library collects only the minimum personal information necessary to provide effective services for its users. Library account data is never sold to any third-party vendors. It is shared with select vendors specifically vetted by the library for the purpose of providing library notifications, which is optional. This may include mail, e-mail, text (SMS), phone or other methods of communication. The library also collects data for statistical purposes containing no personally identifiable information. Personal information and mobile numbers collected through opt-in will not be shared, sold, or rented with third parties for marketing purposes. The library offers a number of options for notifications and/or communications. Phone numbers may be used to notify via phone calls or SMS/text messages, if applicable. Another option is via email. To receive these notices, you may opt-in by selecting your preferred notification method when opening an account or notifying staff any time after that. You may also opt-out at any time from notifications by following the directions in the messages for unsubscribing or by contacting MRLS by phone or email (mrlsweb@gmail.com) during business hours. Patrons will need to provide account information, which may include e-mail or phone number. After opting out, you may receive a final confirmation message. Please allow a reasonable amount of time for your opt-out request to be processed. If you choose to re-subscribe, you can do so by following the opt-in process again.

### Messaging Terms and Conditions

1. Meherrin Regional Library occasionally contacts registered patrons via SMS or Text Messaging. Personal information will not be shared with third parties for marketing purposes.
2. The types of messages the library may send includes but is not limited to customer service/account notifications, such as overdue notices, holds notices, etc.
3. Message frequency may vary.
4. Message and data rates may apply.
5. For support, text HELP for help, email at mrlsweb@gmail.com.
6. To opt-out, text STOP to cancel, log in to your account to change notice preference, or speak with a staff member.
7. Failure to receive a library account notice does not waive patron responsibility for the timely return of library materials.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, July 9, 2025.

### **Library Membership Card Usage**

Library membership card usage is a privilege offered to residents and taxpayers of the three funding jurisdictions, Brunswick County, Greenville County, and the City of Emporia.

Borrowing privileges and access to all other library services may be suspended, revoked, or denied to anyone whose current or previous record as a library borrower reveals willful or habitually careless disregard for the protection and return of borrowed material or for the evasion of payment for assessed damage to Library property.

Library membership cards which are lost or stolen should be reported as such as soon as possible to help maintain the integrity of a patron/customer's records.

There is no charge for the first library membership card issued, but afterwards there is a replacement charge of \$2.00 per card. At the time of replacement, the library membership card must be in good standing for a replacement to be issued.

Except where otherwise stated, library membership cards are renewable every three years. At the time of membership renewal a member must show verification of current address.

Except where otherwise stated, patrons with library membership cards in good standing may check out a maximum of 30 items per card at any one time. Within that 30 item checked out limitation there is a maximum of up to four (4) DVD's checked out at any one time on a library membership card.

As a new library membership card holder the patron is limited to a total loan of four (4) items which may include two (2) DVD's and two (2) of any other type of library materials.

### **Individual Borrower's Cards Information**

#### **Resident Library Membership Card:**

- A resident's library membership card for the Meherrin Regional Library will be issued without charge to any resident of Brunswick County, City of Emporia, or Greenville County. Those persons who own property within one of these three funding jurisdictions, but do not reside within the three funding jurisdictions are also eligible for a library card issued without charge.
- The resident must assume responsibility for all materials checked out on a card, including any fines or fees incurred by the card holder.
- All other Meherrin Regional Library procedures, requirements, and policies are to be met.

#### **Youth Resident Library Membership Card:**

- A youth resident's library membership card for the Meherrin Regional Library will be issued without charge to any resident of Brunswick County, City of Emporia, or Greenville County in accordance with the residency or property owner requirements as outlined in the statement regarding obtaining a Resident Library Membership Card.
- Persons under the age of 18 must have a parent or legal guardian give permission to apply for a library card. The parent or legal guardian must sign the youth's library card registration form.
- Children must be at least age three (3) prior to obtaining a library card.
- The parent or legal guardian must assume responsibility for all materials checked out on a youth card, including any fines or fees incurred on the youth's borrower's card.
- Those parents or legal guardians who have a library membership card must be a card holder in good standing before a youth library membership card can be issued to the child.
- Youth library membership cards which incur fines or fees can result in the library membership card of the youth's responsible party being blocked from borrowing or using a computer. If blocked, once all accompanying account balances are paid in full and/or all overdue library materials are returned the library membership card will return to an active use status.
- A parent or legal guardian who wishes to revoke their youth's library membership card privileges may do so only via a written request letter which is addressed to the Library Director.
- All other Meherrin Regional Library procedures, requirements, and policies are to be met.

**Teacher's Library Membership Card:**

- Teachers in active employment from Greenville County Public Schools, Brunswick County Schools or Brunswick Academy may apply for a Teacher's Membership Card which is offered in addition to their personal library card.
- Extended borrowing privileges may be provided for materials checked out on a Teacher's Membership Card.
- At the time of card registration proof of employment must be provided.
- Teacher's Membership Cards are renewable at the beginning of each school year by September 30<sup>th</sup> and proof of employment must be provided at each renewal time.
- Up to 30 items may be checked out at any one time on a Teacher Membership Card.
- Holders of Teacher Membership Cards must assume responsibility for all materials checked out on the card, including any fines or fees incurred by the card holder.
- Teacher Membership Cards are not exempt from fines, fees, or payment for lost or damaged materials.
- All other Meherrin Regional Library procedures, requirements, and policies are to be met.

**Non-Resident Library Membership Card:**

- For those who do not reside or own property within Brunswick County, Greenville County or the City of Emporia, Virginia, the Library offers the opportunity of obtaining a Non-resident Library Membership Card through the payment of an annual fee. The annual fee payment is calculated in relation to the tax payments of those who reside or own property within these three jurisdictions.
- The Non-resident Library Membership Card charge is \$25.00 per card annually.
- Renewal of these Non-resident Library Membership Cards is done on the annual anniversary of when the original library membership card was first obtained.
- At each renewal a payment of the annual non-resident card fee must be made.
- Holders of Non-resident Library Membership Cards must assume responsibility for all materials checked out on the card, including any fines or fees incurred by the card holder.
- Non-resident Library Membership Cards are not exempt from fines, fees, or payment for lost or damaged material.
- All other Meherrin Regional Library procedures, requirements, and policies are to be met.

**Computer Use Only Pass:**

- For individuals who do not reside or own property within Brunswick County, Greenville County or the City of Emporia, Virginia, the Library offers the opportunity of obtaining a library Computer Use Only Pass.
- Computer Use Only Passes are not available to those who reside or own property within Brunswick County, Greenville County, or the City of Emporia as regular library membership cards are available free of charge to those residents.
- Computer Use Only Passes are for computer access use only. These cards do not allow for any other library borrowing or usage privileges.
- There is no charge for a Computer Use Only Pass, but to obtain the card a person must provide a government issued picture ID.
- As with regular library membership cards a Computer Use Only Pass is good for one use period of two hours on the date it is issued.
- Usage of Computer Use Only Passes may be monitored by Library staff. This ensures the two hour total computer daily usage is adhered to by each pass user.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, May 13, 2015.

### 3.8 Fines and Fees Policy

Some fees are charged to offset costs of some services the library provides.

- Photocopy Services - \$.25 per side (black & white); \$.50 per side (color).
- Printing from computers - \$.20 per side (black & white)
- Scanning Services - \$.20 per side to be saved to patron provided or staff loaned USB
- Faxing Services:
  - Sending a fax - \$2.00 for first page, \$1.00 per page thereafter
  - Receiving a fax - \$1.00 per page
- Nonresident Card - \$25.00 per year, Amended May 13, 2015 and Effective July 01, 2015
- Replacement of Lost Borrower's Card - \$2.00
- Interlibrary Loan Material - \$5.00 per item - Fines \$.25 per day with no maximum
- Earphones - \$1.00
- 3D printing - .25 per gram

Fines are assessed for overdue and damaged materials to encourage patrons to return material in a timely fashion and in good condition.

- Children's and Young Adult books and periodicals are considered fine free and will not incur overdue charges. Items not returned will be subject to standard Lost and Replacement charges.
- Books, audio books, Launchpads, and periodicals - \$.10 per day for each day the Library is open up to a maximum of \$3.00 per item.
- DVDs - \$.50 per day for each day the Library is open up to a maximum of \$3.00 per item.
- Hotspots - \$1.00 per day up to a maximum of \$20.00 per item. Hotspots will be disabled if not returned by its due date. Replacement fee for lost or damaged hotspot case is \$12.00. Replacement fee for lost or damaged power cords is \$4.00.
- Library of Things - \$.10 per day for each day the Library is open up to a maximum of \$3.00 per item. Replacement fees for lost or damaged components of Library of Things may vary and will be assessed on a per item basis.

Lost or Damaged Items - Replacement costs plus \$4.00 processing fee for lost items and/or those damaged beyond repair and not able to be placed back in the collection. The processing fee of \$4.00 is applied to damaged items sent for repair which will remain in the Meherrin Regional Library collection.

The maximum charge for overdue fines is \$50.00 per library card per occurrence. Library card and public computer privileges are suspended when charges exceed \$2.00.

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Refunds for lost and paid items may be granted when items are returned in acceptable condition within 30 days of the payment transaction. Patrons requesting refund must show proof of payment. Approved refunds will be processed through the MRL business office. Processing fees, fines, and Debt Set-off collections are ineligible for refund.

Fines and fees may be paid by cash or check at either library. If a check is returned by the bank for "insufficient funds", a fee of \$35.00 will be charged to cover costs incurred by the Library. The Library may decide not to accept any further checks from that patron.

The Library participates in the Commonwealth of Virginia Set-Off Debt program.

Library Staff must pay fees, but are exempt from overdue fines.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, July 11, 2001. Revised July 13, 2022. Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, September 10, 2003, September 14, 2005, November 14, 2007, September 10, 2008, June 22, 2011, November 9, 2011, and May 13, 2015, July 12, 2017, January 9, 2019, July 13, 2022.

### **3.8.1 Credit and Debit Card Acceptance Policy**

The Meherrin Regional Library accepts bank cards for all point of sale transactions for the convenience of library patrons. The library accepts VISA and MASTERCARD cards for charge and debit transactions under the conditions described below.

Library patrons may only use credit/debit cards by the authorized cardholder. Proper identification may be requested.

- Payments may only be accepted for established library charges, including:
  - Lost or damage materials fees;
  - Fines;
  - Non-resident fees;
  - Copy, print, and scanning charges;
  - Library product sales;
  - Non-refundable meeting room fees;
  - Deposits of money into a person's account, including minor children's accounts by the responsible parent/guardian.
- No cash back is authorized.
- Customer receipts for credit and debit cards transactions are available upon request.
- Library staff members have the right to refuse a credit/debit card.
- No refunds can be given, except in cases of library staff member error. Any refunds as necessary are only credited back to the original card used by the patron.
- Charges to the card's account are made in real time at the instance of the transaction; decline charges require alternative payment.
- Minimum amount for credit/debit card transactions is \$2.00 or the minimum fine amount which is required to allow a library cardholder's account to be cleared and available for regular library use, for example for the checkout of library materials or library public computer use.
- Payments will appear as "Meherrin Regional Library #### #####" on a person's credit/debit card statement.
- The library does not keep any records of the card information that is not necessary to process the transaction. The library uses a third-party, PCI compliant merchant services vendor.
- The library will cooperate with the patron, merchant services vendor, and card issuer to resolve any disputes pertaining to charge/debit transactions conducted at the library, and will act as a responsible organization by immediately reporting any security incidents to appropriate authorities.
- In making a payment by credit/debit card, the library account holder accepts that the payment information will be inserted into the cardholder's library card account.

- This policy is subject to change.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, November 9, 2016. Amended July 12, 2017. Amended March 14, 2018.

### **3.9 Bad Checks**

Any patron whose check is returned by the bank for "insufficient funds" will be charged a fee of \$35.00 in order to cover the costs incurred by the Library. The Library may decide not to accept any further checks from that patron. Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, June 22, 2011.

### **3.10 Internet and Library Computer Policy**

The Meherrin Regional Library has microcomputers available, free of charge, to support the mission of the Library: The mission of Meherrin Regional Library System is to serve as an essential public asset by providing evolving information, serving as a repository of knowledge, and promoting reading, lifelong learning and enjoyment for all.

In order to provide fair and equitable public access to computer based resources, the Library employs timed sessions, printing, and management of computer systems through the use of a computer software program.

Meherrin Regional Library provides access to Internet resources. The Library does not have any control over the Internet offerings. The Library is not responsible for any information access through the Library. The Library cannot be responsible for the content of the sources to which its home page links or sources accessed through secondary links. The Library only assumes responsibility for the offerings on its homepage. The Library follows material selection guidelines for the content of its home page.

Some computers provide access to the Internet. A wide variety of material and opinions are accessible through the Internet. The library does not monitor and has no control over the information available and will not be held responsible for its content. Users are wholly responsible for evaluating the information they receive from access to the Internet. Library policy prohibits: library employees and patrons from using library equipment for illegal purposes; access by juveniles to materials harmful to juveniles; and access of child pornography, obscenity, and materials harmful to juveniles on computers accessed by the public.

Parents or adult guardians, not the Library, are responsible for Internet information selected and/or accessed by children. Library Public Access computers are filtered.

Computer users are bound by local, state and federal law. Violations of law will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. Violation of any laws or statutes including, but not limited to, the following can lead to prosecution:

- USC Title 18, Chapter 110 regarding the Sexual Exploitation and other Abuse of Children
- USC Title 18, Chapter 71 Sections 1465-1468 regarding distribution of obscene materials
- Code of Virginia Title 18.2 Article 5 regarding Obscenity and Related Offences
- Code of Virginia Title 18.2 Article 6 regarding Juveniles
- The Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986
- Credit Card Fraud Act of 1984
- Electronics Communications Privacy Act

- Virginia Computer Crimes Act
- U.S. Copyright Act

Violations of these policies may result in loss of Library, computer, and Internet privileges, and are subject to prosecution by local, state and/or federal authorities. Misuse or unauthorized use of library computers and information resources may result in revocation of library privileges. If such action is taken, the user will be informed by letter from the Library Director. Meherrin Regional Library complies with the copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code). Unauthorized copying and use of computer software, whether by staff or customers is an infringement of that law.

All Library computers are networked and the network may not be used for any illegal activity, such as violating the rights of a third party, or in a manner inconsistent with the Library's tax exempt status or its proper operation. Unauthorized access into computer information or communication services or other resources is not allowed. Users may not invade the privacy of others using library computers or networked resources. Unsolicited advertising is not allowed.

The Network Administrator is designated by the Library Board of Trustees to disable the required computer filters at the request of a user for bona-fide research or other lawful purposes. The library user is responsible for all fees attached to this individualized service.

Wi-Fi is available at library facilities.

Staff Use: Library Staff are expected to use the Internet when appropriate, primarily to accomplish job responsibilities more effectively. Library Staff are encouraged to use the Internet in an ethical manner and is subject to all federal, state and local laws. For further information regarding Library Staff use of the Internet and/or library computer/media refer to the Meherrin Regional Library Employee Handbook.

#### **Guidelines for Access and Conditions of Use:**

- Patrons wishing to use a public access computer must use his or her own valid library card each time they register to use a computer. Utilizing any other person's library card for a customer's computers use is not acceptable use. Those users having library cards are responsible for the use of their library card and must follow all MRL policies. Those without valid MRL library cards in order to access a public use computer must leave provide identification as per the Library Card Policy to Library Staff.
- Patrons with blocks on their library card due to overdue material or fines or fees over \$2.00 will not be allowed to use the computers.
- Public access computer appointments are for 2 hours per day per the patron's library card number. Reservations may be made at any time. However, if an appointment is not kept future use by that individual may be limited according to demand.
- The Library does not offer electronic mail accounts, chat lines, listserves or news groups.
- There will be no more than two people at a workstation at one time.
- Library Staff can provide limited assistance with computer use. Software program use is the responsibility of the computer user.
- The Library will provide selected software designed for business, educational or recreational uses. Software use and downloading to discs are at the users own risk.

- Library Staff is not responsible for lost information. Saving files to library system hardware is not permitted.
- Any software provided by the Library for public use is protected under U.S. Copyright Law. Computer users are forbidden to make copies of these programs for any reason or purpose.
- Only authorized software, which has been officially purchased by the Library, may be used.
- Paper will be provided for the printer. There will be a fee of \$.20 per page to print. Only paper provided by the Library will be used on the printer.
- With the exception of headphones and USB storage devices, hardware and software other than that provided by the Library cannot be attached to or used with library computers.

### **Computer Workstations and Wi-Fi:**

- Computers are available for public use on a first come, first serve basis, unless customer has made a prior reservation. Meherrin Regional Library valid card holders can log on to public computers using their library card number and PINs.
- A visitor card is available to those individuals who are visiting the area for a very short period of time and wish to use a public access computer. Nonresident users may apply for a non-resident card at a charge of \$25.00 per year. Nonresident card holders receive library privileges including public internet computer access.
- Users must not attempt to damage any computer equipment or software (VA. Code Sect. 18.2-138)
- Users must send materials to the printer before the Library closes or the user's session ends. This is the responsibility of the user. Warnings are provided on the computer screen at 30 minutes, 15 minutes and 5 minutes before a person's session ends.
- Users may not use sounds or visuals that disrupt other library users or Library Staff. Users are required to use headphones when using sounds or visuals that disrupt other users. The Library does not supply headphones for public computer use within the Library.
- Users are responsible for troubleshooting their personal computers, lap tops, and or electronic equipment. Assistance and troubleshooting from Library Staff is limited.
- Library Staff members can only spend a limited amount of time with users who lack basic computer skills and computer use knowledge. Library Staff may direct users who lack skills to instructional materials, online tutorials and help on some software or online resources. Users needing more than basic guidance are encouraged to attend computer classes offered in the area. The role of Library Staff is that of helper, facilitator, or guide.

The Library reserves the right to modify and change this policy, guidelines, conditions of use and procedures at any time.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, November 10, 1999.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, September 14, 2005, January 8, 2007, November 14, 2007, and July 01, 2009.

### **3.11 Meeting Room, Special Room, and Study Pod Policy**

#### **Availability**

The Library meeting rooms in each library are available to non-profit public gatherings of a civic, cultural, or educational nature on an equitable basis regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting use. The Library makes these facilities available to promote cultural and educational opportunities and to promote an

open exchange of ideas into the community. The fact that a group is permitted to use a room does not in any way constitute an endorsement of the group's policies or beliefs by the Library.

The rooms are not available for fundraising programs (except those which are for projects for the benefit of the Library), or for worship services. Fees may not be charged to those attending events or meetings. Classes or programs sponsored by the Library or an accredited educational facility may be an exception regarding fees.

Library sponsored activities have first priority in scheduling. The meeting rooms are available for use during hours the library is open. Due to demand, each group or organization may be limited to reserve the meeting room four times each month. There will be no fees for use of the room. Reservations are taken on a first come, first served basis and no more than six months in advance. Reservation of a room by a group indicates the group's willingness to abide by library policies and procedures. The Library reserves the right to dismiss or limit a group from the use of a room at any time.

### **Privileges and Responsibilities**

Food and drinks are allowed, except alcoholic beverages. Each group is responsible for cleaning up after meetings. The group is responsible for leaving the room in the condition in which it was found, and is financially responsible for any damages to the premises or furniture incurred during use of the room. The Library cannot assume responsibility for private property brought into the building. Kitchen facilities are available for limited use and not intended for full meal service. Food and supplies in the kitchens are the property of the Meherrin Regional Library and should not be used. Smoking/vaping is not allowed inside the Library. Revised November 12, 2025.

### **After Hours Meeting**

Groups are allowed to use the library meeting rooms after the Library is closed under certain circumstances. A key will be signed out to an adult 18 years or older who will be responsible for opening and locking the Library for the meeting, plus be present for the meeting. A Responsibility Statement must be signed by the person picking up the library key. THE KEY MUST BE PICKED UP DURING REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS. The key is to be placed in an envelope and put in the book drop immediately after meeting room use and library is locked. No group is allowed to keep a library key on an extended basis. A lost key fee of \$150.00 shall be charged to any group or individual who does not return the library's key in a timely manner. Such groups or individuals are restricted from after hours meeting room access until the library key is returned or lost key fee is paid. All meetings involving children and youth must have two (2) adults present. Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 11, 2009, May 9, 2018.

### **Wheelchair Access (Brunswick County Library)**

Persons using the meeting room who are in wheelchairs may access the third floor by entering the Library's front door on West Hicks Street and using the elevator on that floor. The key to the library's front door and the elevator will need to be picked up during the library hours the day of the event.

The main floor of the Library is not accessible to the general public after hours. No materials may be checked out. The meeting room group is fully responsible for any damage and any missing equipment or items in the building. The front door cannot be left open. It should be locked immediately following the entry and/or exit of the person/s using a wheelchair. For security reasons using the front door of the Library to access the meeting room will be limited to wheelchair use only unless it is a library sponsored or cosponsored event.

### **Elevator Access (Brunswick County Library)**

The elevator may be accessed from the basement of the Library when groups are entering the back door. Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees March 8, 2000. Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees March 13, 2002, July 24, 2007, and March 11, 2009.

### **Literacy, Research and Genealogy Room (Richardson Memorial Library)**

The Literacy, Research and Genealogy Room is for research and genealogy use by patrons and visitors. Use of this room is for adults 18 years of age or older. Children may not be left unattended.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, November 14, 2007. Revised November 12, 2025.

### **Dr. William McCaddin Pritchett Local History and Genealogy Room (Brunswick County Library)**

The Pritchett Room located on the main floor of the Brunswick County Library is for research and genealogy use by patrons and visitors. Users are encouraged to sign the guest book located within the room. Use of this room is for adults 18 years of age or older. Children may not be left unattended.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, July 24, 2007. Revised Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, May 10, 2023.

### **Study Pod**

MRLS Study Pods are a quiet study spaces available free of charge for patrons 18 years and older. The Brunswick County Library Study Pod accommodates one person/one reservation at a time. The Richardson Memorial Library Study Pod accommodates up to two people/one reservation at time. Access is available during regular library hours of operation. The Study Pod may be reserved on a first come basis, first served basis. Reservations may be scheduled up to three months in advance or without advance notice. Usage is limited to three hours per day per person. Food or drink is not allowed. MRLS does not assume responsibility for personal belongings left unattended. MRLS reserves the right to remove items and reassign access if the Study Pod is unattended for more than 15 minutes. The Study Pod is not intended as a place of business or office space. It must be kept in a clean condition. The windows may not be covered at any time. The library reserves the right to deny use for violations of MRLS policies and guidelines or misuse of the Study Pod space. Exceptions to standard usage may be made at the director's discretion.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, May 10, 2023. Revised November 12, 2025.

### **3.11.1 Display and Exhibit Policy**

Meherrin Regional Library provides designated display and exhibit areas to further its mission to support educational, cultural, and civic activities. Priority is given to Meherrin Regional Library activities, then to exhibitors living or working in Brunswick, Greenville, or the City of Emporia. All display and exhibit spaces and their use are at the discretion of the Library Director or designee.

The Library endeavors to present a broad spectrum of ideas and viewpoints. A display or exhibit does not constitute endorsement by the Library. Displays or exhibits must be informational, educational, or cultural in nature. Materials that are partisan, sectarian, lewd, or promote hate and/or violence are prohibited. The Library Director or designee has the authority and discretion to approve or deny displays or exhibits. The Library reserves the right to limit the size, number of items, schedule, location, and frequency of any display. The Library may also determine the manner in which materials are displayed, including hanging, propping, arranging or other display methods. The use of special lighting, A/V material, or electronic media are subject to approval by the Library Director or designee. The exhibitor is responsible for any damage to Library property.

All materials are displayed or exhibited at the owner's risk. The Library assumes no responsibility for security or damage of any displayed material. All individuals or organizations desiring to display or exhibit materials must submit a request in advance. This request is subject to approval by the Library Director or designee. A signed release form will be required upon implementing the display or exhibit.

Displays or exhibits must include information declaring the topic and sponsoring individual or group. Additional explanatory material, publicity, reception, and other related materials or activities require approval by the Library Director or designee.

The Library reserves the right to discontinue displays and exhibits with or without cause at any time and without notice. Further, the Library may deny space to any user with or without reason or cause. The Library may also

suspend or bar access to space by any user who violates this or other Library policies.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, May 10, 2023.

