

## Public Relations

# Public Relations Policy

The public relations goals of the Ticonderoga Black Watch Memorial Library are:

- To promote community awareness and active participation in library services and programs
- To develop public understanding and support of the library and its role in the community

The Board of Trustees recognizes that public relations involves every person who has a connection with the library. The Board urges its own members and every staff member to realize that they represent the library in every public contact. Good service supports good public relations.

## Library Spokesperson

In order to provide the most current and consistent information about the library, all contact with the news media will be carried out through the library manager or board president, although at times they may refer the media to specific staff members. The library board president is the spokesperson for the Board of Trustees. All inquiries from reporters or other media persons should be reported immediately to the library manager and/or board president.

When asked by the public for information related to library business or policy, staff should respond in accordance with library guidelines or speak with the library manager.

- Staff who represent the library as media spokespersons should avoid speculation on any topic and refrain from offering personal opinions about library policies or programs, even when asked to do so by a reporter.
- Questions from the public regarding the general operations and direction of the library should be referred to the library manager. Inquiries related to the underlying principles of a policy that are open to interpretation from a political, constitutional, and/or legal perspective should be referred to the library manager and/or board president. Examples of such policies include but are not limited to those covering Internet access, intellectual freedom and meeting room issues.

## Photography or Recording by the Library

Ticonderoga Black Watch Memorial Library staff has the right to photograph, film and record library events and patrons for promotional use. Visitors to the library, or participants in any library event being captured on film or by photograph, will be advised in advance, verbally or through signage, that their participation in the event acts as consent to being photographed, filmed or recorded, unless they otherwise clearly indicate to the contrary to library staff. To ensure the privacy of all individuals, their images will not be identified using full names or personal identifying information without written approval from the photographed subject, parent or legal guardian.

The above policy applies only to open, public events. Closed events such as school visits would require releases and/or permissions from the supervisor of the visiting organization.

## Photography or Recording by Members of the Public or Media

While the library is a public place, it is considered a “limited public forum” under federal law. Public libraries may reasonably restrict the exercise of free speech rights in their buildings, particularly when the conduct would be disruptive to, or interfere with, the other patrons or staff or be inconsistent with the library’s mission.

Subject to the preceding paragraph: photography and video or audio recording by visitors to the library are generally permitted if it is strictly for personal use. Photography and video or audio recording for commercial purposes are permitted only if the activity has been expressly approved by the library manager. In order to insure that such activity would not be disruptive to, or interfere with, the library staff or patrons, or be inconsistent with the library’s mission, all individuals proposing to engage