### **3.11.2 Bulletin Board Policy**

Meherrin Regional Library provides community bulletin boards as a means of distributing information for community awareness. The Library, at its discretion, provides reasonable space for postings featuring educational opportunities, cultural or fundraising events, or other activities of a non-profit nature and of local interest. Federal, state, and local government, and Library sponsored items and partners take precedence over all other information. Personal ads, campaign literature, and for-profit entities, and activities (except for Library/government partner organizations) are prohibited. All postings must be submitted to Library staff for approval. The Library reserves the right to deny space to any submitted post for any reason, including, but not limited to, lack of space or the prioritization of time-sensitive or County/Library posts. Approved postings will be marked and dated by Library staff. Any unauthorized postings will be removed. Notices may be posted only in designated areas. Authorized postings will be removed after they are no longer timely, after 30 days, or when space is required for more current items, whichever comes first. One-time extensions may be requested but are not guaranteed. Postings will be discarded upon removal. The Library does not necessarily advocate or endorse the viewpoints of organizations or individuals permitted to post notices to community boards. The Library accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to any item accepted for posting. Failure to comply with these rules may result in denial of future posting privileges.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, May 10, 2023.

### **3.12 Library Code of Conduct**

Library Patrons have the right to receive assistance from Library Staff and to use the Library and its services without being disturbed by others. They have a responsibility to behave in a manner that does not violate the rights of others and their use of the library or interfere with library services and operations, including library personnel's performance of their duties. All areas of the Library, including meeting rooms, entrances, restrooms, furnishings, and equipment must be used for their intended purposes and are covered by this policy.

- Talking loudly, making noise, sleeping, or engaging in disruptive conduct that disturbs others is not allowed.
- Eating, and smoking (use of tobacco in any form) or use of a controlled substance is not allowed.
- Drinks are not allowed in the Library unless served in a meeting room with prior permission granted and with responsibility assumed by the requesting authority. \*Adopted September 12, 2012
- There is no loitering on the property after hours. No trespassing is in effect when the library is closed other than patrons dropping off books in the book drop or patrons using facilities as set forth with Library Policy.
- Soliciting, handing out pamphlets or sale of items is not permitted on the property with the exception of fundraising activities of the Library or permission from the Library Director or Board of Trustees.
- Appropriate attire, including shirts and shoes, must be worn at all times.
- Animals are not allowed unless they are used to assist persons with disabilities.

- Activities (such as bicycling, skateboarding, or running) that present safety hazards are not permitted.
- Roller skates, roller blades, skateboards and bicycles are not allowed in the library. They should not block sidewalks or the entrances to the Library.
- Library Staff is not responsible for a patron's personal belongings. Personal belongings should not be left unattended.
- The Library reserves the right to inspect all bags, purses, briefcases, packs and the like.
- No photographic equipment may be used in the Library without the permission of Library Staff
- Computers, cell phones, radios, or tape players must be used in the Library with headphones with the permission of the Library Staff on duty as long as the use of such equipment is not disruptive to others.
- Loud and boisterous behavior, physical or verbal harassment and the use of profanity is prohibited. Persons exhibiting such behavior will be asked to leave. Police will be called if necessary.
- The materials and equipment in the Library are for patron and staff use. Any purposeful damage done to the materials, equipment, furniture or building, or other property of the Library is against the law and will be reported to the police.

### **3.12.1 Safe Child Policy**

The Meherrin Regional Library provides children and families an inviting and fun place to visit, to develop a love of reading, literacy skills, and libraries. The library offers such services as early literacy development story-times, internet access, online homework help, reader's advisory, along with other educational and entertaining programs. Our library children's rooms are designed for use by children, their parents, legal guardians or caregivers, and teachers.

The library encourages frequent visits by children and their families. While visiting the library with a child, parents or caregivers are expected to remain with the child and provide proper supervision to the child at all times. Parents, legal guardians, teachers, or caregivers are responsible for the behavior and safety of a child while visiting the library. Staff cannot be placed in the position of supervising unattended children. Library staff cannot provide child care or assume responsibility for anyone's safety.

Parents, legal guardians, teachers, or caregivers may not leave children alone or in the care of other children who are unable or unwilling to provide adequate care and supervision. Supervising adults must remain close to the child they have brought into the library. The Library is not responsible for supervision and safety of unattended children.

Children are expected to behave in a manner conducive to maintaining an appropriate atmosphere in the library for all patrons. Please refer to the Library's Code of Conduct. Prolonged crying or tantrum-like behavior should be handled by the parent or caregiver outside the building. Children must know how to reach an adult in case of

an emergency. Both adults and children are responsible for knowing library public service hours. Any person who violates these rules and regulations may be asked by a library staff member to leave the library. A person's access to library facilities may be limited for a period of time if the Library's Code of Conduct is not observed.

An unattended child is a child of any age who is apparently unaccompanied by a responsible caregiver. Children inside the library under the age of ten (10) must be in the care of someone who is at least fifteen (15) years or older. If an unattended child is in the library and a problem arises and library staff members are unable to locate a parent or caregiver, then local law enforcement may be called.

If an unattended child is in the library at closing time the following steps will occur:

- Fifteen (15) minutes prior to closing time, the child will be asked to call a responsible person.
- Two staff members will remain with the child after the library closes. If, after being notified, a parent or caregiver does not arrive within fifteen (15) minutes, local law enforcement will be called.
- If the parent or caregiver cannot be reached and no responsible adult has not come after fifteen (15) minutes, local law enforcement will be notified.
- Under NO circumstances will staff transport a minor child.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, September 9, 2015.

### **3.12.2 Unacceptable or Criminal Behavior Policy**

It is critical for the library to be a safe environment for both patrons and staff. This policy which exists in addition to the Library's posted Code of Conduct addresses the need for ensuring all library customers are treated equally and that behavior guidelines are applied in an equitable manner.

Library staff will inform library patrons when their behavior becomes inconsistent with the appropriate use of the Library and request that such behavior be modified. Continued noncompliance with this policy will result in loss of library privileges or removal from Library property. If an individual refuses to leave the premises after staff have requested he/she do so, or if a staff member reasonably suspects an individual has committed a criminal offense, then the library staff will contact the police. Severe violations will result in a person or persons being barred from Library property for a stated period of time through a library banning process or by police directive. Anyone thus barred from the Library for a period of time can be prosecuted for trespassing if he/she returns to the Library within that period of time. Banning library users is not an action to be undertaken lightly or often, but only as the individual situation merits.

#### **Unacceptable Behavior**

Unacceptable behavior is defined as any behavior which infringes on the rights of others using the Library, listed as not acceptable in the Library Code of Conduct, or which results in damage to library buildings, property, or equipment. Unacceptable behavior may result in eviction from all library facilities and property, or in the case of severe damage to Library property or criminal conduct, the police being contacted. Library staff is authorized to take appropriate action to maintain the desired Library environment.

Some examples of unacceptable behavior are: disruptive/menacing behavior; smoking or using other tobacco products on library property; drinking alcoholic beverages; verbal abuse toward others including the use of profanity, including staff members; inappropriate dress such as no shirt or shoes; skateboarding or other similar activity; or use of computers to view sexually explicit or pornographic materials.

#### **Criminal Behavior**

Some examples of criminal behavior are: intentionally damaging or destroying library materials and other library property; concealment of library materials or other library property while on library premises; theft of library materials or property; indecent exposure or other sexual misconduct; drug use or drug dealing on library property; making verbal or physical threats; threatening behavior through the use of firearms or other weapons; viewing pornography, child or adult; or assault or fighting on library property.

### **Bomb Threat**

All bomb threats are to be considered valid and taken seriously until proven otherwise. Safety of the public and of the Meherrin Regional Library employees, buildings, and facilities will take precedence over normal activities.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, May 13, 2015.

### **3.13 Library Petty Cash Policy**

The Meherrin Regional Library approves the establishment of a small, departmental petty cash fund of \$50.00 at each library branch for the purpose of paying minor business items when it would otherwise impractical to purchase items through the usual purchasing methods.

These funds are subject to periodic audits and verification by the Library Director and/or another managerial staff designated by the Library Director to perform such. **A Petty Cash Verification Form** needs to be filled out and signed by the person responsible for performing the audit.

A **Petty Cash Custodian** is appointed at each library to be responsible for ensuring the cash on hand and receipts equal the authorized amount of the funds at all times. Petty cash funds must be kept separate from change funds, cash drawers, personal funds, and any other collected revenue. Cash and receipts for unreimbursed expenditures must be kept in a locked container such as a fire-proof cabinet, safe, or locked repository, and kept in a properly secured area.

The Designated Petty Cash Custodian at both library branches will sign a **Petty Cash Custodian Designation Form** to be kept in the Library Business office and to be presented to the local Bank as authorization to cash the reimbursement check as needed. This form will be authorized by the Library Director and Meherrin Regional Library Board Chairman.

The **Petty Cash Custodian** is personally responsible for the cash which was specifically issued to him/her; therefore, access to the fund must be limited to the custodian.

Expenditures from the petty cash fund must be made only for the purpose(s) for which the fund was authorized. At the time that the expenditure is made, a sales slip, cash register receipt, or other document displaying date of purchase, name of vendor or payee, cash register receipt with a description of the goods purchased or the service provided and the amount paid. Any exceptions to either the type or amount of expenditure must be approved by the Library Director. The expenditure cash register receipt must be attached to a signed Petty Cash Voucher Form.

All petty cash fund expenditures must be supported by a receipt attached to a **Petty Cash Voucher Form** and submitted to the Business Office with a request for **Petty Cash Reimbursement Form** before a check is written to replenish the \$50 petty cash fund at both library branches. This form may be faxed to the Business Office along with a copy of the original receipts and **Petty Cash Voucher Form** and the originals kept until they are able to be delivered to the Business Office by Library Courier.

The Business office will prepare a check payable to **Petty Cash Custodian- Brunswick Library** and/or **Petty Cash Custodian-Richardson Library** to replenish fund.

Reimbursement can be requested as needed, but always by the end of the fiscal year so there are no outstanding receipts as of June 30.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, November 14, 2012.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 10, 2021.

### **3.14 Passport Acceptance Facility**

The Brunswick County Library is designated as a Passport Acceptance Facility. Library staff who are certified Passport Acceptance Agents exclusively accept and forward passport applications for processing. Passport applications are accepted by appointment only Monday through Friday from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm. The library charges a \$35.00 execution fee per application. The library also offers passport photo services at \$10.00 per passport photo. Library execution fees and photo services may be made payable by cash, check, or money order. Rules, processes, and policies regarding accepting passport applications are determined by United States Department of State.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, September 11, 2019.

### **3.15 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Policy**

#### **Rights & Responsibilities: The Rights of Requesters and the Responsibilities of Meherrin Regional Library under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act**

The Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), located in § 2.2-3700 et seq. of the Code of Virginia, guarantees citizens of the Commonwealth and representatives of the media access to public records held by public bodies, public officials, and public employees.

A public record is any writing or recording—regardless of whether it is a paper record, an electronic file, an audio or video recording, or any other format—that is prepared or owned by, or in the possession of a public body or its officers, employees, or agents in the transaction of public business. All public records are presumed to be open, and may only be withheld if a specific, statutory exemption applies.

The policy of FOIA states that the purpose of FOIA is to promote an increased awareness by all persons of governmental activities. In furthering this policy, FOIA requires that the law be interpreted liberally, in favor of access, and that any exemption allowing public records to be withheld must be interpreted narrowly.

#### **Your FOIA Rights**

- You have the right to request to inspect **or** receive copies of public records, or both.
- You have the right to request that any charges for the requested records be estimated in advance. As of July 1, 2022, public bodies must notify the requester in writing that the public body may make reasonable charges not to exceed its actual cost incurred in accessing, duplicating, supplying, or searching for requested records and inquire of the requester whether he would like to request a cost estimate in advance of the supplying of the requested records.
- If you believe that your FOIA rights have been violated, you may file a petition in district or circuit court to compel compliance with FOIA. Alternatively, you may contact the FOIA Council for a nonbinding advisory opinion.

## **Making a Request for Records from Meherrin Regional Library**

- You may request records by U.S. Mail, fax, email, in person, or over the phone - FOIA does not require that you use any particular method to convey your request. FOIA also does not require that your request be in writing, nor do you need to state that you are requesting records pursuant to FOIA.
  - From a practical perspective, it may be helpful to both you and the person receiving your request to put your request in writing. This allows you to create a record of your request. It also gives us a clear statement of what records you are requesting, so that there is no misunderstanding over a verbal request. However, we cannot refuse to respond to your FOIA request if you elect to not put it in writing.
- Your request must identify the records you are seeking with "reasonable specificity." This is a common-sense standard. It does not refer to or limit the volume or number of records that you are requesting; instead, it requires that you be specific enough so that we can identify and locate the records that you are seeking.
- Your request must ask for existing records or documents. FOIA gives you a right to inspect or copy **records**; it does not apply to a situation where you are asking general questions about the work of Meherrin Regional Library, nor does it require Meherrin Regional Library to create a record that does not exist.
- You may choose to receive electronic records in any format used by Meherrin Regional Library in the regular course of business.
  - For example, if you are requesting records maintained in an Excel database, you may elect to receive those records electronically, via email, on a computer disk or flash drive, or to receive a printed copy of those records.
- If we have questions about your request, please cooperate with staff's efforts to clarify the type of records that you are seeking, or to attempt to reach a reasonable agreement about a response to a large request. Making a FOIA request is not an adversarial process, but we may need to discuss your request with you to ensure that we understand what records you are seeking.

**To request records from Meherrin Regional Library, you may direct your request to the library director. The director can be reached at 133 W. Hicks Street, Lawrenceville, VA 23868, 434-848-2418, 434-848-6739 (FAX). You may also contact the director with questions you have concerning requesting records from the Meherrin Regional Library.**

In addition, the Freedom of Information Advisory Council is available to answer any questions you may have about how FOIA works. The Council was created in the legislative branch of state government to issue opinions on the operation and application of FOIA, to publish educational materials, and to provide training about FOIA. However, please be aware that the Council is not a records repository and does not process records requests on behalf of other public bodies, nor is the Council an investigative or enforcement agency. The Council may be contacted by email at [foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov](mailto:foiacouncil@dls.virginia.gov), or by phone at (804) 698-1810 or toll-free at 1-866-448-4100.

## **Meherrin Regional Library's Responsibilities in Responding to Your Request**

- Meherrin Regional Library must respond to your request within five working days of receiving it. "Day One" is considered the day after your request is received. The five-day period does not include weekends, holidays or other days when Meherrin Regional Library is closed for business.
- The reason behind your request for public records from Meherrin Regional Library is irrelevant, and you do not have to state why you want the records before we respond to your request. FOIA does, however, allow Meherrin Regional Library to require you to provide your name and legal address.
- FOIA requires that Meherrin Regional Library make one of the following responses to your request within the five-day time period:
  - 1) We provide you with the records that you have requested in their entirety.

- 2) We withhold all of the records that you have requested, because all of the records are subject to a specific statutory exemption. If all of the records are being withheld, we must send you a response in writing. That writing must identify the volume and subject matter of the records being withheld, and state the specific section of the Code of Virginia that allows us to withhold the records.
  - 3) We provide some of the records that you have requested, but withhold other records. We cannot withhold an entire record if only a portion of it is subject to an exemption. In that instance, we may redact the portion of the record that may be withheld, and must provide you with the remainder of the record. We must provide you with a written response stating the specific section of the Code of Virginia that allows portions of the requested records to be withheld.
  - 4) We inform you in writing that the requested records cannot be found or do not exist (we do not have the records you requested). However, if we know that another public body has the requested records, we must include contact information for the other public body in our response to you.
  - 5) If it is practically impossible for Meherrin Regional Library to respond to your request within the five-day period, we must state this in writing, explaining the conditions that make the response impossible. This will allow us an additional seven working days to respond to your request, giving us a total of 12 working days to respond to your request. In the case of criminal investigative files requested pursuant to § 2.2-3706.1 of the Code of Virginia, we are allowed an additional 60 working days to respond to your request, giving us a total of 65 working days to respond to your request.
- If you make a request for a very large number of records, and we feel that we cannot provide the records to you within 12 working days without disrupting our other organizational responsibilities, we may petition the court for additional time to respond to your request. However, FOIA requires that we make a reasonable effort to reach an agreement with you concerning the production of the records before we go to court to ask for more time.

## Charges

- A public body may make reasonable charges not to exceed its actual cost incurred in accessing, duplicating, supplying, or searching for the requested records. No public body shall impose any extraneous, intermediary, or surplus fees or expenses to recoup the general costs associated with creating or maintaining records or transacting the general business of the public body. Any duplicating fee charged by a public body shall not exceed the actual cost of duplication. Prior to conducting a search for records, the public body shall notify the requester in writing that the public body may make reasonable charges not to exceed its actual cost incurred in accessing, duplicating, supplying, or searching for requested records and inquire of the requester whether he would like to request a cost estimate in advance of the supplying of the requested records as set forth in subsection F of § 2.2-3704 of the Code of Virginia.
- You may have to pay for the records that you request from Meherrin Regional Library. FOIA allows us to charge for the actual costs of responding to FOIA requests. This would include items like staff time spent searching for the requested records, copying costs, or any other costs directly related to supplying the requested records. Any charges cannot include general overhead costs.
- If we estimate that it will cost more than \$200 to respond to your request, we may require you to pay a deposit, not to exceed the amount of the estimate, before proceeding with your request. The five days that we have to respond to your request does not include the time between when we ask for a deposit and when you respond.
- You may request that we estimate in advance the charges for supplying the records that you have requested. This will allow you to know about any costs upfront, or give you the opportunity to modify your request in an attempt to lower the estimated costs. The five days that we have to respond to your request does not include the time between when we send you the estimate and when you respond. If you do not respond within 30 days, then your request will be deemed to be withdrawn.
- If you owe us money from a previous FOIA request that has remained unpaid for more than 30 days, Meherrin Regional Library may require payment of the past-due bill before it will respond to your new FOIA request.

## Types of Records

The following is a general description of the types of records held by Meherrin Regional Library:

- Personnel records concerning employees and officials of Meherrin Regional Library
- Records of contracts which Meherrin Regional Library has entered into

If you are unsure whether Meherrin Regional Library has the record(s) you seek, please contact the library director directly at 133 W. Hicks Street, Lawrenceville, VA or 434-848-2418.

## Commonly Used Exemptions

The Code of Virginia allows any public body to withhold certain records from public disclosure. Meherrin Regional Library commonly withholds records subject to the following exemptions:

- Personnel records (§ 2.2-3705.1 (1) of the Code of Virginia)
- Records subject to attorney-client privilege (§ 2.2-3705.1 (2)) or attorney work product (§ 2.2-3705.1 (3))
- Vendor proprietary information (§ 2.2-3705.1 (6))
- Records relating to the negotiation and award of a contract, prior to a contract being awarded (§ 2.2-3705.1 (12))

## Policy Regarding the Use of Exemptions

- The general policy of Meherrin Regional Library is to invoke the personnel records exemption in those instances where it applies in order to protect the privacy of employees and officials of Meherrin Regional Library.
- The general policy of Meherrin Regional Library is to invoke the contract negotiations exemption whenever it applies in order to protect Meherrin Regional Library bargaining position and negotiating strategy.

### 3.15.1 FOIA Fee Policy

#### Citizen Rights & Responsibilities under Virginia Freedom of Information Act:

In accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, the Library may make reasonable charges not to exceed its actual cost incurred in accessing, duplicating, supplying, or searching for requested records. The Library may not impose any extraneous, intermediary, or surplus fees or expenses to recoup the general costs associated with creating or maintaining records or transacting the general business of the Library. Any duplicating fee charged by the Library shall not exceed the actual cost of duplication. All charges for the supplying of requested records shall be estimated in advance at the request of the citizen as set forth in Virginia Code § 2.2-3704 (F).

- If the Library estimates that it will cost more than \$200 to respond to a request, MRL may require a deposit to be paid, not to exceed the amount of the estimate, before proceeding with the request. The five days that MRL has to respond to a request does not include the time between a request for deposit and when a response is received.
- An estimate of the charges for a request may be supplied in advance upon request. This will allow the requestor to know about any costs upfront, or allow the opportunity to modify a request in an attempt to lower the estimated costs.
- If the requestor owes MRL money from a previous FOIA request that has remained unpaid for more than 30 days, the MRL may require payment of the past-due bill before it will respond to a new FOIA request.
- The Library's fees to respond to a FOIA request are as follows:

Less than 25 pages copied and less than thirty minutes of staff time required to compile records	No fee
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Twenty-five or more pages copied	\$0.25 per page in excess of 24 (no charge for first 24 pages) plus Staff Time Fee, as applicable
Unlimited pages, electronic copy only	No charge per page; Staff Time Fee only, as applicable
Unlimited pages, on CD-Rom	\$2.50 for CD-Rom plus Staff Time Fee, as applicable
Staff Time Fee, if research and copy time is 30 minutes or less	No fee
Staff Time Fee, if research and copy time exceeds thirty minutes	\$6.00/30 minutes (\$12.00/hour), rounded to the half hour (i.e., 30 minutes), for time in excess of the first half hour. (No charge for first half hour of staff time.)

### Security Cameras

The Meherrin Regional Library deploys video surveillance equipment to promote the safety and security of library patrons, staff, and of property, including library materials. All video surveillance recordings from library equipment are considered library records as listed in MRLS Patron Privacy Policy, and as defined in the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VA Code 2.2-3705.7.03).

Video surveillance cameras are located where their use will promote safety and security, including building exteriors and interiors. In no event shall cameras be located in areas where patrons and/or staff have a reasonable expectation of privacy such as restrooms, staff break rooms, or offices. Audio surveillance is not permitted under this policy.

Video surveillance footage is not continuously monitored. Library patrons and staff should take appropriate precautions for their safety and for the security of their personal property.

Video footage will be retained for a flexible period determined by the storage capacity of the equipment, typically no longer than 10 days. As new footage is recorded, the oldest footage will automatically be deleted. Video footage will not be retained for an extended period or archived unless it is needed to document possible criminal activity or violations of MRLS Policy.

Library records, including video surveillance records, shall not be made available to any agency of state, federal, or local government or any individual except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized under the authority of, and pursuant to federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or administrative discovery procedures or legislative investigative power. Upon receipt of any inquiry, process, order, or subpoena seeking library records, the matter will be turned over to the Library Director. The Director and the Meherrin Regional Library's legal representation will determine if such inquiry, process, order, or subpoena is in proper legal form. The Library Director has the authority to share video with authorities in cases of emergency or criminal behavior that is unrelated to the use of library materials and services.

Library personnel have authorized access to library records as needed in the administration of their regular duties. Adopted November 13, 2024.

## **4.0 Employment Policies**

### **4.1 Selection Process**

Employees shall be appointed, promoted and dismissed solely on the basis of merit and fitness, and without regard to age, race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

Positions in the Meherrin Regional Library shall be open to all persons who meet the minimum requirements for the position. All employees of Meherrin Regional Library are to have a high school equivalency diploma as the minimum educational requirement for employment. Exceptions to this minimum educational requirement are high school students 19 years of age or younger who are actively enrolled in a public, private, or certified home school program. Additional minimum and other requirements which are specific to individual positions are stated in the job descriptions of the individual position.

All well qualified applicants shall be considered, and selection shall be based on the best qualified person available at the salary offered for the particular position. Applicants should expect that their employment history and/or references will be verified. Applicants providing false or deceptive information will be immediately eliminated from further consideration. A record of criminal behavior is not an automatic bar to employment, but failure to disclose any misdemeanor or felony conviction shall be the basis to reject an application or terminate employment.

It is the employee's responsibility to notify the MRL Business Office of any changes in personal information in writing. Examples of such information are name change, mailing address, telephone number, name of person to contact in case of emergency, etc. This information must be kept current. If such corrections have not been initiated in writing by the employee and sent to the MRL Business Office, any problem resulting from the Library's use of out-of-date information are the responsibility of the employee. Changes to tax information, social security names, beneficiaries for life insurance and retirement are accomplished by contacting MRL Business Office.

All employees hired are to follow the Meherrin Regional Library *Policy Manual and Bylaws*, the Meherrin Regional Library Employee Handbook, and abide by the Employee Code of Conduct (see Appendix.) Employees are to complete forms which may include but are not limited to the Acceptance of Employment Memorandum (revised 02/28/08), MRLS Non-Disclosure Agreement, Employment Eligibility Verification (I-9), Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate (IRS Form W-4), Employee's Virginia Income Tax Withholding Exemption Certificate (Form VA-4), Direct Deposit Authorization, Virginia State Police Criminal History Records Name Search (SP-167), and other applicable forms pertaining to employee benefits. All employees of Meherrin Regional Library System are "at will" employees.

#### **Library Director**

When this position becomes vacant, the Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees forms a Search Committee which includes the Board Chair (who serves as committee chair) and a minimum of two other board members representing all communities served. The committee advertises the position, accepts applications, and checks references. The Library Board interviews qualified candidates and makes its selection accordingly.

#### **Librarians**

When a librarian's position becomes vacant the Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees is notified immediately. The Library Director serves as chair of the search committee for the librarian's position. The Library Director will advertise the position, accept applications, check references, interview the candidate, and make the selection.

Additional staff may be asked to serve on the interview panel. The Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees shall be notified when the position has been filled. A librarian must hold a master's degree in library science, information science, or library and information science from an ALA accredited institution and be eligible to receive the Professional Librarian's Certificate issued by the Library of Virginia.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, September 13, 2017, March 10, 2021.

#### **Other Full-Time or Part-Time Employees**

When any of these positions become vacant, The Library Director will advertise the position, accept applications, check references, interview the candidates, and make the selection. Additional staff may be asked to serve on the interview panel. The Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees shall be notified when such a position becomes vacant and when the position has been filled.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, February 22, 2006.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 14, 2009, November 10, 2010, June 22, 2011 and March 21, 2012, March 10, 2021

## **4.2 Employment Classifications**

Meherrin Regional Library System has established the following categories for both exempt and non-exempt employees:

### **Exempt Employees**

Employees whose positions meet specific tests established by the Federal Labor Standards Act ("FLSA") and Virginia state law. In general, exempt employees are those engaged in executive managerial high-level administrative and professional jobs who are paid a fixed salary and perform certain duties. In addition, certain highly paid computer professionals are exempt. Exempt employees are not subject to the minimum wage and overtime laws.

### **Non-Exempt Employees**

Non-exempt employee are employees whose work is covered by the Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA). These employees are not exempt from the legal requirements concerning minimum wage and overtime.

### **Full-time Employees**

Employees who are not temporary employees, independent contractors, or independent consultants and who are regularly scheduled to work a schedule of 35 hours per work week.

### **Part-time Employees**

Employees who are not temporary employees, independent contractors, or independent consultants and who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per work week.

### **Temporary Employees**

Employees who are hired as interim replacements to temporarily supplement the workforce or to assist in the completion of a specific project. Employment assignments in this category are of limited duration and the temporary employee can be let go before the end of the defined period. Short term assignments generally are periods of three (3) months or less, however, such assignments may be extended. All Temporary Employees are at-will regardless of the anticipated duration of the assignment (see Employment-At-Will Policy.) Temporary employees retain that status unless and until notified in writing of a change.

Each employee will be advised of his or her status at the time of hire and of any change in status. Regardless of the employee's employment category status, all employees are reminded that the Commonwealth of Virginia is an at-will employment state. An employee is employed at-will and the employment relationship can be ended by the Library or the employee at any time, with or without cause.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

### **4.3 Equal Employment Opportunity & American with Disabilities Act**

Meherrin Regional Library System expects all employees to support our equal employment opportunity policy and to take all steps necessary to maintain a workplace free for all from unlawful discrimination and harassment.

It is the policy of the Library to provide equal employment opportunities to all employees and employment applicants without regard to unlawful considerations of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ancestry, physical or mental disability, and medical condition including medical characteristics, marital status or any other classification protected by applicable local, state, or federal laws. This policy prohibits unlawful discrimination based on the perception that anyone has any of those characteristics, or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics. This policy applies to all aspects of employment, including, but not limited to, hiring, job assignment, working conditions, compensation, promotion, benefits, scheduling, training, discipline and termination. Reasonable accommodation is available for qualified individuals with disabilities, upon request.

In compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Library provides accommodation to the disabled to the full extent required by law. The Library may require medical certification of both the disability and the need for accommodation. Keep in mind that the Library can only seek to accommodate the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified disabled individual. Therefore, it is the employee's responsibility to come forward if there is a need for an accommodation. The Library will engage in an interactive process with the employee to identify possible accommodations, if any will help the applicant or employee perform the job. We further recognize that employees with life threatening illnesses, including but not limited to cancer, heart disease, and AIDS, may wish to continue engaging in as many of their normal pursuits as their condition allows, including work. As long as these employees are able to meet acceptable performance standards with or without reasonable accommodation and medical evidence indicates that their working does not present a substantial threat to themselves or others, they will be permitted to do so.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

### **4.4 Personnel Privacy**

In the course of employment with Meherrin Regional Library System, employees may have access to "confidential information" regarding the Library, which may include its business strategy, future plans, financial information, contracts, suppliers, customers and customer information, personnel information or other information that the Library considers proprietary and confidential. Maintaining the confidentiality of this information is vital to the Library's position in its community and its customers and, ultimately, to the Library's ability to maintain financial stability and assure customer privacy. Employees must protect this information by safeguarding it when in use, using it only for business of the Library and disclosing it only when authorized to do so and to those who have a legitimate business need to know about it. This duty of confidentiality applies whether the employee is on or off the Library's premises and during and even after the employee's employment with the Library. This duty of confidentiality also applies to communications transmitted by the Library's electronic communications. Refer in particular to the Handbook, 4.10 Internet, E-mail and Computer Use Policy. As a condition of employment with the Library, all

employees must sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

#### **4.5 Employment of Minors**

The Meherrin Regional Library System strictly adheres to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) in regards to the employment of minors. Generally speaking, the FLSA sets the minimum age for employment (14 years for non-agricultural jobs), restricts the hours youth under the age of 16 may work, and prohibits youth under the age of 18 from being employed in hazardous occupations. In addition, the FLSA establishes subminimum wage standards for certain employees who are less than 20 years of age, full-time students, student learners, apprentices, and workers with disabilities.

The FLSA's child labor provisions are designed to protect the educational opportunities of youth and prohibit their employment in jobs that are detrimental to their health and safety.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

#### **4.6 Employment of Relatives**

It shall be the policy of the Meherrin Regional Library System that no members of an immediate family are allowed to hold a supervisor/subordinate relationship within the Library. Immediate family is defined for this purpose as: mother; father; sibling; wife; husband; spouse or domestic partner; child; legal ward; grandparents or grandchildren of the employee or the employee's spouse, or any other person who lives in the same household as the employee.

No immediate members of an employee's family may be appointed to sit on the Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

#### **4.7 Introductory/Probationary Period**

The first 180 days (6 months) employment with the Meherrin Regional Library System are considered an introductory/probationary period for all newly hired employees. During this time, the employee will learn new position responsibilities, get acquainted with fellow employees, and determine if the employee is happy with the position. Also, during this time the employee's supervisor will monitor the employee's job performance. Upon completion of the introductory period, the supervisor will review the employee's performance with the employee through a written evaluation document. If the Library finds the performance satisfactory and decides to continue an employee's employment, the employee will be advised of, if necessary, any improvements expected. This is also an opportunity for an employee to make suggestions to improve the Library's efficiency and operations. Completion of the introductory period does not entitle the employee to remain employed by the Library for any definite period of time, but instead allows both the employee and the Library to evaluate whether or not the employee is right for the position. Please note an employee's status as an at-will employee as defined by the common-law doctrine of employment-at-will as adhered to in the Commonwealth of Virginia does not change.

During the introductory/probationary period an employee may be dismissed. Introductory/probationary employees are not eligible for the Meherrin Regional Library System's Grievance Procedure process. If the employee completes the introductory/probationary period successfully, he or she is entitled to use, if necessary, the Library's Grievance Procedure process. The Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees will be notified.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014, March 10, 2021.

#### **4.8 Personnel Records and Employee References**

Meherrin Regional Library System maintains a personnel file and payroll records for each employee as required by law. Personnel files and payroll records are the property of the Library and may not be removed from Library premises without written authorization. Because personnel files and payroll records are confidential, access to the records is restricted. Generally, only those who have a legitimate reason to review information in an employee's file are allowed to do so. Disclosure of personnel information to outside sources will be limited. However, the Library will cooperate with requests from authorized law enforcement or local, state, or federal agencies conducting official investigations and as otherwise legally required.

At any time an employee may contact the library's business office to request a time to review their payroll records and/or personnel file. With reasonable advance notice, an employee may review his or her own records in the Library's offices during regular business hours and in the presence of an individual appointed by the Library to maintain the records. No copies of documents in your file may be made, with the exception of documents that you have previously signed. You may add your comments to any disputed item in the file.

By policy, the Meherrin Regional Library System will provide only the former or present employee's dates of employment and position(s) held with the Library and eligibility for rehire, if asked. Compensation information may also be verified if written authorization is provided by the employee.

#### **4.9 Immigration Law Compliance**

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 on day of hire and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility within three business days of date of hire. Former employees who are rehired must also complete an I-9 form if they have not completed an I-9 form with the Library within the last three years, or if their previous I-9 form is no longer retained or valid. You may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

#### **4.10 Political Neutrality**

Maintenance of individual freedom and our political institutions necessitates broad scale participation by citizens concerning the selection, nomination and election of our public office holders. Meherrin Regional Library System will not discriminate against any employee because of identification with and support of any lawful political activity. Library employees are entitled to their own personal political position. The Library will not discriminate against employees based on their lawful political activity engaged in outside of work. If an employee is engaging in political activity, however, that employee should always make it clear that any actions and opinions are their own and not necessarily, those of the Library, and that the employee is not representing the Library.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

#### **4.11 Gifts/Gratuities Acceptance and Charity Solicitation/Distribution**

Meherrin Regional Library System employees shall not accept gifts, gratuities, or loans from organizations, business concerns or individuals with whom he or she has official relationships in business of the Library. These limitations are not intended to prohibit the acceptance of articles of negligible value which are distributed generally, not to prohibit

employees from accepting social courtesies which promote good public relations, nor to prohibit employees from obtaining loans from regular lending institutions. It is particularly important that library employees guard against relationships which might be construed as evidence of favoritism, coercion, unfair advantage or collusion.

The Meherrin Regional Library System prohibits the solicitation, distribution and posting of materials on or at Library property by any employee or nonemployee, except as may be permitted by the policy. The sole exceptions to this policy are charitable and community activities supported by Library Management. Nonemployees may not solicit employees or distribute literature of any kind on Library premises at any time with the exception of items approved by Library staff for posting on the public information board. Employees may not solicit other employees during work times, except in connection with a Library approved or sponsored event. Employees may not distribute literature of any kind during work times or in any work area at any time, except in connection with a Library sponsored event. The posting of materials or electronic announcements are permitted with prior approval from Library Management. Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

#### **4.12 Hours of Work and Payroll Practices**

##### **Pay Periods and Paydays**

Employees are paid on a monthly basis. All employees will be paid on the last working business day of the month. All employees are paid by check or direct deposit on the above-mentioned payday. If the regular payday falls on a weekend or Library holiday, employees will be paid on the last business day before the holiday and/or weekend (exception may be made for a holiday pay period).

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

##### **Flex-time/Compensatory Time-Off**

Both exempt and nonexempt employees will be paid in accordance with Federal and Virginia state law. Flex-time or compensatory time off in lieu of working hours provided by an employee beyond a pre-arranged daily work schedule may be granted at the discretion of the department director/supervisor consistent with the guidelines of Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) compliance. Such use of staff time must be pre-approved by Library Administration. Upon separation exempt employees shall forfeit all unused flex-time/compensatory time and no payment shall be made for unused compensatory time.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

##### **Rest and Meal Breaks**

Employee meal periods are important to employee health and for company productivity. All rest and meal periods will be in accordance with Virginia state law and the federal Fair Labor Standards Act. To the extent Virginia state law does not require rest and meal breaks, nonexempt employees will be allowed a 15 minute break for every four hour period worked. This time is counted and paid as time worked. All full-time employees, whether exempt or nonexempt, receive a meal break of 60 minutes. The meal period will not be included in the total hours worked per day and is not compensable. Nonexempt employees are to be completely relieved of all job duties while on meal breaks. Part-time employees scheduled to work five or more hours will be allowed a 30-60 minute unpaid meal break as scheduled by the supervisor to meet the business needs of the department.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014. Revised July 13, 2022.

##### **Time Sheets/Attendance Records**

Nonexempt employees are required to keep an accurate and complete record of their attendance and hours worked. Time sheets are official business records and may not be altered without the employee's supervisor's approval and

may not be falsified in any way. Exempt employees use attendance records in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

### **Payroll Deductions**

Various payroll deductions are made each payday to comply with federal and state laws pertaining to taxes and insurance. Deductions will be made for the following: Federal and State Income Tax Withholding, Social Security, Medicare, and other items designated by the employee or required by law (including a valid court order.) An employee can adjust their federal and state income tax withholding by completing the proper federal or state form and submitting it to the business office. At the start of each calendar year, each employee will be supplied with a Wage and Tax Statement (W-2) form for the prior year. This statement summarizes income and deductions for the year.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 10, 2021.

### **Wage Garnishment**

A garnishment is a court order requiring an employer to remit part of an employee's wages to a third party to satisfy a just debt. Once Meherrin Regional Library System receives the legal papers ordering a garnishment, the Library is required by law to continue making deductions from an employee's check until the Library has withheld the full amount or until the Library receives legal papers from the court to stop the garnishment. Even if an employee has already paid the debt, the Library will still need the legal papers to stop the garnishment.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

### **Direct Deposit**

All Meherrin Regional Library System employees are encouraged, but not required, to use direct deposit and have their paychecks deposited into a bank account of an accredited participating bank or credit union.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

### **Work Hours and Scheduling**

Meherrin Regional Library System office hours begin at 8:30 AM and conclude at 5:00 PM Monday through Friday with a one hour lunch break for a total of 35 hours scheduled work hours per week. The Library's public service personnel work hours may fluctuate according to public service coverage needs of the branches' open business hours. Such personnel work hours may vary daily to ensure good service coverage for the Library's open public service business hours. Neither the meal break nor any rest break(s) may be used to account for an employee's late arrival or early departure or to cover time off for other purposes.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

### **Inclement Weather**

Shorter work days due to inclement weather will be treated like a regular work day for those employees scheduled to work that day. Meherrin Regional Library System follows its fiscal agent (Brunswick County) for closures or alterations to the work day due to inclement weather.

If an employee is scheduled to work on a day which has an inclement weather incident and the employee reported to work as scheduled, then when library hours are shortened due to inclement weather the employee shall be paid for their shift's scheduled hours. If an employee does not come into work as scheduled and an inclement weather situation arises, then the employee shall not be paid unless the employee uses accrued leave

to cover their absence.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

### **Building and Department Closures**

Meherrin Regional Library strives to insure environmental conditions in library buildings and departmental offices are safe and satisfactory for patron access and staff performance. In the event of mechanical failure including but not limited to power, water, sewer, or HVAC, the Library Director has the authority to reassign staff or close effected library departments or branches to best meet the needs of the public and secure the well-being of library staff. It is further defined that office or building temperatures that are below 60 degrees or above 85 degrees for a four hour period of time are considered extreme. In these instances departments or buildings will be subject to closure.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, November 14, 2018.

### **Compensation of Employees**

Meherrin Regional Library System currently utilizes the County of Brunswick (our fiscal agent) pay scale. For each class of positions a salary range is assigned which consists of a minimum and maximum salary step. In arriving at salary ranges, consideration is given to prevailing rates for comparable work in other public employment and relevant private business, the current cost of living, the responsibilities of the position, working conditions, and the Library's financial condition and policy.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

### **Telecommuting**

Meherrin Regional Library System may permit selected employees to work at an alternative work location for all or part of their work week in order to promote general work efficiencies. Library Management is responsible for any telecommuting assignments and the Library Directors' prior approval must be obtained. All work done by Library employees through a telecommuting assignment shall be subject to all provisions of the Meherrin Regional Library Handbook and Meherrin Regional Library Manual and Bylaws.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **4.13 Employee Benefits and Services**

Aside from those benefits required by state and federal regulations, Meherrin Regional Library System also offers additional benefits for its employees. From time to time, benefits may be added or deleted from the benefits package; the Library reserves the right to make such changes. Refer to the Meherrin Regional Library Employee Handbook and Library Business Office for further information.

### **Group Health Insurance**

Meherrin Regional Library System offers a group health plan for eligible employees. The Library's group health insurance plan is offered through the Brunswick County, Virginia, Employees Health Plan. For more information, refer to the Meherrin Regional Library Employee Handbook or contact the Library's Business Office.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 10, 2021.

### **COBRA**

Under the provisions of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1986, if an employee is covered under the Library's group health insurance plan(s) that employee is entitled to continue coverage in the event that employment with the Library ends. Under COBRA, the Library must offer each qualified beneficiary (the employee and any covered dependents) who would otherwise lose coverage under the plan as a result of a qualifying

event an opportunity to continue their insurance coverage. A qualifying event is defined as termination of employment, a reduction in the number of hours of employment, death of covered employee, divorce or legal separation, a dependent child ceases to be dependent, eligibility of the covered employee for Medicare, or an employer's bankruptcy.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Group Life Insurance**

Meherrin Regional Library System offers a group life insurance plan for eligible employees, including accidental death and dismemberment coverage. The Library's group life insurance plan is offered through the Virginia Retirement System (VRS). For more information, refer to the Meherrin Regional Library Employee Handbook or contact the Library's Business Office.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 10, 2021.

### **Social Security Benefits (FICA)**

During employment with the Meherrin Regional Library System, the employee and the Library both contribute funds to the Federal government to support the Social Security Program. This program is intended to provide the employee with retirement benefit payments and medical coverage upon reaching retirement age.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Unemployment Insurance Coverage**

Employees laid off, dismissed, or otherwise terminated by action of the Meherrin Regional Library System for reasons other than misconduct or improper acts shall be entitled to apply for and may receive unemployment compensation under the rules and regulations of the Virginia Employment Commission. Any notice of any dismissed or terminated employee having applied for unemployment compensation shall be forwarded promptly to the Library Director or his or her designated agent by the manager/supervisor, along with pertinent data and/or recorded action that may have been taken.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Health Insurance Credit**

Meherrin Regional Library System participates in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) health insurance credit program. This benefit is provided for Library retirees (full-time eligible employees) who participate in a supplemental health insurance policy to assist with the cost of health insurance premiums. Qualifying health plans include: individual health plans coverage as a dependent on a spouse's health plan; employer-sponsored health plans; Medicare Part B; and dental, vision and prescription drug plans including Medicare Part D. Other types of plans for specific conditions or coverage are not eligible.

The health insurance credit is added to the eligible employee's monthly VRS retirement benefit. The credit is a dollar amount set by the Commonwealth of Virginia's General Assembly for each year of service. The credit ends upon death of the VRS member and cannot exceed the amount of the individual's health insurance premium.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Retirement**

Meherrin Regional Library System participates in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) for eligible full-time employees. Employees should refer to the VRS website or the VRS telephone contact number for further

information. VRS contact information is available through the Library's Business Office.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Staff Library Borrowing Privileges**

Meherrin Regional Library System staff members may borrow library materials with the same circulation period as the public. Fines will not be charged to library staff members for overdue materials. Library staff members receive no special consideration when reserving materials. Library staff members who do not reside within Brunswick County, Greenville County or the City of Emporia are eligible for a library membership (borrowing) card without a nonresident charge.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Continuing Education/Staff Development**

The Library Board of Trustees supports the efforts of staff members who wish to enhance their work-related skills in order to improve library services. A certain amount of staff development should be anticipated and planned for in the Library's annual budget.

Enhancement of skills may take the form of in-service training, local workshops, Library of Virginia sponsored workshops, professional library organization workshops, library webinars, or other training which directly pertains to an employee's work.

It is the Library Director's job to keep staff informed concerning learning opportunities, which arise, as well as to encourage the staff in areas where training needs have been identified.

When the priorities of the Library do not allow full reimbursement for training expenses, the employee can be offered other support such as administrative leave time where the employee would be paid for their normal work hours while attending the workshop. Employees are encouraged to reduce expenses by such methods as carpooling, limiting their attendance to day trips, or sharing part of the cost, for example, the Library might pay the registration fee and the employee would pay for meals and gas. These methods will be utilized at the Library Director's discretion.

Approval for attendance at any workshop or training situation must be given by the Library Director. A library employee who is seeking a MLIS may apply to the Library Board of Trustees for a State Aid Fellowship. Requesters for training attendance or for a State Aid Fellowship should refer to the Library Employee Handbook or Library's Business Office for further information.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 10, 2021.

### **Short/Long Term Disability**

The Meherrin Regional Library System will offer to eligible full-time employees, effective January 1, 2014, short/long term disability benefits through the Virginia Retirement System, Hybrid Retirement Plan (Plan 3). Basic disability is currently offered through the Virginia Retirement System for eligible full-time employees participating in the VRS' Plan 1 or Plan 2. For more information, refer to the Meherrin Regional Library Employee Handbook or contact the Library's Business Office.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 10, 2021.

## **Worker's Compensation**

All states have Worker's Compensation laws whose purpose is to promote the general welfare of people by providing compensation for accidental injuries or death suffered in the course of employment. These laws are designed to provide protection to workers suffering occupational disabilities through accidents arising out of, and in the course of employment. Meherrin Regional Library System carries Worker's Compensation Insurance for all employees and pays the entire cost of the insurance program. Any employee who is unable to work due to a work related injury or illness and who is eligible for Worker's Compensation benefits will be provided an unpaid leave for the period required. The first 12 weeks will be treated concurrently as a family and medical leave under the federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for eligible employees. For more information, refer to the Meherrin Regional Library Employee Handbook or contact the Library's Business Office.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 10, 2021.

## **Worker's Compensation Return-to-Work Policy Statement**

An effective workers' compensation program includes many parts, all of which are important. This policy addresses the Meherrin Regional Library's deliberate, organized effort to return injured employees to productive employment as early as possible, compatible with physical restrictions and good medical practices. A strong return to work effort yields several benefits including: acceleration of the injured employee's recovery; maintenance of an experienced workforce; reductions in claims costs; and improved employee relations.

Our first responsibility is the prevention of occupational injury and illness. Despite our best efforts, injuries and illnesses do sometimes occur. It then becomes our responsibility to mitigate the impact of the injury or illness on both the employee and the locality. Meherrin Regional Library is committed to providing transitional work, on a temporary basis. By transitional work, we mean: appropriate work to allow the resolution of the injury and to prevent re-injury; appropriate modification of the job according to the medical limitations; setting a positive atmosphere and letting employees ease back into a routine by adjusting work expectations/encouraging employees to adhere to therapy schedules, and explaining the need for transitional work to the employee's co-workers to reduce peer resentment; a meaningful job (Make-work projects are of little or no value ); and work assignments that are temporary . Temporary transitional work assignments will be reviewed at least every 14 days.

Procedure:

- Meherrin Regional Library shall receive a workers' compensation follow-up form, which identifies specific employee restrictions.
- Meherrin Regional Library shall review these physical restrictions and plan tasks for the employee on a temporary transitional assignment.
- For employees who are out on temporary disability, a certified letter will be sent notifying the employee of a temporary transitional work form.
- The employer and employee will meet to discuss the temporary transitional work assignment and complete a temporary transitional work form.
- The employee's medical provider will notify the employer of any changes in the injured worker's physical restrictions, as recommended in writing by the medical provider.
- The employer will re-evaluate all temporary work assignments at least every 14 days, or as conditions merit.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 10, 2004.

#### **4.14 Employee Leaves of Absence and Time Off**

While regular attendance is crucial to maintain business operations, the Library recognizes that for a variety of reasons, employees may need time off from work. The Library has available a number of types of leaves of absence. Some are governed by law and others are discretionary. For all planned leaves employees submit their request at least thirty (30) days in advance; in case of emergencies, employees should submit the request as soon as they become aware of the need for leave. All leaves must have the approval of library management. If, during a leave, an employee accepts another job, engages in other employment or consulting outside of the Library, or applies for unemployment insurance benefits, the employee may be considered to have voluntarily resigned from employment with the Library. For further information refer to the Meherrin Regional Library Employee Handbook, Section 6, Employee Leaves of Absence and Time Off and the Library's Business Office.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 10, 2021.

#### **Holidays**

Meherrin Regional Library System observes the same holiday schedule as the Commonwealth of Virginia as announced by the Governor. The holidays generally include the following, but may occasionally include other days as per the Governor: New Year's Day; Lee-Jackson Day; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; George Washington's Birthday; Memorial Day; July 4<sup>th</sup>; Labor Day; Columbus Day; Veterans Day; Thanksgiving and the Day after Thanksgiving; and Christmas.

MRL libraries will be closed the Saturday before a holiday which falls on Monday or after a holiday which falls on Friday. MRL libraries are closed the Saturday after Thanksgiving. If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the Meherrin Regional Library System will be closed.

The Library will grant paid holiday time off to all eligible employees. Holiday pay for eligible full-time employees will be calculated based on the employee's base pay rate (as of the date of the holiday). Part-time staff hired after January 1, 2000 are not eligible for holiday pay. Part-time staff hired prior to January 1, 2000 are eligible for holiday pay if the holidays falls on their regularly scheduled work day. Part-time employees hired before January 1, 2000 will accrue holiday pay in proportion to the number of days worked per week.

If a Staff Development Day is scheduled requiring employees to work on a holiday, then eligible full-time employees and part-time eligible employees are to be allowed their holiday compensation time to be taken by the employee at a later date in the same pay period with prior approval by their supervisor.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015. Revised November 14, 2018.

#### **Family and Medical Leave**

Meherrin Regional Library System complies with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA.) Special family and medical leave is provided for eligible employees after childbirth or adoption or for the care of a child, spouse, parent or the employee himself in the case of serious illness. All such leave is provided on a basis consistent with the requirements of the FMLA. Meherrin Regional Library System recognizes that our employees may occasionally need to take unpaid leave to care for a new child, to care for a seriously ill family member, to handle an employee's own medical issues, or to handle issues relating to a family member's military service, possibly including caring for a family member who is injured while serving in the military.

If an employee anticipates a need to take time off to deal with family and medical issues, please speak with your supervisor or Library's Business Office.

Approval for leave requests under the provisions of this section shall be granted only to current employees who have been employed by the Library for at least twelve months and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the preceding twelve month period.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 10, 2021.

### **Worker's Compensation Leave**

Any employee who is unable to work due to a work related injury or illness and who is eligible for Worker's Compensation benefits will be provided an unpaid leave for the period required. The first 12 weeks will be treated concurrently as a family and medical leave under the federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for eligible employees.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Military Leave**

An employee who is absent for annual active duty for training as a member of the reserve components of the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, or United States Coast and Geodetic Survey is allowed leave without pay for the period required to fulfill his or her military obligation. Any extraordinary absences for military purpose such as special schools, training, or volunteer service shall be allowed only with the approval of the Library Director. An employee who is absent for duty with the National Guard under orders of the Governor pursuant to Section 44-75.1 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, is entitled to leave of absence at full time pay or at the current rate of pay for the employee's position and hours for the period of ordered absence.

An employee voluntarily entering extended active duty in the armed forces of the United States shall be deemed to have resigned from his position and shall not have automatic rights to reinstatement in his position upon return from active duty. Provided, however, if an employee who voluntarily leaves employment for active duty: (a) serves not more than four (4) years; (b) has a certificate attesting that military duty was satisfactorily completed; and, (c) applies for re-employment in Library service no later than following separation duty from active military duty, said employee shall be re-employed in any available position for which he or she meets the qualifications and shall serve the required introductory/probationary period. He or she shall be given credit for satisfactory library service in determining compensation and annual leave.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Bereavement Leave**

In the event of a death in the immediate family, full-time and any eligible part-time (those hired prior to January 1, 2000) Meherrin Regional Library System employees may have, if needed, up to three (3) working days, with pay, at their regular straight time rate or base salary, to handle family affairs and attend the funeral. "Immediate family" is defined as: father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, domestic partner, child, stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, stepsister, stepchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandparents and grandchildren. Special consideration may be given to other special circumstances with family members.

Those employees not eligible for paid bereavement leave shall, with approval of the Library Director, be granted up to three (3) working days of Administrative Leave without pay to handle family affairs and attend the funeral.

An employee who wishes to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify his or her supervisor immediately. The length of employment service which entitles an eligible employee to take bereavement leave is one (1) month.

Bereavement leave will be granted unless there are unusual business needs or staffing requirements.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Voting, Jury Duty or Other Special Circumstances**

All employees should be able to vote, either before or after regularly assigned work hours; however, when this is not possible brief paid leaves may be granted by the Library Director or his or her designee.

U.S. citizens have a civic obligation to provide jury duty service when called. Special leave is granted with pay for absence from their scheduled work days in order that the employee may serve required jury duty or to attend court as a witness on subpoena.

By state law, employees may not be subject to any adverse personnel action and may not be forced to use sick leave or vacation leave. An employee who has appeared for four or more hours cannot be required to start a shift after 5 PM that day or before 3 AM the next morning.

The employee must bring in the jury duty notice as soon as it is received so that appropriate arrangements can be made to cover his or her duties. This notice shall be given to the employee's supervisor or Library Management. Employees are required to call in or report for work on those days or parts of days when their presence in court is not required.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Staff Development Day**

Meherrin Regional Library System holds an annual Staff Development Day. Employees are required to attend this training if at all possible. This is a Board of Trustees approved special training opportunity which is usually very informative and team building for all Library employees. All employees will be paid for their attendance at this training day regardless of their regular work schedule. The date for this training is subject to approval by the Library Board of Trustees.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Annual Leave/Vacation**

Eligible full-time employees are allowed to accrue vacation at the rate of one day a month. After five years, vacation accrues at the rate of 1 ½ days a month, up to 18 days per calendar year. Part-time employees hired after January 1, 2000 are not eligible for vacation pay. Employees must work three (3) months before any vacation time may be taken and then are entitled only to time earned.

Professional librarians are allowed a vacation accrual of 18 working days per year, to be earned at a rate of 1 ½ days per month. Professional librarians with five or more years' service will earn vacation at the rate of two days per month. Professional librarians are those holding a certificate issued by the Virginia State Board for the Certification of Librarians (or the state agency given responsibility for licensing and certifying librarians.)

Employees may not use vacation leave that has not accrued. Vacation leave may be carried over from year to year up to 45 days (315 hours); after that time earned will be lost unless used. Employees should be careful in tracking their vacation accrual and may request clarification from Library' Business Office during office work hours regarding their

leave balances. Upon termination of employment, an employee will receive compensation equivalent to the employee's accrued vacation leave of up to 45 days (315 hours.)

Vacation time off must be applied for and approved by the employee's supervisor. All supervisors must apply for and receive leave request approval from the Library Director. The Library's Administrative Assistant shall be responsible for keeping a current account of all leave used and accumulated. Vacation leave use should be documented appropriately on an employee's time sheet and attendance record.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 10, 2021.

### **Sick Leave and Local Disability Program (LDP)**

Sick leave may be used for illness, medical, dental or optical appointments. Sick leave may be used to care for immediate family and/or members of the same household. Immediate family shall include the employee's children (step, foster, or adopted included), father, mother, husband, wife, grandparents, or grandchildren.

When an employee is unable to work, the employee shall notify his or her supervisor as soon as possible; but no later than 30 minutes after they are scheduled to work. The Library prefers an employee to notify their supervisor directly and with at least 60 minutes (1 hour) advance notice of the employee's scheduled work arrival time. Supervisors will notify the Library Director when they are unable to work. When an employee will be taking extended sick leave, (more than 3 days), written notice of last day of work and expected day of return should be applied for and approved by the Library Director.

The Library reserves the right to demand a physician's note if sick leave is taken for more than three (3) consecutive days or for multiple occurrences of use over a 30 day period. Abuse or obvious and flagrant misuse of sick leave may result in disciplinary action or constitute grounds for dismissal.

Sick leave use should be documented appropriately on an employee's time sheet and attendance record and is subject to supervisor approval.

Leave may be taken after one (1) month of employment.

Upon termination or retirement from employment with Meherrin Regional Library unused accrued sick leave shall not be paid.

Meherrin Regional Library eligible employees under the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) Plan 1 or 2 accrue sick leave at the rate of one day per month. Full-time eligible VRS covered Plan 1 and Plan 2 employees may accrue sick leave up to 60 days (420 hours).

Part-time staff hired after January 1, 2000 are not eligible for sick leave. Part-time staff hired before January 1, 2000 will accrue sick leave in proportion to the number of days worked. Any part-time eligible employees who are eligible to accrue sick leave do so based upon the number of hours worked.

When an employee VRS eligible Plan 1, Plan 2, or Hybrid Retirement Plan, Plan 3 or part-time eligible employee has exhausted accrued sick leave, an employee's vacation leave may be used. Subsequent time taken is considered leave without pay and approval is at the discretion of the Library Director.

Meherrin Regional Library eligible employees under the Virginia Retirement System Hybrid Retirement Plan, Plan 3, accrue sick leave at the rate of one day per month until their total available sick leave balance consists of up to 15 days (105 hours). 105 hours of sick leave allows sick leave coverage for up to two weeks for a full-time employee at which time, should it be necessary, the Hybrid Retirement Plan, Plan 3 eligible employee would be eligible for extended sick leave coverage through the Local Disability Program (LDP). 105 hours of sick leave would also provide five more days of additional sick leave coverage for use during a Plan 3 employee's short term disability coverage period.

The Local Disability Program applies to all eligible employees participating in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) Hybrid Retirement Plan. All employees hired for 35 or more hours per week after January 1, 2014 (with no creditable service or account balance with VRS) must participate in the VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan also known as Plan 3. Provisions of the LDP follow Chapter 11.1 of Title 51.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. The LDP provides employees supplemental replacement income during periods of partial or total disability for both non-occupational and occupational disabilities. An employee is eligible for non-occupational related disability benefits after one continuous year of participation in the LDP. An employee is eligible for occupational related disability benefits on the first day of participation in the LDP. For more information on the LDP, please refer to the Library's Business Office or the Virginia Retirement System.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, November 10, 2015.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 10, 2021.

### **Maternity Leave**

Accrued vacation and sick leave may be used for the purpose of maternity leave, but no additional paid leave is allowed. The employee is granted a leave of absence without pay to the time advised by her doctor. Eligible employees are covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Administrative Leave/Unpaid Leave**

Administrative leave (brief paid leaves) may be granted by the Library Director to allow employees to vote, to donate blood, to participate in civic or charitable causes or due to a death in the family.

Unpaid leave may be obtained as compliant with Library policy, state law and federal law and/or with the permission of the Library Director.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Sick Leave Transfer Policy**

When an employee has utilized all of his or her accrued sick leave due to an extended illness or accident, that employee may be assisted by means of fellow employees donating their accrued sick leave time. A sick leave transfer is voluntary and will only be made when necessary. The employee donating the time is to contact the Meherrin Regional Library System Administrative Assistant and fill out the transfer request form. The total number of days/hours donated by the employee will be transferred to the needed employee's record for him or her to utilize. Employees may not donate leave time in excess of their own accrued sick leave balances.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

## **4.15 Standards of Conduct and Employee Performance**

### **Customer Service Standards and Employee Code of Conduct**

All employees hired are to follow Library service standards and to abide by the Meherrin Regional Library Policy Manual and Bylaws, the Meherrin Regional Library Employee Handbook, and the Meherrin Regional Library Employee Code of Conduct. Refer to the Meherrin Regional Library Employee Handbook and Library's Business Office for further information.

All employees are expected to follow the Meherrin Regional Library System's Customer Service Approach: practice a professional demeanor; maintain current, up-to-date knowledge about Meherrin Regional Library System policies and procedures; understand and accept Meherrin Regional Library's operating philosophy; and understand what the Meherrin Regional Library does and why.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Anti-Harassment and Discrimination**

The Meherrin Regional Library System is committed to providing a work environment free of sexual or any form of unlawful harassment or discrimination. Harassment or unlawful discrimination against individuals on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ancestry, physical or mental disability, and medical condition including medical characteristics, marital status or any other classification protected by local, state, or federal laws is illegal and prohibited by Library policy. Such conduct by or towards any employee, contract worker, customer, vendor or anyone else who does business with the Library will not be tolerated. Any employee or contract worker who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of his or her employment or engagement. To the extent a customer, vendor, other person with whom the Library does business engages in unlawful harassment or discrimination, the Library will take appropriate corrective action.

Prohibited Conduct - Prohibited harassment or discrimination includes any verbal, physical or visual conduct based on sex, race, age, national origin, disability or any other legally protected basis if:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or engagement;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for decisions concerning that individual's employment or engagement; or
- It creates a hostile or offensive work environment.

Prohibited harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and lewd, vulgar or obscene remarks, jokes, posters or cartoons, and any unwelcome touching, pinching, or other physical contact. Other forms of unlawful harassment or discrimination may include racial epithets, slurs and derogatory remarks, stereotypes, jokes, posters or cartoons based on race, national origin, age, disability, marital status or other legally protected categories. Prohibited harassment might also be transmitted using the Library's electronic communication system, or through other online conduct.

Meherrin Regional Library System defines bullying as "repeated inappropriate behavior, either direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment." Such behavior violates the Library's Employee Code of Conduct which clearly states that all employees will be treated with dignity and respect. The Library will not tolerate bullying behavior. Employees found in violation of this policy will be disciplined.

Complaint Procedure: Employees or contract workers who feel that they have been harassed or discriminated against, or who witness any harassment or discrimination by an employee, contract worker, customer, vendor or anyone else who does business with the Library, should immediately report such conduct to their supervisor or any other member of management.

Do not allow an inappropriate situation to continue by not reporting it, regardless of who is creating the situation. No employee, contract worker, customer, vendor or other person who does business with this organization is exempt from the prohibitions in this policy. In response to every complaint, the Library will conduct an investigation and, if improper conduct is found, take appropriate corrective action.

To the extent that an employee or contract worker is not satisfied with the Library's handling of a harassment or discrimination complaint, he or she may also contact the appropriate state or federal enforcement agency for legal relief.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Attendance**

Punctuality and regular attendance are essential to the successful operation of the Library's business. If an employee is unable to report to work (or to report to work on time) for any reason, the employee must notify his or her supervisor before his or her starting time (preference is for at least 60 minutes notification prior to the employee scheduled shift start time.) If an employee desires to leave work for any reason during the workday, the employee must obtain the approval of his or her supervisor prior to leaving. In the event that the employee fails to call his or her supervisor or report for work for three (3) consecutive workdays, the employee will be deemed to have voluntarily resigned from his or her employment with the Library and will be removed from the payroll. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Discipline and Standards of Conduct**

As needed, the Meherrin Regional Library System may impose discipline whenever it determines discipline is necessary or appropriate. Discipline may take various forms, including verbal counseling, written warnings, suspension, demotion, transfer, reassignment or termination. The discipline imposed will depend on the circumstances of each case; therefore, discipline will not necessarily be imposed in any particular sequence. Moreover, at any time the Library determines it is appropriate, an employee may be discharged immediately.

Every organization must have certain standards of conduct to guide the behavior of employees. Although there is no possible way to identify every rule of conduct, the following is an illustrative list of problematic conduct (not intended to be comprehensive or to limit the Library's right to impose discipline for any other conduct it deems appropriate.) Keep in mind that these standards of conduct apply to all employees whenever they are on Library property and/or conducting Library business (on or off Library property.) Engaging in any conduct the Library deems inappropriate may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Examples of problematic behaviors include:

- Dishonesty;
- Falsification of Library records;
- Unauthorized use or possession of property that belongs to the Library, a co-worker, or of the public;
- Possession or control of illegal drugs, weapons, explosives, or other dangerous or unauthorized materials;

- Fighting, engaging in threats of violence or violence, use of vulgar or abusive language, horseplay, practical jokes or other disorderly conduct that may endanger others or damage property;
- Insubordination, failure to perform assigned duties or failure to comply with the Library's health, safety or other rules;
- Unauthorized or careless use of the Library's materials, equipment or property;
- Unauthorized and/or excessive absenteeism or tardiness;
- Lack of teamwork, poor communication, unsatisfactory performance, unprofessional conduct, or conduct improper for the workplace;
- Sexual or other illegal harassment or discrimination;
- Unauthorized use or disclosure of the Library's confidential information; and
- Violation of any Library policy.

### **Dress Code**

Library employees are expected to present a neat, clean and professional appearance. Extremes in dress are not acceptable; examples may include (but are not limited to) halter-tops, tank tops, shorts (except knee-length walking shorts), torn clothing, clothing with slogans and caps. All personnel will wear nametags.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Safety**

Meherrin Regional Library System is committed to providing a safe workplace. Accordingly, the Library emphasizes "safety first." It is the employee's responsibility to take steps to promote safety in the workplace and work in a safe manner. By remaining safety conscious, employees can protect themselves and their co-workers. Employees are expected to promptly report all unsafe working conditions, accidents and injuries, regardless of how minor so that any potential hazards can be corrected.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Substance and Abuse**

Meherrin Regional Library System is committed to providing its employees with a safe and productive work environment. In keeping with this commitment, the Library maintains a strict policy against the use of alcohol and the unlawful use of drugs in the workplace. Consequently, no employee may consume or possess alcohol, or use, possess, sell, purchase or transfer illegal drugs at any time while on the Library's premises or while using the Library vehicles or equipment, or at any location during work time.

No employee may report to work with illegal drugs (or their metabolites) or alcohol in his or her bodily system. "Illegal drug" means any drug that is not legally obtainable or that is legally obtainable, but has not been legally obtained. It includes prescription drugs not being used for prescribed purposes or by the person to whom it is prescribed or in prescribed amounts. It also includes any substance a person holds out to another as an illegal drug.

Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Meherrin Regional Library System employees are prohibited from the following: use of any illegal drug during working hours, or being under the influence of any illegal drug during work hours; use of alcohol during working hours, or being under the influence of alcohol during work hours; being under the influence of any prescribed medication, or nonprescription medication, which would impair the employee's ability to perform his or her job duties during work hours. Upon request any employee taking prescription drugs will provide a written statement from his or her

attending physician that the medication as prescribed will not impair the employee's ability to discharge his or her job duties.

Any employee who feels he or she has developed an addiction to, dependence upon, or problem with alcohol or drugs, legal or illegal, is strongly encouraged to seek assistance before a violation of this policy occurs. Any employee who requests time off to participate in a rehabilitation program will be reasonably accommodated. However, employees may not avoid disciplinary action, up to and including termination, by entering a rehabilitation program after a violation of this policy is suspected or discovered. When, in the Library's sole and absolute discretion, the Library determines it is appropriate, an employee may be offered the option of participating in and satisfactorily completing a Library-approved drug and/or alcohol rehabilitation program in lieu of termination.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Smoke Free Workplace**

The Meherrin Regional Library System is a smoke free workplace. As stated in the Library Code of Conduct, 3.12 MRLS Policy Manual and Bylaws, all areas of the Library including meeting rooms, entrances, restrooms adhere to "Eating and smoking (use of tobacco in any form) or use of a controlled substance is not allowed." Refer to the Code of Virginia, 15.2-2823, "smoke or smoking means the carrying or holding of any lighted pipe, cigar, or cigarette of any kind, or any other lighted smoking equipment, or the lighting, inhaling, or exhaling of smoke from a pipe, cigar, and cigarettes of any kind."

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Workplace Searches**

To protect Meherrin Regional Library System property and to ensure the safety of all employees, the Library reserves the right to inspect and search any employee's office, desk, drawers, cabinets, files, locker, equipment, including computers, e-mail and voice mail, Library vehicles, and any area on Library premises. In this regard, it should be noted that all offices, desks, file drawers, cabinets, lockers, and other Library equipment and facilities are the property of the Library, and are intended for business use. Employees should have no expectation of privacy with respect to items brought onto Library property and/or stored in Library facilities. Inspection may be conducted at any time, without notice, at the discretion of the Library.

In addition, when the Library deems it appropriate, employees may be required to submit to searches of their parcels, purses, handbags, backpacks, brief cases, lunch boxes or any other possessions or articles brought on to the Library's property.

A person who wishes to enter the premises, but refuses to cooperate in an inspection conducted pursuant to this policy, may not be permitted to enter the premises. All Meherrin Regional Library System employees must cooperate in an inspection; failure to do so is insubordination and will result in disciplinary action.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Internet, E-mail, and Computer Use Policy**

The Meherrin Regional Library System uses various forms of electronic communication including, but not limited to: computers, e-mail, telephones, voicemail, instant message, text message, Internet, cell phones and smart phones (hereafter referred to as "electronic communications.") The electronic communications, including all software, databases, hardware, and digital files, remain the sole property of the Library and is to be used only for Library business and not for personal use.

All Library employees are expected to check their Library e-mail account at least once per scheduled work shift. Doing so allows each employee to be current and to keep informed with up-to-date Library business and information.

The following rules apply to all forms of electronic communications and media that are: (1) accessed on or from the Library premises; (2) accessed using the Library computer or telecommunications equipment, or via Library-paid access methods; and/or (3) used in a manner which identifies the Library. The following list is not exhaustive and the Library may implement additional rules from time to time.

- Electronic communication and media may not be used in any manner that would be discriminatory, harassing, or obscene, or for any other purpose that is illegal, against Library policy, or not in the best interest of the Library. Employees who misuse electronic communications and engage in defamation, copyright or trademark infringement, misappropriation of trade secrets, discrimination, harassment, or related actions will be subject to discipline and/or immediate termination. Employees may not install personal software on Library computer systems.
- Employee's own electronic media may only be used during breaks. All other company policies, including the Library's no tolerance for discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in the workplace apply. The Library reserves the right to adjust this policy on a case by case basis as it deems appropriate.
- All electronic information created by any employee on Library premises or transmitted to Library property using any means of electronic communication is the property of the Library and remains the property of the Library. You should not assume that any electronic communications are private or confidential and should transmit personal sensitive information in other ways. Personal passwords may be used for purposes of security, but the use of a personal password does not affect the Library's ownership of the electronic information. The Library will override all personal passwords if necessary.
- The Library reserves the right to access and review electronic files, messages, internet use, blogs, "tweets", instant messages, text messages, e-mail, voice mail, and other digital archives, and to monitor the use of electronic communications as necessary to ensure that no misuse or violation of Library policy or any law occurs. All such information may be used and/or disclosed to others, in accordance with business needs and the law. The Library reserves the right to keep a record of all passwords and codes used and/or may be able to override any such password system.
- Employees are not permitted to access the electronic communications of other employees or third parties unless directed to do so by Library management. No employee may install or use anonymous e-mail transmission programs or encryption of e-mail communications.
- Employees who use devices on which information may be received and/or stored, including, but not limited to cell phones, cordless phones, portable computers, fax machines, and voice mail communications are required to use these machines in strict compliance with the Personnel Privacy section of this Handbook. These communications tools should not be used for communicating confidential or sensitive information or any trade secrets.
- Access to the Internet, websites, and other types of Library-paid computer access are to be used for Library-related business only. However, during an employee's non-work time such as during a staff member's break period or meal break period an employee may, within reason, utilize Library computer access points if such devices are not necessary to conduct Library business at that time. Any information about Meherrin Regional Library System, its products or services, or other types of information that will appear in the electronic media about the Library must be approved before the information is placed on any electronic information resource that is accessible to others.
- Library staff are expected to use the Internet when appropriate primarily to accomplish job responsibilities more effectively. Library staff members are required to use the Internet in an ethical manner and are subject to all federal, state, and local laws.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

## **Social Media Policy**

Meherrin Regional Library System is committed to utilizing social media to enhance its profile, products, services, and reputation, to listen and respond to customer opinions and feedback, and to drive funding, support, loyalty and advocacy. The Meherrin Regional Library System encourages employees to support our activities through their personal social networking channels while adhering to the guidelines outlined in this section and section 4.10, Internet, E-mail, and Computer Policy and the MRLS Policy Manual and Bylaws.

For the purpose of this section, social media and networking refers to the use of web-based and mobile applications for social interaction and the exchange of user-generated content. Social media channels can include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs, review sites, forums, online communities and any similar online platforms.

Library employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner, to respect the views and opinions of others, and to demonstrate respect for the Library, its community contacts, agencies and funders, users, customers, patrons, guests, vendors, employees, and other community supportive organizations. Employees should always conduct themselves online professionally and remember not to say anything online which they would not state to a person in a face-to-face interaction.

Employees must not disclose private or confidential information about the Library, its employees, its customers, patrons, or suppliers on social networks. Employees must respect trademarks, copyrights, intellectual property and proprietary information. No third-party content should be published without prior permission from the owner. Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

## **Telephone and Cell Phone Policy**

The use of personal cell phones at work is discouraged because it can interfere with work and be disruptive to others. Therefore, employees who bring personal cell phones to work are required to keep the ringer shut off or placed on vibrate mode when they are in the workplace and to keep cell phone personal use confined to breaks and meal periods. Conversations should be conducted away from areas where other employees are working. When cell phone use interferes with the satisfactory performance of an employee's duties or disturbs others, the privilege of using a personal cell at work will be discussed between the supervisor and the employee.

Staff may make and receive brief telephone calls through Meherrin Regional Library System business telephones. All personal calls should be taken and made from staff work or break rooms, rather than at the public service desks.

Library customers may make brief calls, at the discretion of the desk staff. Customers should be discouraged from receiving calls at the library through the Library's business telephones.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015. Revised July 1, 2022.

## **Workplace Violence**

All Meherrin Regional Library System employees, customers, patrons, vendors and business associates must be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from conduct that may be dangerous to others. Conduct that threatens, intimidates or coerces another employee, customer, patron, vendor or business associate will not be tolerated. Meherrin Regional Library System resources may not be used to threaten, stalk or harass anyone at the workplace or outside the workplace. The Library treats threats coming from an abusive personal relationship as it does other forms of violence.

Indirect or direct threats of violence, incidents of actual violence and suspicious individuals or activities should be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor or Library Management. When reporting a threat or incident of violence, the employee should be as specific and detailed as possible. Employees should not place themselves in peril, nor should they attempt to intercede during an incident.

Employees should promptly inform Library Management of any protective or restraining order that they have obtained that lists the workplace as a protected area. Employees are encouraged to report safety concerns with regard to intimate partner violence. The Library will not retaliate against employees making good-faith reports. The Library is committed to supporting victims of intimate partner violence by providing referrals to community resources and providing time off for reasons related to intimate partner violence.

Meherrin Regional Library System will promptly investigate all reports of threats or violence or incidents of actual violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as possible. In order to maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, the Library may suspend employees suspected of workplace violence or threats of violence, either with pay or without pay, pending investigation.

Anyone found to be responsible for threats of or actual violence or other conduct that is in violation of these guidelines will be subject to prompt disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Meherrin Regional Library System encourages employees to bring their disputes to the attention of their supervisor or Library Management before a situation escalates. The Library will not discipline employees for raising such concerns. Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

#### **Employee Development Plan/Evaluation Policy**

Meherrin Regional Library System performance evaluations are a means of communicating a staff members' job performance, giving guidelines and suggestions for future employee performance and development. They are to be confidential and completed annually.

New employees receive an evaluation after the introductory/probationary period (180 days or 6 months.) All employees receive a performance evaluation at least annually.

- All employees will receive a performance evaluation at least annually. New employees will receive an evaluation after six months, annually after that.
- All evaluations are to be completed on forms approved by the Library Board of Trustees. Evaluations will be completed by supervisors and approved by the Library Director. Performance evaluations are confidential, originals are kept in a personnel file in the Library Director's Office, copies are given to the person being evaluated and the person completing the evaluation for review with the supervisor's copy placed in the personnel file in the Library Director's office. Supervisors may review their copy for reference anytime by asking the Library Director to make it available to them for review with the employee or Library Director in the Library Director's office.
- The Library Director will complete evaluations for all supervisory positions and those employees the Library Director supervises. The Board of Trustees will complete an evaluation for the Library Director at least once each year.

- Each employee has the right to request a different person to complete their evaluation besides their supervisor. They have the right to counter an evaluation he/she does not agree with by filing a written statement covering any points with which the employee disagrees. Such a statement will be attached to the evaluation in question and will be filed in the employee's personnel record. The employee has the right to file a grievance or request a meeting with the Library Board of Trustees.

Evaluations are not the sole basis for job promotions or demotions and salary increases or decreases. Cost of living increases are also a serious consideration if the budgetary allotments from governmental entities allow for granting cost of living increases across the board. If an employee "exceeds job standards", he or she may receive an additional increase in pay. If he or she "meets job standards", he or she may receive an additional increase in pay. If he or she receives an overall rating of "needs improvement", or "unsatisfactory", he or she receives no pay increase and shall receive another evaluation in six months. After six months, failure to improve job performance could lead to disciplinary action or dismissal. Improvement may allow for an increase in pay.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, November 8, 2000.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, November 4, 2001, and September 14, 2005.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

### **Use of Vehicles**

Employees may use Meherrin Regional Library System vehicles for such purposes as reducing library expenditures and saving time; affording convenience for better allocation of library personnel; and providing a regular delivery service between library facilities which is a requirement in meeting the Library of Virginia's minimum standards for a public library.

Vehicles may be used for the following: trips between facilities for administrative purpose and to deliver library materials; delivery of materials to stations throughout the regional library system; conferences, workshops, and meetings attended by board members, library staff and library volunteers; programs and events throughout the counties or city to which library personnel have been invited, if attendance benefits library public relations; meetings of the Library Board of Trustees; and other matters related to library services. Vehicles are not permitted for personal trips by library personnel; however, library staff are permitted to drive a vehicle home at night when it is to be used for early morning departures the following day. Such use of a library vehicle requires the Library Director's approval.

When a library vehicle is not available and someone must use their own vehicle for library business, they will be reimbursed for mileage at the current rate. Such use requires the Library Director's approval. Someone choosing to use their own vehicle when a library vehicle is available will not be reimbursed for mileage. Library vehicles, when not in use, should be parked at approved designated areas.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

### **4.16 Separation, Discipline, and Grievances**

For further information regarding Meherrin Regional Library policies regarding separation, discipline, and grievances please refer to the Meherrin Regional Library Employee Handbook and Library Administration.

### **Resignation**

Meherrin Regional Library System employees may leave their employment through resignation at any time and the resignation may be accepted by the employee's supervisor and/or Library Director at any time. Resignations must be

submitted in written form. Final documentation of a resignation will be by letter from the Library Director or Library Business Office to the resigned employee.

An employee who decides to resign shall notify their intent in writing and include the effective last day of employment with a minimum of two weeks advance notice. The employee's last paycheck shall occur on the next regularly scheduled payroll date after the last date of employment.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 10, 2021.

### **Retirement**

A Meherrin Regional Library System employee's effective retirement date is the last day of the month in which the employee wishes to retire. For a Virginia Retirement System eligible employee to begin receiving their retirement benefit payments in a timely manner the employee is to submit their application and all required documents to the Meherrin Regional Library System Director at least 90 days, but no more than 6 months, before the employee wants to retire.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Layoffs and Reduction-In-Force**

Meherrin Regional Library System employees may be dismissed if there is a lack of need and/or lack of available funding for their position. The Library Director shall provide notification of dismissal to the employee in writing. If necessary for a reduction-in-force (RIF) to occur, the Library Director and Library Management shall consider library objectives and needs, work records, employee evaluation ratings, and length of service and shall make recommendations to the Library Board of Trustees as to which employees shall be separated through a reduction-in-force.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2015.

### **Return of Company Property**

A separating employee must return all Meherrin Regional Library System property at the time of separation, including cell phones, keys, computers, name tags and any other Library provided property. If necessary, the final paycheck shall not be issued until the extent of any indebtedness to the Library has been determined and cleared.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

### **Exit Conference**

The Library offers employees the opportunity for an exit conference when ceasing employment at the Library.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, June 22, 2011.

### **Progressive Discipline**

Every employee has the duty and the responsibility to be aware of and abide by existing rules and policies of the Meherrin Regional Library System. Employees have the responsibility to perform his or her duties to the best of his or her ability and to the standards as set forth in his or her job description or as otherwise established. Prior to most progressive disciplinary steps being taken with an employee their supervisor is expected to work closely with the employee. The employee's supervisor should provide necessary instruction and coaching for any noted work issues.

Meherrin Regional Library System supports the use of progressive discipline to address issues such as poor work performance or misconduct. The Library's progressive discipline policy is designed to provide a corrective action process to improve and prevent a recurrence or undesirable behavior and/or performance issues. Our progressive discipline policy has been designed consistent with our organizational values, Human Resources best practices, and employment laws.

Outlined below are steps of the Meherrin Regional Library System progressive discipline procedure. The Library reserves the right to combine or skip steps in this process depending on the facts of each situation and the nature of the offense. Some of the factors that will be considered are whether the offense is repeated despite coaching, counseling or training; the employee's work record; and the impact the conduct and performance issues have on our organization.

The following outline the Meherrin Regional Library System disciplinary process:

- Verbal warning; a supervisor verbally counsels an employee about an issue of concern, A written record of the discussion is placed in the employee's file for future reference and a copy is provided to the employee.
- Written warning; written warnings are used for behavior or violations that a supervisor considers serious or in situations when a verbal warning has not helped change unacceptable behavior. The written warning record is placed in the employee's personnel file and a copy of the written warning is provided to the employee. Employees should recognize the grave nature of the written warning.
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP); whenever an employee has been involved in a disciplinary situation that has not been readily resolved or when he or she has demonstrated an inability to perform assigned work responsibilities efficiently, the employee may be given a final warning or placed on a PIP. The written PIP shall be placed into the employee's personnel file and a copy of the PIP provided to the employee. PIP status shall last for a predetermined length of time not to exceed 90 days. Within this time period the employee must demonstrate an ability to meet or maintain the conduct or work requirements as specified by the supervisor and the Library. At the end of the performance improvement period, the performance improvement plan may be closed, or if established goals are not met, dismissal may occur.
- Suspension; if deemed necessary by the Library Director in order to support and emphasize an employee's disciplinary process, a suspension of an employee's work schedule may be utilized, with or without pay. Such a suspension must be measured and in proportion to the progressive disciplinary process. A written suspension notification should be placed within the employee's file and a copy provided to the employee.

Meherrin Regional Library System reserves the right to determine the appropriate level of discipline for any inappropriate conduct, including oral and written warnings, suspension with or without pay, demotion and discharge. Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

#### **4.17 Grievance Policy**

##### **I. General**

The Meherrin Regional Library grievance policy is established to provide eligible employees an efficient and effective means by which to objectively resolve disputes or problems. The Library believes all employees want to be successful and will attempt to resolve any job performance problems to the best of their ability, but the grievance policy is available to employees who determine it is in their best interest to utilize it. However, if an employee has a concern the employee should seek resolution with their supervisor or department manager before pursuing a formal grievance process. The grievance policy and its procedures provide a prompt, fair, and orderly method for the resolution of employee grievances initiated by eligible employees of the Library.

The Meherrin Regional Library and its Board of Trustees reserves for itself the exclusive right to manage the affairs and operations of the Library. Accordingly, complaints involving the following management rights and prerogatives are not grievable.

1. Establishment and revision of wages or salaries, position classification, or general benefits.
2. Work activity accepted by the employee as a condition of employment, or work activity which may reasonably be expected to be part of the job content.
3. The contents of any ordinances, statutes, or established personnel policies, procedures, rules and regulations.
4. The methods, means, and personnel by which work activities are to be carried on, including, but not necessarily limited to the following listing.
5. The provision of equipment, tools, and facilities necessary to accomplish tasks.
6. The scheduling and distribution of manpower/personnel resources.
7. Training and career development.
8. The hiring, promotion, transfer, assignment, and retention of employees in positions within the library.
9. Failure to promote except where the employee can show that established promotional policies or procedures were not followed or applied fairly.
10. The relief of employees from duties, or taking action as may be necessary to carry out the duties, of the Library in emergencies.
11. Direction and evaluation of the work of Library employees.
12. Termination, layoff, demotion, or suspension from duties because of lack of work, reduction in force, or job abolition, except where such action affects an employee who has been reinstated within the previous six months as the result of a final determination of a grievance. In any grievance brought under the exception to this paragraph, the action shall be upheld upon a showing by the Library that:
  - There was a valid business reason for the action; and
  - The employee was notified of the reason in writing prior to the effective date of the action.
  - In addition, the existence of a disciplinary policy or grievance policy does not alter the employment-at-will status. The Commonwealth of Virginia is an employment-at-will state. Nothing herein shall be construed as creating an express or implied employment contract.

The decision regarding whether or not a matter is eligible for resolution under the Meherrin Regional Library grievance policy shall be made by the Library Director based upon the employee's information regarding the grievance as submitted on a Request for a Grievance Hearing Form (see Meherrin Regional Library Manual and By-Laws appendix) and this policy. In the event that the Library Director or his or her designee rules that the complaint, or a portion of the complaint, is not eligible for the grievance process, the employee may appeal that decision to the Library's Board of Trustees. The Library's Board of Trustees would then appoint a three member panel to review the Request for Grievance Hearing Form to determine if the complaint, or a portion of the complaint, is eligible or not eligible for the grievance process. The panel would submit its decision on eligibility in writing within 10 calendar days of receiving such a request. The employee, the Library Director, and the Library Board of Trustees would receive a copy. A copy shall be provided for the employee's official personnel file.

## II. Eligibility

All classified, non-probationary permanent full-time and part-time employees (those part-time staff working 10 or more hours on a regular weekly schedule or a total of 520 hours/year) listed in the Library personnel allotment as approved by the Library's Board of Trustees are eligible to file grievances under this policy with the following listed exceptions:

- The Library Director;
- Probationary employees; and
- Temporary, limited term, and seasonal employees.

## III. Definitions

A grievance is a complaint or dispute by an employee relating to his or her employment, including but not necessarily limited to the following actions:

- Disciplinary actions, including disciplinary demotions, suspensions, and dismissals provided such dismissals result from formal discipline or unsatisfactory job performance;
- The application of personnel policies, procedures, rules, and regulations, and the application of ordinances and statutes;
- Acts of retaliation as the result of the use of or the participation in the grievance procedure or because the employee has complied with any law of the United States or of the Commonwealth of Virginia, has reported any violation of such law to a governmental authority, has sought any change in law before the United States Congress or the General Assembly of Virginia, or has reported an incident of fraud, abuse, or gross mismanagement; and
- Discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, political affiliation, age, disability, national origin, or sex.

## IV. Grievance Steps

### A. Step One

- An employee who believes he or she has a grievance and wishes to utilize this procedure shall discuss the grievance informally with his or her immediate supervisor within 20 calendar days of the occurrence or the incident giving rise to the grievance or within 20 calendar days following the time when the employee reasonably should have gained knowledge of its occurrence.
- At this time, the grievance need not be submitted in writing or resolved in writing, and a formal hearing is not required. The meeting at this step takes place between the employee and the immediate supervisor.
- The employee should indicate at this meeting to the supervisor that this meeting is Step One. The employee and the supervisor may not have witnesses and/or representative during Step One of this process.
- The supervisor or supervisor's designee shall, if necessary, investigate the employee's grievance concern. Resolution of the grievance by the immediate supervisor shall be reached and communicated, either orally or in writing, to the employee within 10 calendar days.

### B. Step Two

- If the employee is not satisfied with and does not accept the Step One response, or if the immediate supervisor fails to respond within the required time frame, and the employee wishes to

advance his or her grievance to Step Two, the employee shall submit a written grievance on a Request for Grievance Hearing Form (see Meherrin Regional Library Manual and By-laws Appendix) and shall file the completed request form with the Library's Business Office within 10 calendar days of receipt of the immediate supervisor's response or the deadline for that response, whichever occurs first.

- The employee shall specify the dispute or complaint which constitutes the grievance, the attempts made to resolve the issue, and the relief that he or she expects to gain through the use of this procedure. By filing a Step Two Request for Grievance Hearing Form, the employee expressly foregoes any relief offered to the grievant in Step One.
- The employee's immediate supervisor and/or department manager, the Library's Administrative Assistant, the Library Director, and the employee shall meet promptly within 10 calendar days of the Library's receipt of the Request for Grievance Hearing Form.
- The employee may bring one representative of his or her choice who is not an attorney to the Step Two meeting.
- Appropriate witnesses for each side may be present, but only while providing information pertinent to the specific written grievance as detailed in the employee's Request for Grievance Hearing Form.
- The employee's supervisor/department manager or designee shall provide a written response to the grievance with 10 calendar days following the Step Two meeting with a copy of the response being provided to the employee, the employee's immediate supervisor, the employee's department manager, the Library Director, and for the employee's official personnel file.

**C. Step Three**

- If the employee is not satisfied with and does not accept the Step 2 written response, or if the employee's supervisor/department head or his/her designee fails to respond within the required time frame, and the employee wishes to advance his or her grievance to Step Three of this procedure, the employee shall complete a Request for Grievance Hearing Form (see Meherrin Regional Library Manual and By-laws Appendix) indicating his or her desire to advance the grievance to Step Three.
- The Request for Grievance Hearing Form shall be filed by the employee directly with the Library Director within 10 calendar days following the receipt of the Step Two response or the deadline for that response, whichever occurs first.
- The Library Director, the employee's immediate supervisor and/or department manager, the Library's Administrative Assistant, and the employee shall meet promptly within 10 calendar days of the Library's receipt of the Request for Grievance Hearing Form, Step Three.
- At the Step Three hearing the employee may have present a lay representative or legal counsel of his or her choice. If the employee is represented by legal counsel, the Library also has the option of being represented by counsel. The employee shall include the name, mailing address, and telephone number of the employee's lay representative or legal counsel, if any, on the Request for Grievance Hearing Form for Step Three. Legal counsel representing the employee or the Library may examine, cross-examine, question, and present evidence on behalf of the grievant or the Library before the panel present in the Step Three meeting without being in violation of the provisions of Virginia Code 54.1-3904.
- Appropriate witnesses for each side may be present, but only while providing information pertinent to the specific written grievance as detailed in the employee's Request for Grievance Hearing Form.

- The employee's supervisor/department manager or designee shall provide a written response to the grievance with 10 calendar days following the receipt of the completed request form and the date of the Step Three meeting with a copy of such response being provided to the employee, the employee's immediate supervisor, the employee's department manager, the Library Director, the Library Board of Trustees, and for the employee's official personnel file.

**D. Step Four**

- If the employee is not satisfied with and does not accept the Step Three written response, or if the Library Director or his/her designee fails to respond within the required time frame, and the employee wishes to advance to Step Four of this procedure, the employee shall complete a Request for Grievance Hearing Form indicating his or her desire to advance the grievance to Step Four.
- The Request for Grievance Hearing Form (see Meherrin Regional Library Manual and By-laws) shall be filed by the employee directly with the Library Director within 10 calendar days following receipt of the Step Three response or the deadline for that response, whichever occurs first.
- At the Step Four hearing the employee may have present a lay representative or legal counsel of his or her choice. If the employee is represented by legal counsel, the Library also has the option of being represented by counsel. The employee shall include the name, mailing address, and telephone number of the employee's lay representative or legal counsel, if any, on the Request for Grievance Hearing Form for Step Four. Legal counsel representing the employee or the Library may examine, cross-examine, question, and present evidence on behalf of the grievant or the Library before the panel without being in violation of the provisions of Virginia Code 54.1-3904.
- The employee shall suggest on the request form the name of a person to serve on the grievance panel. The employee shall not name a person to serve on the grievance panel unless and until the grievant has received that person's written consent to do so. That written consent to serve on the grievance panel shall be provided to the Library Director within 10 calendar days following the employee's receipt of the Step Three written response.
- A grievance panel consisting of two Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustee members or their designees as appointed to such a panel by the Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees and one panel member as provided by the grievant shall meet within 10 calendar days following the receipt of the Step Four Request for Grievance Hearing Form as submitted by the employee.
- At the Step Four grievance panel hearing shall be the employee, a representative of the affected Library Department, the employee's lay representative or attorney should the employee chose to have one at the hearing, the Library's Administrative Assistant, the Library Director, any appropriate witnesses for each side while the witness is providing information pertinent to the specific written grievance as detailed in the employee's Request for Grievance Hearing Form, and such other persons as the Library Director or his or her designee deems necessary and appropriate.
- At the request of the grievant, at least seven calendar days prior to a scheduled panel hearing in Step Four, the employee and his or her attorney shall be allowed access to and copies of all relevant files intended by the Library to be used by it at the panel hearing as well as any documents, exhibits, and a list of witnesses intended to be used by the Library. The grievant shall furnish to the Library copies of all documents, exhibits, and a list of witnesses intended to be used by the grievant, including those used for purposes of rebuttal, cross-examination, or impeachment at the panel hearing, seven calendar days in advance of the hearing.
- At the request of the Library, at least seven calendar days prior to a scheduled panel hearing in Step Four, the Library and its attorney shall be allowed access to and copies of all relevant files

intended by the grievant to be used by him or her at the panel hearing as well as any documents, exhibits, and a list of witnesses intended to be used by the grievant. The Library shall furnish to the grievant copies of all documents, exhibits, and a list of witnesses intended to be used by the Library, including those used for purposes of rebuttal, cross-examination, or impeachment at the panel hearing, seven calendar days in advance of the hearing.

- When the grievance panel is ready to deliberate the panel shall do so in private without any non-panel member present.
- The grievance panel shall provide a written decision within 10 calendar days of the panel's meeting and shall provide a copy of that decision to the employee, the Library Director, the Library's Administrative Assistant, and the full Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees.

## **V. General Grievance Process Procedures**

1. Time intervals for each step of the grievance process may be extended by the mutual consent of the parties. Such consent shall be specified in writing and the record kept with the Request for Grievance Hearing Form(s). Because it is important that grievances be resolved quickly, fairly, and without unnecessary delay, postponements are not favored. Any postponement of a grievance set for a hearing session in Steps Two through Four shall be submitted in writing, with a copy delivered to each person specified as involved in Steps Two through Four. The hearing officer or panel chair may grant a postponement only for good cause shown. The decision on a request for postponement shall be in writing to the requesting party with a copy to the others involved in Steps Three and Four.
2. When a deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or Library holiday, the next calendar day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or Library holiday shall be considered the last calendar day.
3. As far as practical, all grievance hearings shall be held during normal Library weekday working hours – Monday through Friday, 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM.
4. Library employees who are necessary participants at grievance hearings shall not lose pay for time necessarily lost from their jobs and will not be charged leave because of their attendance at such hearings.
5. Grievance hearings shall not be recorded and recording devices are not permitted in the room in which a grievance is being heard.
6. Grievance hearings are not intended to be conducted like court proceedings and the rules of evidence do not apply.
7. The employee shall present his or her evidence first. If there is any change to that order of evidence presentation, that change must be agreed to by the grievant and the Library.
8. The hearing officer or grievance panel, as the case may be, shall determine the propriety of and the weight to be given the evidence submitted.
9. Both the employee and the Library may ask for the presence of appropriate witnesses. All witnesses, including the grievant, shall be subject to questioning and cross-examination. All witnesses shall be present only for their pertinent portion of the grievance hearing. In other words, witnesses shall be present at a hearing only while actually giving testimony.
10. Since grievance hearings are informal in nature and the rules of evidence do not apply, witnesses shall not be sworn.
11. At Step Three and Four, the hearing officer or the grievance panel, as the case may be, shall have the discretion to limit the attendance at the hearing of persons not having a direct interest in the hearing; however, the Library Director and Administrative Assistant and/or his or her designee may be present at

any hearing. All written decisions at Step Two, Three, and Four shall include the reason(s) for the decision.

12. The grievant shall not be entitled to recover more than he or she has lost.
13. When an employee has obtained partial relief at one level of his or her grievance process, but decides to appeal to the next higher level, the filing of a request form to the next higher level shall constitute rejection of and relinquishment of any claim to, any and all relief granted at the previous level.
14. Each party shall bear the costs and expenses, if any, of his or her legal counsel or representative.
15. Failure of either the employee or the Library to comply with all substantial requirement of this grievance process, without just cause, will result in a decision in favor of the other party on the issue at grievance by the employee, provided the party not in compliance fails to correct the non-compliance within five calendar days of receipt of written notification by the other party of compliance violation. Such written notification shall be made directly to the Library Director.
16. The existence of a disciplinary policy or grievance policy does not alter the Meherrin Regional Library employment-at-will state. Nothing herein shall be construed as creating an express or implied employment contract.

## **VI. Grievance Panel**

1. No person shall receive any compensation, whether monetary or otherwise, for his or her time serving as a member of a grievance panel.
2. The members of the grievance panel shall not be comprised of any person having direct involvement with the grievance or its cause(s).
3. From the 3 panel members, the chair of the grievance hearing panel shall be appointed by the Library's Board of Trustees.
4. The members of the grievance panel shall not have the authority to: formulate Library policies and procedures; alter existing policies or procedures; exonerate an employee from all discipline when the guilt of the employee is admitted or is beyond question in the view of the panel; grant relief greater than that which the grievant has requested in the request form; or award back pay to the employee in excess of pay for time actually lost due to suspension, if any, or discharge.
5. The members of the grievance panel shall have the authority to, if it finds (based upon the greater weight of the evidence) that the grievant has been denied or wrongly disciplined without just cause (where such cause is required) to reverse, reduce, or otherwise modify such action and, where appropriate, to order the reinstatement of such employee to his/her former position with back pay. The panel also has the power to sustain the Library's action(s). The majority decision of the panel, acting within the scope of its authority, shall be final and binding, subject to existing policies, procedures, and law.

Approved Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, May 13, 2015.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, March 10, 2021.

#### **4.18 Employment-At-Will**

##### **Employment-At-Will Statement**

Employment with the Meherrin Regional Library System is on an at-will basis, unless otherwise specified in a written employment agreement. The Commonwealth of Virginia is an employment at-will state. An employee is free to resign at any time, for any reason, with or without notice. Similarly, the Library is free to conclude the employment relationship at any time for any lawful reason, with or without cause, and with or without notice.

Nothing in this Meherrin Regional Library System Employee Handbook will limit the right of either party to terminate an at-will employment. No section of this Employee Handbook is meant to be construed, nor should be construed, as establishing anything other than an employment-at-will relationship. This Employee Handbook does not limit management's discretion to make personnel decisions such as reassignment, change of wages and benefits, demotion, etc. No person other than the Library Director or the Chair of the Library Board of Trustees has the authority to enter into an agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to make an agreement for employment other than at-will terms. Only the Library Director or Chair of the Library Board of Trustees has the authority to make any such agreement, which is only binding if it is in writing and signed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, January 8, 2014.

## Appendix

- Library Bill of Rights
- ALA's Freedom to Read Statement
- ALA's Freedom to View Statement
- Challenged Materials: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights
- Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials
- Employee Code of Conduct
- MRL Memorandum of Employment
- MRL Employee Grievance Procedure - Request for Grievance Hearing
- Guidelines for Public Participation at Board Meetings
- Meherrin Regional Library Employee Handbook
- Five Year Strategic Plan

## 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 and concerned with resisting abridgment of free expressions 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 which 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 American Library Association Council, June 18, 1948.

Amended American Library Association Council, February 2, 1961; June 28, 1967: and January 23, 1980.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996 by the American Library Association Council.

## ALA's 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.

*A Joint Statement by:*

American Library Association  
Association of American Publishers

*Subsequently endorsed by:*

American Booksellers for Free Expression  
The Association of American University Presses  
The Children's Book Council  
Freedom to Read Foundation  
National Association of College Stores  
National Coalition Against Censorship  
National Council of Teachers of English  
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

## **ALA's Freedom to View Statement**

The **FREEDOM TO VIEW**, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

**Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council**

## CHALLENGED MATERIALS

### An Interpretation of the **Library Bill of Rights**

The American Library Association declares as a matter of firm principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined materials selection policy in written form which reflects the **Library Bill of Rights**, and which is approved by the appropriate governing authority. Challenged materials, which meet the criteria for selection in the materials selection policy of the library, should not be removed under any legal or extra-legal pressure. The **Library Bill of Rights** states in Article 1 “Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation,” and in Article 2, that “Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.” Freedom of expression is protected by the Constitution of the United States, but constitutionally protected expression is often separated from unprotected expression only by a dim and uncertain line. The Constitution requires a procedure designed to focus searchingly on challenged expression before it can be suppressed. An adversary hearing is a part of this procedure. Therefore, any attempt, be it legal or extra-legal, to regulate or suppress materials in libraries must be closely scrutinized to the end that protected expression is not abridged.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees June 25, 1971.

Amended American Library Association Council July 1, 1981 and January 10, 1990.

Reprinted by permission of the American Library Association.

**Meherrin Regional Library System  
Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials**

MRLS selects and acquires a wide variety of materials for access by all library customers. MRLS promotes equal access to all materials in our library collections. MRLS supports the guidelines established by the American Library Association in its Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and Freedom to View Statement.

Upon receipt of this form, MRLS will review this written request in relation to the library's collection development policy. The Library Director and appropriate staff will then review the book/item and reply, typically, within thirty (30) days. The item in question will remain in the library's collection until the review and decision process is complete.

The library values your opinion. If you object to any library material(s), please complete this form, outlining your concerns as concisely as possible. A librarian will respond to your inquiry in the near future. Thank you.

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Format:            Book                    DVD/Video            Audio CD                    Magazine                    Other

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions concisely. Use the back of the form or additional paper if necessary. After completing this form, please return it to any staff member.

1. How did you learn about this material?
2. Did you finish the entire work? If not, what parts were completed?
3. What are your objections to this material? Please be specific in citing page and passages.
4. What do you believe might be the result or harm to others in having access to this material?
5. Do you have any recommendations for other material to use in place of this?

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees May 13, 2015. Amended July 12, 2023.

## **Meherrin Regional Library System**

### **Employee Code of Conduct**

Employees must find personal satisfaction in their jobs in order to provide the highest possible level of customer service. The library staff, to facilitate this satisfaction, pledges to conduct themselves in accordance with the following:

- We show respect to all by being accountable for our actions and words striving to remain positive, professional and courteous at all times; we listen to and value other points of view.
  
- We readily assist all when needed, recognizing that we are all part of the same team.
  
- We thoroughly know and understand our jobs and realize all that we do contributes to others; we seek assistance when necessary and are open to training at all levels.
  
- We are guided by the mission and vision statements of the library as our common focus while continuing to achieve excellence.

Amended Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, Policy Manual Appendix November 10, 2010.

**Meherrin Regional Library Memorandum of Employment**

To:  
From: Administrative Assistant  
Director:

RE: ACCEPTANCE OF EMPLOYMENT. I am pleased you have accepted our employment offer with Meherrin Regional Library. This confirms our understanding of the employment offer you have accepted as follows:

Position Title:  
Job Description:  
Beginning Salary:

Full Time is currently a 35 hour week for non-exempt employees with benefit package; Part Time are scheduled as necessary, paid hourly and no benefits; Part Time Temp is paid hourly for a set period of time determined by the Library Director.

Branch employees are assigned as scheduled or duties require; Contracted employees are paid hourly per terms of contract.

Pay dates: Last working day of each month/except December where we may follow the Brunswick County, VA, pay period date.

Completions of Application process and Orientation date/location, Beginning\_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_.

Orientation content: All employees are expected to adhere to federal, state and local regulations, library policies and procedures.

New Hire Status: Probationary period consists of 6 months for all new hires. No vacation can be taken before working for 3 months.

All Hires beginning January 01, 2006 working for Meherrin Regional Library System can be assigned duties at either location at Brunswick County Library or William E. Richardson Jr. Memorial Library. It is the employee’s responsibility to provide transportation to and from locations as assigned per diem.

Agency policies and procedures have been reviewed with me during the application and orientation processes. I understand it is my responsibility to keep current on all policies and procedures as long as I am employed with Meherrin Regional Library System.

This confirms your status as “at will” employees. Please carefully review the above, if you agree with the employment conditions, please sign this form. If you do not agree with the above conditions, please contact me with your questions and/or concerns as soon possible.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of individual Accepting Employment

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Title of Hiring Authority

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Revised Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, February 22, 2008.  
Amended with Title Clarification and Policy Manual addition Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, November 10, 2010.



Meherrin Regional Library System

Employee Grievance Procedure - Request for Grievance Hearing Form

Full Name of Grievant:

\_\_\_\_\_

Department and Job Title:

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address/Phone Number(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 2: Supervisor/Department Manager:** To be completed by the grievant at Step 2 only and filed with the Library's Administrative Assistant.

1. Date of the incident giving rise to this grievance.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Date of the grievant's first awareness of the incident.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Have you had a Step 1 informal hearing with your immediate supervisor?  Yes  No

4. If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Person(s) against whom this grievance is directed.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Specify the incident that resulted in this grievance. (Use separate sheets if necessary.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Specify the policy(ies), rule(s), or regulation(s) at issue. (Use separate sheets if necessary.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Specify the relief sought. (Use separate sheets if necessary.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Grievant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Submitted

**To be completed by the Meherrin Regional Library System Business Administrative Assistant.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Meherrin Regional Library System Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Received

**Meherrin Regional Library System  
Employee Grievance Procedure - Request for Grievance Hearing Form**

Full Name of Grievant:

Department and Job Title:

E-mail Address/Phone Number(s):

**STEP 3: Library Director Hearing:** To be completed by the grievant at Step 3 only and filed with the Library Director directly.

I wish to have my grievance heard at the Step 3 (Library Director) level. I understand that, by requesting to have my grievance heard at Step 3, I am giving up the relief, if any, that was awarded to me at Step 2.

Signature of Grievant

Date Submitted

If grievant will have a lay representative or attorney at Step 3, provide the following information:

Name of Representative or Attorney:

Mailing Address, Telephone Number(s)/e-mail address:

**Step 4: Grievance Panel Hearing:** To be completed by the grievant at Step 4 only and filed directly with the Library Director directly.

I wish to have my grievance heard at the Step 4 (grievance panel) level. I understand that, by requesting to have my grievance heard at Step 4, I am giving up the relief, if any, that was awarded to me at Step 3.

Name of Grievant's Panel Member:

Mailing Address:

Phone Number (Home): \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

If grievant will have a lay representative or attorney at Step 4, provide the following information:

Name of Representative or Attorney:

Mailing Address:

Phone Number(s)/E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

For further information about the Library Grievance Policy, please consult the Meherrin Regional Library System Policy Manual and By-Laws or the Library Director.

Meherrin Regional Library System, Administrative Office, 133 W. Hicks Street, Lawrenceville, VA 23868

Telephone: 434-848-6898 Fax: 434-848-6739

## MEHERRIN REGIONAL LIBRARY

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

#### Guidelines for Public Participation at Board Meetings

The Board of Trustees of Meherrin Regional Library permits citizen participation concerning library service and provides an opportunity for such involvement during regular meetings of the Board under the following procedures.

1. Citizens may request to address the Board at the appropriate time allowed on the Agenda for public comment. Requests must be in writing and must be received by the library director at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting date. Speakers will be notified of their time on the agenda.
2. Following all scheduled speakers, any citizen who is present may request five (5) Minutes of speaking time during Public Comment period. Each speaker is subject to a five (5) minute time limit and is permitted only one appearance at each meeting.
3. Comment must be on legitimate matters of library business.
4. Every person addressing the Board must clearly state his/her name and address.
5. Board members may ask questions of the speakers.
6. Citizens offering comment must be residents of Brunswick County, Greenville County, or the City of Emporia, or own property located in those localities.
7. Opportunity for citizen comment should be used to improve delivery of library service in a positive way. Citizens must address the whole Board. No citizen may engage in Political statements, personal attacks on members of the Board of Trustees, library staff, or any other person, nor is any person entitled to use abusive language or discuss matters outside the purview of the authority of the Board of Trustees. Any person whose behavior is disruptive may be asked to leave the room.
8. Matters brought before the Board will be taken under advisement to allow time for Due deliberation. Action on such matters is not taken at the time of presentation to the Board. If Board action is indicated as a result of information provided during this period, the matter will be placed on the agenda for the next regular Board meeting.
9. Speakers will be notified of the Board's decision within seventy-five (75) days. If a matter requires a longer period of time for resolution; the speaker will be notified of the interim status.
10. Written statements may be submitted for consideration by the Board.
11. Once the Public Comment period is closed, no further public comments are in order.

Adopted Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees November 12, 2003.



Meherrin Regional Library System

*Serving Brunswick, Greenville and Emporia* [www.meherrinlib.org](http://www.meherrinlib.org)

## **Employee Handbook**

Meherrin Regional Library System Board of Trustees

Approved Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees January 8, 2014.

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# Section I

## Introduction

### 1.1 Welcome to Meherrin Regional Library System

Welcome to the Meherrin Regional Library System. The Library is glad to have you join us as a valued employee as we strive to provide the best quality library services to the residents, businesses, and organizations of Brunswick County, Greensville County, and the City of Emporia, Virginia. Our engaged and valued employees are an important component of what makes Meherrin Regional Library System special and vital in our communities.

The Library appreciates the efforts of all our employees in helping to empower, enrich, and inform our citizens. Meherrin Regional Library System hopes this manual will answer questions about our policies and procedures. Portions of this Handbook are explanatory in nature of how the Library accomplishes its mission, vision, and core values, but please refer for further information to the MRLS Policy Manual and Bylaws. Remember your supervisors, administrative staff, and co-workers look forward to working with you and helping you with any of your employment questions or needs.

### 1.2 Employee Handbook

This Employee Handbook (“Handbook”) is designed to summarize certain personnel policies and benefits of Meherrin Regional Library System (the “Library”) and to acquaint employees with many of the rules concerning employment with the Library. This Handbook applies to all employees, and it is important to remember compliance with the Library’s policies is a condition of our employment. This Handbook supersedes all previous employment policies, written and oral, express and implied. The Library reserves the right to modify, rescind, delete, or add to the provisions of this Handbook from time to time in its sole and absolute discretion.

If there is a question or a clarification need by an employee regarding any information contained in this Handbook, please ask your supervisor or someone in Library Administration to help you. We welcome questions as such questions help us to understand better how to assist our employees.

### 1.3 Changes in Policy

Since our business is constantly changing, Meherrin Regional Library System expressly reserves the right to revise, modify, delete, or add to any and all policies, procedures, work rules, or benefits stated in this handbook or in any other document, except for the policy of at-will employment in the Commonwealth of Virginia as described later in this Handbook. Nothing in this employee handbook or in any other document, including benefit plan descriptions, creates or is intended to create a promise or representation of continued employment for any employee. This Employee Handbook is not a binding contract between the Library and its employees, nor is it intended to alter the at-will employment relationship between the Library and its employees. The Library reserves the right to interpret the policies in this Handbook and to deviate from them when, in its discretion, it determines it is appropriate. Any changes to an employee’s at-will employment status, as described later in the Handbook, must be in writing and must be signed by an authorized representative of the Library.

With respect to all other changes to Meherrin Regional Library System policies, the Library will notify an employee of these changes when they occur in writing. No oral statements or representations can in any way alter the provisions of this Handbook. Changes will be effective on dates determined by Meherrin Regional Library System and employees may not rely on policies that have been superseded.

As always if an employee is uncertain about any policy or procedure, please check with your supervisor or Library Administration for clarification. It is always appropriate to ask questions when needed for understanding.

## Section II

### Employment Policies

#### 2.1 Employee Classifications

Meherrin Regional Library System has established the following categories for both exempt and non-exempt employees:

**Exempt Employees** – Employees whose positions meet specific tests established by the Federal Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”) and Virginia state law. In general, exempt employees are those engaged in executive managerial high-level administrative and professional jobs who are paid a fixed salary and perform certain duties. In addition, certain highly paid computer professionals are exempt. Exempt employees are not subject to the minimum wage and overtime laws.

**Non-Exempt Employees** – Non-exempt employee are employees whose work is covered by the Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA.) They are not exempt from the legal requirements concerning minimum wage and overtime.

**Full-time Employees**– Employees who are not temporary employees, independent contractors, or independent consultants and who are regularly scheduled to work a schedule of 35 hours per work week.

**Part-time** – Employees who are not temporary employees, independent contractors, or independent consultants and who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per work week.

**Temporary Employees** – Employees who are hired as interim replacements to temporarily supplement the workforce or to assist in the completion of a specific project. Employment assignments in this category are of limited duration and the temporary employee can be let go before the end of the defined period. Short term assignments generally are periods of three (3) months or less, however, such assignments may be extended. All Temporary Employees are at-will regardless of the anticipated duration of the assignment (see Employment-At-Will Policy.) Temporary employees retain that status unless and until notified in writing of a change.

Each employee will be advised of his or her status at the time of hire and of any change in status. Regardless of the employee’s employment category status, all employees are reminded that the Commonwealth of Virginia is an at-will employment state. An employee is employed at-will and the employment relationship can be ended by the Library or the employee at any time, with or without cause.

#### 2.2 Equal Employment Opportunity & American with Disabilities Act

Meherrin Regional Library System expects all employees to support our equal employment opportunity policy and to take all steps necessary to maintain a workplace free for all from unlawful discrimination and harassment.

It is the policy of the Library to provide equal employment opportunities to all employees and employment applicants without regard to unlawful considerations of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ancestry, physical or mental disability, and medical condition including medical characteristics, marital status or any other classification protected by applicable local, state, or federal laws. This policy prohibits unlawful discrimination based on the perception that anyone has any of those characteristics, or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics. This policy applies to all aspects of employment, including, but not limited to, hiring, job assignment, working conditions, compensation, promotion, benefits, scheduling, training, discipline and termination. Reasonable accommodation is available for qualified individuals with disabilities, upon request.

In compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Library provides accommodation to the disabled to the full extent required by law. The Library may require medical certification of both the disability and the need for accommodation. Keep in mind that the Library can only seek to accommodate the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified disabled individual. Therefore, it is the employee's responsibility to come forward if there is a need for an accommodation. The Library will engage in an interactive process with the employee to identify possible accommodations, if any will help the applicant or employee perform the job. We further recognize that employees with life threatening illnesses, including but not limited to cancer, heart disease, and AIDS, may wish to continue engaging in as many of their normal pursuits as their condition allows, including work. As long as these employees are able to meet acceptable performance standards with or without reasonable accommodation and medical evidence indicates that their working does not present a substantial threat to themselves or others, they will be permitted to do so.

### **2.3 Confidentiality**

In the course of employment with Meherrin Regional Library System, employees may have access to "confidential information" regarding the Library, which may include its business strategy, future plans, financial information, contracts, suppliers, customers and customer information, personnel information or other information that the Library considers proprietary and confidential. Maintaining the confidentiality of this information is vital to the Library's position in its community and its customers and, ultimately, to the Library's ability to maintain financial stability and assure customer privacy. Employees must protect this information by safeguarding it when in use, using it only for business of the Library and disclosing it only when authorized to do so and to those who have a legitimate business need to know about it. This duty of confidentiality applies whether the employee is on or off the Library's premises and during and even after the employee's employment with the Library. This duty of confidentiality also applies to communications transmitted by the Library's electronic communications. Refer in particular to the Handbook, 4.10 Internet, E-mail and Computer Use Policy.

As a condition of employment with the Library, all employees must sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement.

### **2.4 Employment of Minors**

The Meherrin Regional Library System strictly adheres to the Fair Labor Standards Act in regards to the employment of minors. Generally speaking, the FLSA sets the minimum age for employment (14 years for non-agricultural jobs), restricts the hours youth under the age of 16 may work, and prohibits youth under the age of 18 from being employed in hazardous occupations. In addition, the FLSA establishes subminimum wage standards for certain employees who are less than 20 years of age, full-time students, student learners, apprentices, and workers with disabilities.

The FLSA's child labor provisions are designed to protect the educational opportunities of youth and prohibit their employment in jobs that are detrimental to their health and safety.

### **2.5 Employment of Relatives**

It shall be the policy of the Meherrin Regional Library System that no members of an immediate family are allowed to hold a supervisor/subordinate relationship within the Library. Immediate family is defined for this purpose as: mother; father; sibling; wife; husband; spouse or domestic partner; child; legal ward; grandparents or grandchildren of the employee or the employee's spouse, or any other person who lives in the same household as the employee.

No immediate members of an employee's family may be appointed to sit on the Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees.

## **2.6 Introductory/Probationary Period**

The first 180 days (6 months) employment with the Meherrin Regional Library System are considered an introductory/probationary period for all newly hired employees. During this time, the employee will learn new position responsibilities, get acquainted with fellow employees, and determine if the employee is happy with the position. Also, during this time the employee's supervisor will monitor the employee's job performance. Upon completion of the introductory period, the supervisor will review the employee's performance with the employee through a written evaluation document. If the Library finds your performance satisfactory and decides to continue your employment, the employee will be advised of, if necessary, any improvements expected. This is also an opportunity for an employee to make suggestions to improve the Library's efficiency and operations. Completion of the introductory period does not entitle the employee to remain employed by the Library for any definite period of time, but instead allows both the employee and the Library to evaluate whether or not the employee is right for the position. Please note your status as an at-will employee as defined by the common-law doctrine of employment-at-will as adhered to in the Commonwealth of Virginia does not change.

During the introductory/probationary period the employee may be dismissed. Introductory/probationary employees are not eligible for the Meherrin Regional Library System's Grievance Procedure process. If the employee completes the introductory/probationary period successfully, he or she is entitled to use, if necessary, the Library's Grievance Procedure process. The Library Board of Trustees will be notified.

## **2.7 Personnel Records and Employee References**

Meherrin Regional Library System maintains a personnel file and payroll records for each employee as required by law. Personnel files and payroll records are the property of the Library and may not be removed from Library premises without written authorization. Because personnel files and payroll records are confidential, access to the records is restricted. Generally, only those who have a legitimate reason to review information in an employee's file are allowed to do so. Disclosure of personnel information to outside sources will be limited. However, the Library will cooperate with requests from authorized law enforcement or local, state, or federal agencies conducting official investigations and as otherwise legally required.

At any time an employee may contact a Library's Administrative Assistant to request a time to review their payroll records and/or personnel file. With reasonable advance notice, an employee may review his or her own records in the Library's offices during regular business hours and in the presence of an individual appointed by the Library to maintain the records. No copies of documents in your file may be made, with the exception of documents that you have previously signed. You may add your comments to any disputed item in the file.

By policy, the Meherrin Regional Library System will provide only the former or present employee's dates of employment and position(s) held with the Library and eligibility for rehire, if asked. Compensation information may also be verified if written authorization is provided by the employee.

## **2.8 Personnel Privacy**

The Meherrin Regional Library System is respectful of employee privacy. All employee demographic and personal information will be shared only as required in the normal course of business. Healthcare enrollment information is kept in a separate folder from other human resources forms. Please note that Worker's Compensation information is not considered private healthcare information; however, this information will be released only on a need-to-know basis.

The Library does not make or receive any private healthcare information through the course of normal work. If any employee voluntarily shares private healthcare information with a member of management, this information will be kept confidential. If applicable, the Library will set up guidelines for employees and

management to follow to ensure that Library employees conform to the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA.)

## **2.9 Immigration Law Compliance**

In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 on day of hire and present documentation establishing identity and employment eligibility within three business days of date of hire. Former employees who are rehired must also complete an I-9 form if they have not completed an I-9 form with the Library within the last three years, or if their previous I-9 form is no longer retained or valid. You may raise questions or complaints about immigration law compliance without fear of reprisal.

## **2.10 Religious Accommodation**

Meherrin Regional Library System will make reasonable accommodations for employees' observance of religious holidays and practices unless the accommodation would cause an undue hardship on the Library's operations. If an employee desires a religious accommodation, please be aware employees are requested to make the request in writing to their supervisor as far in advance as possible. An employee is also expected to strive to find co-workers who can assist in the accommodation (e.g., trade shifts) and cooperate with the Library in seeking and evaluating alternatives.

## **2.11 Political Neutrality**

Maintenance of individual freedom and our political institutions necessitates broad scale participation by citizens concerning the selection, nomination and election of our public office holders. Meherrin Regional Library System will not discriminate against any employee because of identification with and support of any lawful political activity. Library employees are entitled to their own personal political position. The Library will not discriminate against employees based on their lawful political activity engaged in outside of work. If an employee is engaging in political activity, however, that employee should always make it clear that any actions and opinions are their own and not necessarily those of the Library, and that the employee is not representing the Library.

## **2.12 Gifts/Gratuities Acceptance and Charity Solicitation/Distribution**

Meherrin Regional Library System employees shall not accept gifts, gratuities, or loans from organizations, business concerns or individuals with whom he or she has official relationships in business of the Library. These limitations are not intended to prohibit the acceptance of articles of negligible value which are distributed generally, not to prohibit employees from accepting social courtesies which promote good public relations, nor to prohibit employees from obtaining loans from regular lending institutions. It is particularly important that library employees guard against relationships which might be construed as evidence of favoritism, coercion, unfair advantage or collusion.

The Meherrin Regional Library System prohibits the solicitation, distribution and posting of materials on or at Library property by any employee or nonemployee, except as may be permitted by the policy. The sole exceptions to this policy are charitable and community activities supported by Library Management. Nonemployees may not solicit employees or distribute literature of any kind on Library premises at any time with the exception of items approved by Library staff for posting on the public information board. Employees may not solicit other employees during work times, except in connection with a Library approved or sponsored event. Employees may not distribute literature of any kind during work times or in any work area at any time, except in connection with a Library sponsored event. The posting of materials or electronic announcements are permitted with prior approval from Library Management.

## Section 3

### Hours of Work and Payroll Practices

#### 3.1 Pay Periods and Paydays

Employees are paid on a monthly basis. All employees will be paid on the last working business day of the month. All employees are paid by check or direct deposit on the above-mentioned payday. If the regular payday falls on a weekend or Library holiday, employees will be paid on the last business day before the holiday and/or weekend (exception may be made for a holiday pay period.)

#### 3.2 Flex-time/Compensatory Time-Off

Both exempt and nonexempt employees will be paid in accordance with Federal and Virginia state law. Flex-time or compensatory time off in lieu of working hours provided by an employee beyond a pre-arranged daily work schedule may be granted at the discretion of the department director/supervisor consistent with the guidelines of Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) compliance. Such use of staff time must be pre-approved by Library Administration. Upon separation exempt employees shall forfeit all unused flex-time/compensatory time and no payment shall be made for unused compensatory time.

#### 3.3 Rest and Meal Periods

Employee meal periods are important to employee health and for company productivity. All rest and meal periods will be in accordance with Virginia state law and the federal Fair Labor Standards Act. To the extent Virginia state law does not require rest and meal breaks, nonexempt employees will be provided a break for every four hour period of work. This time is counted and paid as time worked. All full-time employees, whether exempt or nonexempt, receive a meal break of 60 minutes. The meal period will not be included in the total hours of work per day and is not compensable. Nonexempt employees are to be completely relieved of all job duties while on meal breaks. Part-time employees scheduled to work more than a six hour period will be provided a 30 minute unpaid meal break. Part-time employees who work a 9:30 AM until 5:30 PM shift (7 hours) may combine a break with a 30 minute unpaid meal break with prior supervisor approval and, if doing so, meets the business needs of the department.

#### 3.4 Time Sheets/Attendance Records

Nonexempt employees are required to keep an accurate and complete record of their attendance and hours worked. Time sheets are official business records and may not be altered without the employee's supervisor's approval and may not be falsified in any way. Exempt employees use attendance records in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA".)

#### 3.5 Payroll Deductions

Various payroll deductions are made each payday to comply with federal and state laws pertaining to taxes and insurance. Deductions will be made for the following: Federal and State Income Tax Withholding, Social Security, Medicare, and other items designated by the employee or required by law (including a valid court order.) An employee can adjust their federal and state income tax withholding by completing the proper federal or state form and submitting it to Library's Business Office. At the start of each calendar year, each employee will be supplied with a Wage and Tax Statement (W-2) form for the prior year. This statement summarizes income and deductions for the year.

### **3.6 Wage Garnishment**

A garnishment is a court order requiring an employer to remit part of an employee's wages to a third party to satisfy a just debt. Once Meherrin Regional Library System receives the legal papers ordering a garnishment, the Library is required by law to continue making deductions from your check until we have withheld the full amount or until we receive legal papers from the court to stop the garnishment. Even if an employee has already paid the debt, the Library will still need the legal papers to stop the garnishment.

### **3.7 Direct Deposit**

All Meherrin Regional Library System employees are encouraged, but not required, to use direct deposit and have their paychecks deposited into a bank account of an accredited participating bank or credit union.

### **3.8 Work Hours and Scheduling**

Meherrin Regional Library System office hours begin at 8:30 AM and conclude at 5:00 PM Monday through Friday with a one hour lunch break for a total of 35 hours scheduled work hours per week. The Library's public service personnel work hours may fluctuate according to public service coverage needs of the branches' open business hours. Such personnel work hours may vary daily to ensure good service coverage for the Library's open public service business hours. Neither the meal break nor any rest break(s) may be used to account for an employee's late arrival or early departure or to cover time off for other purposes.

### **3.9 Inclement Weather**

Shorter work days due to inclement weather will be treated like a regular work day for those employees scheduled to work that day. Meherrin Regional Library System follows its fiscal agent (Brunswick County) for closures or alterations to the work day due to inclement weather.

If an employee is scheduled to work on a day which has an inclement weather incident and the employee reported to work as scheduled, then when library hours are shortened due to inclement weather the employee shall be paid for their shift's scheduled hours. If an employee does not come into work as scheduled and an inclement weather situation arises, then the employee shall not be paid unless the employee uses accrued leave to cover their absence.

### **3.10 Compensation of Employees**

Meherrin Regional Library System currently utilizes the County of Brunswick (our fiscal agent) pay scale. For each class of positions a salary range is assigned which consists of a minimum and maximum salary step. Each salary range consists of a selected number of pay steps. In arriving at salary ranges, consideration is given to prevailing rates for comparable work in other public employment and relevant private business, the current cost of living, the responsibilities of the position, working conditions, and the Library's financial condition and policy.

### **3.11 Telecommuting**

Meherrin Regional Library System may permit selected employees to work at an alternative work location for all or part of their work week in order to promote general work efficiencies. Library Management is responsible for any telecommuting assignments and the Library Directors' prior approval must be obtained. All work done by Library employees through a telecommuting assignment shall be subject to all provisions of this Handbook and Library Manual and Bylaws. Refer in particular to the Handbook, 2.3 Confidentiality.

## Section 4

### Standards of Conduct and Employee Performance

#### 4.1 Customer Service Standards and Employee Code of Conduct

All employees hired are to follow Library service standards and to abide by the Meherrin Regional Library Policy Manual and Bylaws, this Handbook, and the Employee Code of Conduct (Appendix A.)

All employees are expected to follow the Meherrin Regional Library System's Customer Service Approach: practice a professional demeanor; maintain current, up-to-date knowledge about Meherrin Regional Library System policies and procedures; understand and accept Meherrin Regional Library's operating philosophy; and understand what the Meherrin Regional Library does and why.

#### 4.2 Anti-Harassment and Discrimination

The Meherrin Regional Library System is committed to providing a work environment free of sexual or any form of unlawful harassment or discrimination. Harassment or unlawful discrimination against individuals on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ancestry, physical or mental disability, and medical condition including medical characteristics, marital status or any other classification protected by local, state, or federal laws is illegal and prohibited by Library policy. Such conduct by or towards any employee, contract worker, customer, vendor or anyone else who does business with the Library will not be tolerated. Any employee or contract worker who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of his or her employment or engagement. To the extent a customer, vendor, other person with whom the Library does business engages in unlawful harassment or discrimination, the Library will take appropriate corrective action.

Prohibited Conduct - Prohibited harassment or discrimination includes any verbal, physical or visual conduct based on sex, race, age, national origin, disability or any other legally protected basis if:

- a. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or engagement;
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for decisions concerning that individual's employment or engagement; or
- c. It creates a hostile or offensive work environment.

Prohibited harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and lewd, vulgar or obscene remarks, jokes, posters or cartoons, and any unwelcome touching, pinching, or other physical contact. Other forms of unlawful harassment or discrimination may include racial epithets, slurs and derogatory remarks, stereotypes, jokes, posters or cartoons based on race, national origin, age, disability, marital status or other legally protected categories. Prohibited harassment might also be transmitted using the Library's electronic communication system, or through other online conduct.

Meherrin Regional Library System defines bullying as "repeated inappropriate behavior, either direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment." Such behavior violates the Library's Employee Code of Conduct which clearly states that all employees will be treated with dignity and respect. The Library will not tolerate bullying behavior. Employees found in violation of this policy will be disciplined.

## **Complaint Procedure:**

Employees or contract workers who feel that they have been harassed or discriminated against, or who witness any harassment or discrimination by an employee, contract worker, customer, vendor or anyone else who does business with the Library, should immediately report such conduct to their supervisor or any other member of management.

Do not allow an inappropriate situation to continue by not reporting it, regardless of who is creating the situation. No employee, contract worker, customer, vendor or other person who does business with this organization is exempt from the prohibitions in this policy. In response to every complaint, the Library will conduct an investigation and, if improper conduct is found, take appropriate corrective action.

To the extent that an employee or contract worker is not satisfied with the Library's handling of a harassment or discrimination complaint, he or she may also contact the appropriate state or federal enforcement agency for legal relief.

For further information refer to MRLS Policy Manual and Bylaws, 4.5 Harassment and Discrimination Policy.

### **4.3 Attendance**

Punctuality and regular attendance are essential to the successful operation of the Library's business. If an employee is unable to report to work (or to report to work on time) for any reason, the employee must notify his or her supervisor before his or her starting time (preference is for at least 60 minutes notification prior to the employee scheduled shift start time.) If an employee desires to leave work for any reason during the workday, the employee must obtain the approval of his or her supervisor prior to leaving. In the event that the employee fails to call his or her supervisor or report for work for three (3) consecutive workdays, the employee will be deemed to have voluntarily resigned from his or her employment with the Library and will be removed from the payroll. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness may subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **4.4 Discipline and Standards of Conduct**

As needed, the Meherrin Regional Library System may impose discipline whenever it determines discipline is necessary or appropriate. Discipline may take various forms, including verbal counseling, written warnings, suspension, demotion, transfer, reassignment or termination. The discipline imposed will depend on the circumstances of each case; therefore, discipline will not necessarily be imposed in any particular sequence. Moreover, at any time the Library determines it is appropriate, an employee may be discharged immediately.

Every organization must have certain standards of conduct to guide the behavior of employees. Although there is no possible way to identify every rule of conduct, the following is an illustrative list of problematic conduct (not intended to be comprehensive or to limit the Library's right to impose discipline for any other conduct it deems appropriate.) Keep in mind that these standards of conduct apply to all employees whenever they are on Library property and/or conducting Library business (on or off Library property.) Engaging in any conduct the Library deems inappropriate may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

- a. Dishonesty;
- b. Falsification of Library records;
- c. Unauthorized use or possession of property that belongs to the Library, a co-worker, or of the public;
- d. Possession or control of illegal drugs, weapons, explosives, or other dangerous or unauthorized materials;

- e. Fighting, engaging in threats of violence or violence, use of vulgar or abusive language, horseplay, practical jokes or other disorderly conduct that may endanger others or damage property;
- f. Insubordination, failure to perform assigned duties or failure to comply with the Library's health, safety or other rules;
- g. Unauthorized or careless use of the Library's materials, equipment or property;
- h. Unauthorized and/or excessive absenteeism or tardiness;
- i. Lack of teamwork, poor communication, unsatisfactory performance, unprofessional conduct, or conduct improper for the workplace;
- j. Sexual or other illegal harassment or discrimination;
- k. Unauthorized use or disclosure of the Library's confidential information;
- l. Violation of any Library policy.

For further information regarding please refer to the Handbook, Section 7 and the MRLS Policy Manual and Bylaws, 4.0 Personnel Policies.

#### **4.5 Dress Code**

Library employees are expected to present a neat, clean and professional appearance. Extremes in dress are not acceptable; examples may include (but are not limited to) halter-tops, tank tops, shorts (except knee-length walking shorts), torn clothing, clothing with slogans and caps. All personnel will wear nametags.

#### **4.6 Safety**

Meherrin Regional Library System is committed to providing a safe workplace. Accordingly, the Library emphasizes "safety first." It is the employee's responsibility to take steps to promote safety in the workplace and work in a safe manner. By remaining safety conscious, employees can protect themselves and their co-workers. Employees are expected to promptly report all unsafe working conditions, accidents and injuries, regardless of how minor so that any potential hazards can be corrected. For further information refer to the Safety Policy Statement in the MRLS Policy Manual and Bylaws.

#### **4.7 Substance and Abuse**

Meherrin Regional Library System is committed to providing its employees with a safe and productive work environment. In keeping with this commitment, the Library maintains a strict policy against the use of alcohol and the unlawful use of drugs in the workplace. Consequently, no employee may consume or possess alcohol, or use, possess, sell, purchase or transfer illegal drugs at any time while on the Library's premises or while using the Library vehicles or equipment, or at any location during work time.

No employee may report to work with illegal drugs (or their metabolites) or alcohol in his or her bodily system. "Illegal drug" means any drug that is not legally obtainable or that is legally obtainable, but has not been legally obtained. It includes prescription drugs not being used for prescribed purposes or by the person to whom it is prescribed or in prescribed amounts. It also includes any substance a person holds out to another as an illegal drug.

Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Meherrin Regional Library System employees are prohibited from the following: use of any illegal drug during working hours, or being under the influence of any illegal drug during work hours; use of alcohol during working hours, or being under the influence of alcohol during work hours; being under the influence of any prescribed medication, or nonprescription medication, which would impair the employee's ability to perform his or her job duties during work hours. Upon request any employee taking prescription drugs will provide a written statement from his or her attending physician that the medication as prescribed will not impair the employee's ability to discharge his or her job duties.

Any employee who feels he or she has developed an addiction to, dependence upon, or problem with alcohol or drugs, legal or illegal, is strongly encouraged to seek assistance before a violation of this policy occurs. Any employee who requests time off to participate in a rehabilitation program will be reasonably accommodated. However, employees may not avoid disciplinary action, up to and including termination, by entering a rehabilitation program after a violation of this policy is suspected or discovered. When, in the Library's sole and absolute discretion, the Library determines it is appropriate, an employee may be offered the option of participating in and satisfactorily completing a Library-approved drug and/or alcohol rehabilitation program in lieu of termination.

#### **4.8 Smoke Free Workplace**

The Meherrin Regional Library System is a smoke free workplace. As stated in the Library Code of Conduct, 3.12 MRLS Policy Manual and Bylaws, all areas of the Library including meeting rooms, entrances, restrooms adhere to "Eating and smoking (use of tobacco in any form) or use of a controlled substance is not allowed." Refer to the Code of Virginia, 15.2-2823, "smoke or smoking means the carrying or holding of any lighted pipe, cigar, or cigarette of any kind, or any other lighted smoking equipment, or the lighting, inhaling, or exhaling of smoke from a pipe, cigar, and cigarettes of any kind."

#### **4.9 Workplace Searches**

To protect Meherrin Regional Library System property and to ensure the safety of all employees, the Library reserves the right to inspect and search any employee's office, desk, drawers, cabinets, files, locker, equipment, including computers, e-mail and voice mail, Library vehicles, and any area on Library premises. In this regard, it should be noted that all offices, desks, file drawers, cabinets, lockers, and other Library equipment and facilities are the property of the Library, and are intended for business use. Employees should have no expectation of privacy with respect to items brought onto Library property and/or stored in Library facilities. Inspection may be conducted at any time, without notice, at the discretion of the Library.

In addition, when the Library deems it appropriate, employees may be required to submit to searches of their parcels, purses, handbags, backpacks, brief cases, lunch boxes or any other possessions or articles brought on to the Library's property.

A person who wishes to enter the premises, but refuses to cooperate in an inspection conducted pursuant to this policy, may not be permitted to enter the premises. All Meherrin Regional Library System employees must cooperate in an inspection; failure to do so is insubordination and will result in disciplinary action.

#### **4.10 Internet, E-mail, and Computer Use Policy**

The Meherrin Regional Library System uses various forms of electronic communication including, but not limited to: computers, e-mail, telephones, voicemail, instant message, text message, Internet, cell phones and smart phones (hereafter referred to as "electronic communications.") The electronic communications, including all software, databases, hardware, and digital files, remain the sole property of the Library and is to be used only for Library business and not for personal use.

All Library employees are expected to check their Library e-mail account at least once per scheduled work shift. Doing so allows each employee to be current and to keep informed with up-to-date Library business and information.

The following rules apply to all forms of electronic communications and media that are: (1) accessed on or from the Library premises; (2) accessed using the Library computer or telecommunications equipment, or via Library-paid access methods; and/or (3) used in a manner which identifies the Library. The following list is not exhaustive and the Library may implement additional rules from time to time.

- a. Electronic communication and media may not be used in any manner that would be discriminatory, harassing, or obscene, or for any other purpose that is illegal, against Library policy, or not in the best interest of the Library. Employees who misuse electronic communications and engage in defamation, copyright or trademark infringement, misappropriation of trade secrets, discrimination, harassment, or related actions will be subject to discipline and/or immediate termination. Employees may not install personal software on Library computer systems.
- b. Employee's own electronic media may only be used during breaks. All other company policies, including the Library's no tolerance for discrimination, harassment, or retaliation in the workplace apply. The Library reserves the right to adjust this policy on a case by case basis as it deems appropriate.
- c. All electronic information created by any employee on Library premises or transmitted to Library property using any means of electronic communication is the property of the Library and remains the property of the Library. You should not assume that any electronic communications are private or confidential and should transmit personal sensitive information in other ways. Personal passwords may be used for purposes of security, but the use of a personal password does not affect the Library's ownership of the electronic information. The Library will override all personal passwords if necessary.
- d. The Library reserves the right to access and review electronic files, messages, internet use, blogs, "tweets", instant messages, text messages, e-mail, voice mail, and other digital archives, and to monitor the use of electronic communications as necessary to ensure that no misuse or violation of Library policy or any law occurs. All such information may be used and/or disclosed to others, in accordance with business needs and the law. The Library reserves the right to keep a record of all passwords and codes used and/or may be able to override any such password system.
- e. Employees are not permitted to access the electronic communications of other employees or third parties unless directed to do so by Library management. No employee may install or use anonymous e-mail transmission programs or encryption of e-mail communications.
- f. Employees who use devices on which information may be received and/or stored, including, but not limited to cell phones, cordless phones, portable computers, fax machines, and voice mail communications are required to use these machines in strict compliance with the Confidentiality section of this Handbook. These communications tools should not be used for communicating confidential or sensitive information or any trade secrets.
- g. Access to the Internet, websites, and other types of Library-paid computer access are to be used for Library-related business only. However, during an employee's non-work time such as during a staff member's break period or meal break period an employee may, within reason, utilize Library computer access points if such devices are not necessary to conduct Library business at that time. Any information about Meherrin Regional Library System, its products or services, or other types of information that will appear in the electronic media about the Library must be approved before the information is placed on any electronic information resource that is accessible to others.
- h. Library staff are expected to use the Internet when appropriate primarily to accomplish job responsibilities more effectively. Library staff members are required to use the Internet in an ethical manner and are subject to all federal, state, and local laws.

#### **4.11 Social Media Policy**

Meherrin Regional Library System is committed to utilizing social media to enhance its profile, products, services, and reputation, to listen and respond to customer opinions and feedback, and to drive funding, support, loyalty and advocacy. The Meherrin Regional Library System encourages employees to support our activities through their personal social networking channels while adhering to the guidelines outlined in this section and section 4.10, Internet, E-mail, and Computer Policy and the MRLS Policy Manual and Bylaws.

For the purpose of this section, social media and networking refers to the use of web-based and mobile applications for social interaction and the exchange of user-generated content. Social media channels can include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs, review sites, forums, online communities and any similar online platforms.

Library employees are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner, to respect the views and opinions of others, and to demonstrate respect for the Library, its community contacts, agencies and funders, users, customers, patrons, guests, vendors, employees, and other community supportive organizations. Employees should always conduct themselves online professionally and remember not to say anything online which they would not state to a person in a face-to-face interaction.

Employees must not disclose private or confidential information about the Library, its employees, its customers, patrons, or suppliers on social networks. Employees must respect trademarks, copyrights, intellectual property and proprietary information. No third-party content should be published without prior permission from the owner.

#### **4.12 Telephone and Cell Phone Policy**

The use of personal cell phones at work is discouraged because it can interfere with work and be disruptive to others. Therefore, employees who bring personal cell phones to work are required to keep the ringer shut off or placed on vibrate mode when they are in the workplace and to keep cell phone personal use confined to breaks and meal periods. Conversations should be conducted away from areas where other employees are working. When cell phone use interferes with the satisfactory performance of an employee's duties or disturbs others, the privilege of using a personal cell at work will be discussed between the supervisor and the employee.

Staff may make and receive brief telephone calls through Meherrin Regional Library System business telephones. Personal long distance calls, when absolutely necessary, are allowed. These calls are to be documented in writing to Library Administration. All personal calls should be taken and made from staff work or break rooms, rather than at the public service desks.

Library customers may make brief local calls, at the discretion of the desk staff. Customers should be discouraged from receiving calls at the library through the Library's business telephones.

#### **4.13 Workplace Violence**

All Meherrin Regional Library System employees, customers, patrons, vendors and business associates must be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from conduct that may be dangerous to others. Conduct that threatens, intimidates or coerces another employee, customer, patron, vendor or business associate will not be tolerated. Meherrin Regional Library System resources may not be used to threaten, stalk or harass anyone at the workplace or outside the workplace. The Library treats threats coming from an abusive personal relationship as it does other forms of violence.

Indirect or direct threats of violence, incidents of actual violence and suspicious individuals or activities should be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor or Library Management. When reporting a threat or incident of violence, the employee should be as specific and detailed as possible. Employees should not place themselves in peril, nor should they attempt to intercede during an incident.

Employees should promptly inform Library Management of any protective or restraining order that they have obtained that lists the workplace as a protected area. Employees are encouraged to report safety concerns with regard to intimate partner violence. The Library will not retaliate against employees making good-faith reports. The Library is committed to supporting victims of intimate partner violence by providing referrals to community resources and providing time off for reasons related to intimate partner violence.

Meherrin Regional Library System will promptly investigate all reports of threats or violence or incidents of actual violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as possible. In order to maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, the Library may suspend employees suspected of workplace violence or threats of violence, either with pay or without pay, pending investigation.

Anyone found to be responsible for threats of or actual violence or other conduct that is in violation of these guidelines will be subject to prompt disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Meherrin Regional Library System encourages employees to bring their disputes to the attention of their supervisor or Library Management before a situation escalates. The Library will not discipline employees for raising such concerns.

#### **4.14 Employee Development Plan/Evaluation Policy**

Meherrin Regional Library System performance evaluations are a means of communicating a staff members' job performance, giving guidelines and suggestions for future employee performance and development. They are to be confidential and completed annually.

New employees receive an evaluation after the introductory/probationary period (180 days or 6 months.) All employees receive a performance evaluation at least annually. For further information refer to MRLS Policy Manual and Bylaws, 4.8 Evaluation Policy.

#### **4.15 Use of Vehicles**

Employees may use Meherrin Regional Library System vehicles for such purposes as reducing library expenditures and saving time; affording convenience for better allocation of library personnel; and providing a regular delivery service between library facilities which is a requirement in meeting the Library of Virginia's minimum standards for a public library.

Vehicles may be used for the following: trips between facilities for administrative purpose and to deliver library materials; delivery of materials to stations throughout the regional library system; conferences, workshops, and meetings attended by board members, library staff and library volunteers; programs and events throughout the counties or city to which library personnel have been invited, if attendance benefits library public relations; meetings of the Library Board of Trustees; and other matters related to library services. Vehicles are not permitted for personal trips by library personnel; however, library staff are permitted to drive a vehicle home at night when it is to be used for early morning departures the following day. Such use of a library vehicle requires the Library Director's approval.

When a library vehicle is not available and someone must use their own vehicle for library business, they will be reimbursed for mileage at the current rate. Such use requires the Library Director's approval. Someone choosing to use their own vehicle when a library vehicle is available will not be reimbursed for mileage. Library vehicles, when not in use, should be parked at approved designated areas.

For further information refer to MRLS Policy Manual and Bylaws, 4.12 Policy for Use of Library Vehicle.

## Section 5

### Employee Benefits and Services

#### 5.1 Generally

Aside from those benefits required by state and federal regulations, Meherrin Regional Library System also offers additional benefits for its employees. From time to time, benefits may be added or deleted from the benefits package; the Library reserves the right to make such changes.

This Handbook does not contain the complete terms and/or conditions of any of the Library's current benefit plans. It is intended only to provide general explanations. For more information regarding employee benefits and services, employees should contact the Library's Business Office.

#### 5.2 Group Health Insurance

Meherrin Regional Library System offers a group health plan for eligible employees. The Library's group health insurance plan is offered through TLC-The Local Choice, Brunswick County Virginia Employees Health Plan. For more information, refer to the Library's benefits information sheet for complete details and benefits.

#### 5.3 COBRA

Under the provisions of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1986, if an employee is covered under the Library's group health insurance plan(s) that employee is entitled to continue coverage in the event that employment with the Library ends. Under COBRA, the Library must offer each qualified beneficiary (the employee and any covered dependents) who would otherwise lose coverage under the plan as a result of a qualifying event an opportunity to continue their insurance coverage. A qualifying event is defined as termination of employment, a reduction in the number of hours of employment, death of covered employee, divorce or legal separation, a dependent child ceases to be dependent, eligibility of the covered employee for Medicare, or an employer's bankruptcy.

#### 5.4 Group Life Insurance

Meherrin Regional Library System offers a group life insurance plan for eligible employees, including accidental death and dismemberment coverage. The Library's group life insurance plan is offered through the Virginia Retirement System "VRS" (Minnesota Life.) For more information refer to the Library's benefits information sheet for complete details and benefits.

#### 5.5 Worker's Compensation

All states have Worker's Compensation laws whose purpose is to promote the general welfare of people by providing compensation for accidental injuries or death suffered in the course of employment. These laws are designed to provide protection to workers suffering occupational disabilities through accidents arising out of, and in the course of employment. Meherrin Regional Library System carries Worker's Compensation Insurance for all employees and pays the entire cost of the insurance program. An employee who suffers an injury or illness in connection with the job is usually eligible to receive payment through the insurance company for lost wages. In addition to disability payments, necessary hospital, medical and surgical expenses are covered under Worker's Compensation, with payments being made directly to the hospital or physician. Worker's Compensation benefits to injured workers also includes assistance to help qualified injured employees return to suitable employment.

Any employee who is unable to work due to a work related injury or illness and who is eligible for Worker's Compensation benefits will be provided an unpaid leave for the period required. The first 12 weeks will be treated concurrently as a family and medical leave under the federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for eligible employees.

## **5.6 Social Security Benefits (FICA)**

During employment with the Meherrin Regional Library System, the employee and the Library both contribute funds to the Federal government to support the Social Security Program. This program is intended to provide the employee with retirement benefit payments and medical coverage upon reaching retirement age.

## **5.7 Unemployment Insurance Coverage**

Employees laid off, dismissed, or otherwise terminated by action of the Meherrin Regional Library System for reasons other than misconduct or improper acts shall be entitled to apply for and may receive unemployment compensation under the rules and regulations of the Virginia Employment Commission. Any notice of any dismissed or terminated employee having applied for unemployment compensation shall be forwarded promptly to the Library Director or his or her designated agent by the manager/supervisor, along with pertinent data and/or recorded action that may have been taken.

## **5.8 Health Insurance Credit**

Meherrin Regional Library System participates in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) health insurance credit program. This benefit is provided for Library retirees (full-time eligible employees) who participate in a supplemental health insurance policy to assist with the cost of health insurance premiums. Qualifying health plans include: individual health plans coverage as a dependent on a spouse's health plan; employer-sponsored health plans; Medicare Part B; and dental, vision and prescription drug plans including Medicare Part D. Other types of plans for specific conditions or coverage are not eligible.

The health insurance credit is added to the eligible employee's monthly VRS retirement benefit. The credit is a dollar amount set by the Commonwealth of Virginia's General Assembly for each year of service. The credit ends upon death of the VRS member and cannot exceed the amount of the individual's health insurance premium.

## **5.9 Retirement**

Meherrin Regional Library System participates in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) for eligible full-time employees. Employees should refer to the VRS website or VRS telephone contact number for further information. VRS contact information is available through the Library's Business Office.

## **5.10 Staff Library Borrowing Privileges**

Meherrin Regional Library System staff members may borrow library materials with the same circulation period as the public. Fines will not be charged to library staff members for overdue materials. Library staff members receive no special consideration when reserving materials. Library staff members who do not reside within Brunswick County, Greensville County or the City of Emporia are eligible for a library membership (borrowing) card without a nonresident charge.

### **5.11 Continuing Education/Staff Development**

The Library Board of Trustees supports the efforts of staff members who wish to enhance their work-related skills in order to improve library services.

Enhancement of skills may take the form of in-service training, local workshops, Library of Virginia sponsored workshops, professional library organization workshops, library webinars, or other training which directly pertains to an employee's work.

A certain amount of staff development should be anticipated and planned for in the Library's annual budget.

It is the Library Director's job to keep staff informed concerning learning opportunities, which arise, as well as to encourage the staff in areas where training needs have been identified.

When the priorities of the Library do not allow full reimbursement for training expenses, the employee can be offered other support such as administrative leave time where the employee would be paid for their normal work hours while attending the workshop. Employees are encouraged to reduce expenses by such methods as carpooling, limiting their attendance to day trips, or sharing part of the cost, for example, the Library might pay the registration fee and the employee would pay for meals and gas. These methods will be utilized at the Library Director's discretion.

Approval for attendance at any workshop or training situation must be given by the Library Director. Requests for attendance should be made in writing and at least two weeks in advance of the desired training opportunity. Each such request should have attached printed information about the training.

A library employee who is seeking a MLIS may apply to the Library Board of Trustees for a State Aid Fellowship. For more information about this benefit, please contact Library Administration, Business Office, or refer to the Meherrin Regional Library System Policy Manual and Bylaws.

### **5.12 Short/Long Term Disability**

The Meherrin Regional Library System will offer to eligible full-time employees, effective January 1, 2014, short/long term disability benefits through the Virginia Retirement System, Hybrid Retirement Plan (Plan 3.) Effective July 1, 2019 such benefits are obtained through a contract agreement with Anthem of Virginia. Basic disability is currently offered through the Virginia Retirement System for eligible full-time employees participating in the VRS' Plan 1 or Plan 2.

## Section 6

### Employee Leaves of Absence and Time Off

#### 6.1 Generally

While regular attendance is crucial to maintain business operations, the Library recognizes that for a variety of reasons, employees may need time off from work. The Library has available a number of types of leaves of absence. Some are governed by law and others are discretionary. For all planned leaves employees submit their request at least thirty (30) days in advance; in case of emergencies, employees should submit the request as soon as they become aware of the need for leave. All leaves must have the approval of library management. If, during a leave, an employee accepts another job, engages in other employment or consulting outside of the Library, or applies for unemployment insurance benefits, the employee may be considered to have voluntarily resigned from employment with the Library.

For further information refer to Meherrin Regional Library System Policy Manual and Bylaws, 4.6 Holiday and Leave Policy.

#### 6.2 Holidays

Meherrin Regional Library System observes the same holiday schedule as the Commonwealth of Virginia as announced by the Governor. The holidays generally include the following, but may occasionally include other days as per the Governor:

New Year's Day; Lee-Jackson Day; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; George Washington's Birthday; Memorial Day; July 4<sup>th</sup>; Labor Day; Columbus Day; Veterans Day; Thanksgiving and the Day after Thanksgiving; and Christmas.

All libraries are closed the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the Meherrin Regional Library System will be closed. If the holiday is a Saturday, the holiday will be granted to the employees the Friday before and the Library will be closed that Friday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, the holiday will be celebrated the Monday after and the Library will be closed that Monday.

The Library will grant paid holiday time off to all eligible employees. Holiday pay for eligible full-time employees will be calculated based on the employee's base pay rate (as of the date of the holiday.) Part-time staff hired after January 1, 2000 are not eligible for holiday pay. Part-time staff hired prior to January 1, 2000 are eligible for holiday pay if the holidays falls on their regularly scheduled work day. Part-time employees hired before January 1, 2000 will accrue holiday pay in proportion to the number of days worked per week.

If a Staff Development Day is scheduled requiring employees to work on a holiday, then eligible full-time employees and part-time eligible employees are to be allowed their holiday compensation time to be taken by the employee at a later date in the same pay period with prior approval by their supervisor.

For further information refer to Meherrin Regional Library System Policy Manual and Bylaws, 4.6 Holiday and Leave Policy.

#### 6.3 Family and Medical Leave

Meherrin Regional Library System complies with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA.) Special family and medical leave is provided for eligible employees after childbirth or adoption or for the care of a child, spouse, parent or the employee himself in the case of serious illness. All such leave is provided on a basis

consistent with the requirements of the FMLA. Meherrin Regional Library System recognizes that our employees may occasionally need to take unpaid leave to care for a new child, to care for a seriously ill family member, to handle an employee's own medical issues, or to handle issues relating to a family member's military service, possibly including caring for a family member who is injured while serving in the military.

If an employee anticipates a need to take time off to deal with family and medical issues, please speak with your supervisor or Library's Business Office.

Approval for leave requests under the provisions of this section shall be granted only to current employees who have been employed by the Library for at least twelve months and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the preceding twelve-month period.

#### **6.4 Worker's Compensation Leave**

Any employee who is unable to work due to a work related injury or illness and who is eligible for Worker's Compensation benefits will be provided an unpaid leave for the period required. The first 12 weeks will be treated concurrently as a family and medical leave under the federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for eligible employees. For further information refer to Meherrin Regional Library System Employee Handbook, 5.5 Worker's Compensation.

#### **6.5 Military Leave**

An employee who is absent for annual active duty for training as a member of the reserve components of the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, or United States Coast and Geodetic Survey is allowed leave without pay for the period required to fulfill his/her military obligation. Any extraordinary absences for military purpose such as special schools, training, or volunteer service shall be allowed only with the approval of the Library Director.

An employee who is absent for duty with the National Guard under orders of the Governor pursuant to Section 44-75.1 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, is entitled to leave of absence at full time pay or at the current rate of pay for the employee's position and hours for the period of ordered absence.

An employee voluntarily entering extended active duty in the armed forces of the United States shall be deemed to have resigned from his position and shall not have automatic rights to reinstatement in his position upon return from active duty. Provided, however, if an employee who voluntarily leaves employment for active duty: (a) serves not more than four (4) years; (b) has a certificate attesting that military duty was satisfactorily completed; and, (c) applies for re-employment in Library service no later than following separation duty from active military duty, said employee shall be re-employed in any available position for which he or she meets the qualifications and shall serve the required introductory/probationary period. He or she shall be given credit for satisfactory library service in determining compensation and annual leave.

#### **6.6 Bereavement Leave**

In the event of a death in the immediate family, full-time and any eligible part-time (those hired prior to January 1, 2000) Meherrin Regional Library System employees may have, if needed, up to three (3) working days, with pay, at their regular straight time rate or base salary, to handle family affairs and attend the funeral. "Immediate family" is defined as: father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, domestic partner, child, stepfather, stepmother, stepbrother, stepsister, stepchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandparents and grandchildren. Special consideration may be given to other special circumstances with family members.

Those employees not eligible for paid bereavement leave shall, with approval of the Library Director, be granted up to three (3) working days of Administrative Leave without pay to handle family affairs and attend the funeral.

An employee who wishes to take time off due to the death of an immediate family member should notify his or her supervisor immediately. The length of employment service which entitles an eligible employee to take bereavement leave is one (1) month.

Bereavement leave will be granted unless there are unusual business needs or staffing requirements.

For further information refer to Meherrin Regional Library System Policy Manual and Bylaws, 4.6 Holiday and Leave Policy.

## **6.7 Voting, Jury Duty or Other Special Circumstances**

All employees should be able to vote, either before or after regularly assigned work hours; however, when this is not possible brief paid leaves may be granted by the Library Director or his or her designee.

U.S. citizens have a civic obligation to provide jury duty service when called. Special leave is granted with pay for absence from their scheduled work days in order that the employee may serve required jury duty or to attend court as a witness on subpoena.

By state law, employees may not be subject to any adverse personnel action and may not be forced to use sick leave or vacation leave. An employee who has appeared for four or more hours cannot be required to start a shift after 5 PM that day or before 3 AM the next morning.

The employee must bring in the jury duty notice as soon as it is received so that appropriate arrangements can be made to cover his or her duties. This notice shall be given to the employee's supervisor or Library Management. Employees are required to call in or report for work on those days or parts of days when their presence in court is not required.

## **6.8 Staff Development Day**

Meherrin Regional Library System holds an annual Staff Development Day. Employees are required to attend this training if at all possible. This is a Board of Trustees approved special training opportunity which is usually very informative and team building for all Library employees. All employees will be paid for their attendance at this training day regardless of their regular work schedule. The date for this training is subject to approval by the Library Board of Trustees.

## **6.9 Annual Leave/Vacation**

Eligible full-time employees are allowed to accrue vacation at the rate of one day a month. After five years, vacation accrues at the rate of 1 ½ days a month, up to 18 days per calendar year. Part-time employees hired after January 1, 2000 are not eligible for vacation pay. Employees must work three (3) months before any vacation time may be taken and then are entitled only to time earned.

Professional librarians are allowed a vacation accrual of 18 working days per year, to be earned at a rate of 1 ½ days per month. Professional librarians with five or more years' service will earn vacation at the rate of two days per month. Professional librarians are those holding a certificate issued by the Virginia State Board for the Certification of Librarians (or the state agency given responsibility for licensing and certifying librarians.)

Employees may not use vacation leave that has not accrued. Vacation leave may be carried over from year to year up to 45 days (315 hours); after that time earned will be lost unless used. Employees should be careful in tracking their vacation accrual and may request clarification from the Library's Business Office during office work hours regarding their leave balances. Upon termination of employment, an employee will receive compensation equivalent to the employee's accrued vacation leave of up to 45 days (315 hours.)

Vacation time off must be applied for and approved by the employee's supervisor. All supervisors must apply for and receive leave request approval from the Library Director. The Library's Administrative Assistant shall be responsible for keeping a current account of all leave used and accumulated. Vacation leave use should be documented appropriately on an employee's time sheet and attendance record.

For further information refer to Meherrin Regional Library System Policy Manual and Bylaws, 4.6 Holiday and Leave Policy.

### **6.10 Sick Leave and Local Disability Program (LDP)**

Sick leave may be used for illness, medical, dental or optical appointments. Sick leave may be used to care for immediate family and/or members of the same household. Immediate family shall include the employee's children (step, foster, or adopted included), father, mother, husband, wife, grandparents, or grandchildren.

When an employee is unable to work, the employee shall notify his or her supervisor as soon as possible; but no later than 30 minutes after they are scheduled to work. The Library prefers an employee to notify their supervisor directly and with at least 60 minutes (1 hour) advance notice of the employee's scheduled work arrival time. Supervisors will notify the Library Director when they are unable to work. When an employee will be taking extended sick leave, (more than 3 days), written notice of last day of work and expected day of return should be applied for and approved by the Library Director.

The Library reserves the right to demand a physician's note if sick leave is taken for more than three (3) consecutive days or for multiple occurrences of use over a 30 day period. Abuse or obvious and flagrant misuse of sick leave may result in disciplinary action or constitute grounds for dismissal.

Sick leave use should be documented appropriately on an employee's time sheet and attendance record and is subject to supervisor approval.

Leave may be taken after one (1) month of employment.

Upon termination or retirement from employment with Meherrin Regional Library unused accrued sick leave shall not be paid.

Meherrin Regional Library eligible employees under the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) Plan 1 or 2 accrue sick leave at the rate of one day per month. Full-time eligible VRS covered Plan 1 and Plan 2 employees may accrue sick leave up to 60 days (420 hours).

Part-time staff hired after January 1, 2000 are not eligible for sick leave. Part-time staff hired before January 1, 2000 will accrue sick leave in proportion to the number of days worked. Any part-time eligible employees who are eligible to accrue sick leave do so based upon the number of hours worked.

When an employee VRS eligible Plan 1, Plan 2, or Hybrid Retirement Plan, Plan 3 or part-time eligible employee has exhausted accrued sick leave, an employee's vacation leave may be used. Subsequent time taken is considered leave without pay and approval is at the discretion of the Library Director.

Meherrin Regional Library eligible employees under the Virginia Retirement System Hybrid Retirement Plan, Plan 3 accrue sick leave at the rate of one day per month until their total available sick leave balance consists of

up to 15 days (105 hours). 105 hours of sick leave allows sick leave coverage for up to two weeks for a full-time employee at which time, should it be necessary, the Hybrid Retirement Plan, Plan 3 eligible employee would be eligible for extended sick leave coverage through the Local Disability Program (LDP). 105 hours of sick leave would also provide five more days of additional sick leave coverage for use during a Plan 3 employee's short term disability coverage period.

The Local Disability Program applies to all eligible employees participating in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) Hybrid Retirement Plan. All employees hired for 35 or more hours per week after January 1, 2014 (with no creditable service or account balance with VRS) must participate in the VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan also known as Plan 3. Provisions of the LDP follow Chapter 11.1 of Title 51.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. The LDP provides employees supplemental replacement income during periods of partial or total disability for both non-occupational and occupational disabilities. An employee is eligible for non-occupational related disability benefits after one continuous year of participation in the LDP. An employee is eligible for occupational related disability benefits on the first day of participation in the LDP. For more information on the LDP, please refer to the Library's Business Office or the Virginia Retirement System.

Eligible employees are covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA.)

Approved Meherrin Regional Library Board of Trustees, November 10, 2015.

### **6.11 Maternity Leave**

Accrued vacation and sick leave may be used for the purpose of maternity leave, but no additional paid leave is allowed. The employee is granted a leave of absence without pay to the time advised by her doctor. Eligible employees are covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA.)

### **6.12 Administrative Leave/Unpaid Leave**

Administrative leave (brief paid leaves) may be granted by the Library Director to allow employees to vote, to donate blood, to participate in civic or charitable causes or due to a death in the family.

Unpaid Leave may be obtained as compliant with Library policy, state law and federal law and/or with the permission of the Library Director.

### **6.13 Sick Leave Transfer Policy**

When an employee has utilized all of his or her accrued sick leave due to an extended illness or accident, that employee may be assisted by means of fellow employees donating their accrued sick leave time. A sick leave transfer is voluntary and will only be made when necessary. The employee donating the time is to contact the Meherrin Regional Library System Administrative Assistant and fill out the transfer request form. The total number of days/hours donated by the employee will be transferred to the needed employee's record for him or her to utilize. Employees may not donate leave time in excess of their own accrued sick leave balances.

## Section 7

### Separation, Discipline, and Grievances

#### 7.1 Resignation

Meherrin Regional Library System employees may leave their employment through resignation at any time and the resignation may be accepted by the employee's supervisor and/or Library Director at any time. Resignations must be submitted in written form. Final documentation of a resignation will be by letter from the Library Director or Business Office to the resigned employee.

An employee who decides to resign shall notify their intent in writing and include the effective last day of employment with a minimum of two weeks advance notice. The employee's last paycheck shall occur on the next regularly scheduled payroll date after the last date of employment. For further information refer to the Meherrin Regional Library System Employee Handbook, 8.1 Employment-At-Will.

#### 7.2 Retirement

A Meherrin Regional Library System employee's effective retirement date is the last day of the month in which the employee wishes to retire. For a Virginia Retirement System eligible employee to begin receiving their retirement benefit payments in a timely manner the employee is to submit their application and all required documents to the Meherrin Regional Library System Director at least 90 days, but no more than 6 months, before the employee wants to retire.

#### 7.3 Layoffs and Reduction-In-Force

Meherrin Regional Library System employees may be dismissed if there is a lack of need and/or lack of available funding for their position. The Library Director shall provide notification of dismissal to the employee in writing. If necessary for a reduction-in-force (RIF) to occur, the Library Director and Library Management shall consider library objectives and needs, work records, employee evaluation ratings, and length of service and shall make recommendations to the Library Board of Trustees as to which employees shall be separated through a reduction-in-force. For further information refer to the Meherrin Regional Library System Employee Handbook, 8.1 Employment-At-Will.

#### 7.4 Return of Company Property

A separating employee must return all Meherrin Regional Library System property at the time of separation, including cell phones, keys, computers, name tags and any other Library provided property. If necessary, the final paycheck shall not be issued until the extent of any indebtedness to the Library has been determined and cleared.

#### 7.5 Progressive Discipline

Every employee has the duty and the responsibility to be aware of and abide by existing rules and policies of the Meherrin Regional Library System. Employees have the responsibility to perform his or her duties to the best of his or her ability and to the standards as set forth in his or her job description or as otherwise established. Prior to most progressive disciplinary steps being taken with an employee their supervisor is expected to work closely with the employee. The employee's supervisor should provide necessary instruction and coaching for any noted work issues.

Meherrin Regional Library System supports the use of progressive discipline to address issues such as poor work performance or misconduct. The Library's progressive discipline policy is designed to provide a corrective action

process to improve and prevent a recurrence or undesirable behavior and/or performance issues. Our progressive discipline policy has been designed consistent with our organizational values, Human Resources best practices, and employment laws.

Outlined below are steps of the Meherrin Regional Library System progressive discipline procedure. The Library reserves the right to combine or skip steps in this process depending on the facts of each situation and the nature of the offense. Some of the factors that will be considered are whether the offense is repeated despite coaching, counseling or training; the employee's work record; and the impact the conduct and performance issues have on our organization.

The following outline the Meherrin Regional Library System disciplinary process:

- Verbal warning; a supervisor verbally counsels an employee about an issue of concern, A written record of the discussion is placed in the employee's file for future reference and a copy is provided to the employee.
- Written warning; written warnings are used for behavior or violations that a supervisor considers serious or in situations when a verbal warning has not helped change unacceptable behavior. The written warning record is placed in the employee's personnel file and a copy of the written warning is provided to the employee. Employees should recognize the grave nature of the written warning.
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP); whenever an employee has been involved in a disciplinary situation that has not been readily resolved or when he or she has demonstrated an inability to perform assigned work responsibilities efficiently, the employee may be given a final warning or placed on a PIP. The written PIP shall be placed into the employee's personnel file and a copy of the PIP provided to the employee. PIP status shall last for a predetermined length of time not to exceed 90 days. Within this time period the employee must demonstrate an ability to meet or maintain the conduct or work requirements as specified by the supervisor and the Library. At the end of the performance improvement period, the performance improvement plan may be closed, or if established goals are not met, dismissal may occur.
- Suspension; if deemed necessary by the Library Director in order to support and emphasize an employee's disciplinary process, a suspension of an employee's work schedule may be utilized, with or without pay. Such a suspension must be measured and in proportion to the progressive disciplinary process. A written suspension notification should be placed within the employee's file and a copy provided to the employee.

Meherrin Regional Library System reserves the right to determine the appropriate level of discipline for any inappropriate conduct, including oral and written warnings, suspension with or without pay, demotion and discharge. For more information refer to the Meherrin Regional Library System Employee Handbook, 4.4 Discipline and Standards of Conduct and the Meherrin Regional Library System Policy Manual and Bylaws, 4.3 Resignation, Retirement and Dismissal Policies.

## Section 8

### Employment-At-Will Statement

#### 8.1 Employment-At-Will

Employment with the Meherrin Regional Library System is on an at-will basis, unless otherwise specified in a written employment agreement. The Commonwealth of Virginia is an employment at-will state. An employee is free to resign at any time, for any reason, with or without notice. Similarly, the Library is free to conclude the employment relationship at any time for any lawful reason, with or without cause, and with or without notice.

Nothing in this Meherrin Regional Library System Employee Handbook will limit the right of either party to terminate an at-will employment. No section of this Employee Handbook is meant to be construed, nor should be construed, as establishing anything other than an employment-at-will relationship. This Employee Handbook does not limit management's discretion to make personnel decisions such as reassignment, change of wages and benefits, demotion, etc. No person other than the Library Director or the Chair of the Library Board of Trustees has the authority to enter into an agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to make an agreement for employment other than at-will terms. Only the Library Director or Chair of the Library Board of Trustees has the authority to make any such agreement, which is only binding if it is in writing and signed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

## **Meherrin Regional Library System**

### **Employee Code of Conduct**

Employees must find personal satisfaction in their jobs in order to provide the highest possible level of customer service. The library staff, to facilitate this satisfaction, pledges to conduct themselves in accordance with the following:

- We show respect to all by being accountable for our actions and words striving to remain positive, professional and courteous at all times; we listen to and value other points of view.
  
- We readily assist all when needed, recognizing that we are all part of the same team.
  
- We thoroughly know and understand our jobs and realize all that we do contributes to others; we seek assistance when necessary and are open to training at all levels.
  
- We are guided by the mission and vision statements of the library as our common focus while continuing to achieve excellence.

Amended to the Policy Manual and Bylaws, Appendix – November 10, 2010

**At-Will Employment Agreement and  
Acknowledgement of Receipt of Employee Handbook**

**Employee:** \_\_\_\_\_

I acknowledge that I have been provided with a copy of the Meherrin Regional Library System (the "Library") Employee Handbook, which contains important information on the Library's policies, procedures and benefits, including the policies on Anti-Harassment/Discrimination, Substance Use and Abuse and Confidentiality. I understand that I am responsible for familiarizing myself with the policies in this handbook and agree to comply with all rules applicable to me.

I understand and agree that the policies described in the handbook are intended as a guide only and do not constitute a contract of employment. I specifically understand and agree that the employment relationship between the Library and me is at-will and can be terminated by the Library or me at any time, with or without cause or notice. Furthermore, the Library has the right to modify or alter my position, or impose any form of discipline it deems appropriate at any time. Nothing in this Employee Handbook is intended to modify the Library's policy of at-will employment. The at-will employment relationship may not be modified except by a specific written agreement signed by me and an authorized representative of the Library. This is the entire agreement between the Library and me regarding this subject. All prior or contemporaneous inconsistent agreements are superseded.

I understand that the Library reserves the right to make changes to its policies, procedures or benefits at any time at its discretion. However, the at-will employment agreement can be modified only in the manner specified above. I further understand that the Library reserves the right to interpret its policies or to vary its procedures as it deems necessary or appropriate.

I have received the Library Employee Handbook. I have read (or will read) and agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained in the Handbook.

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_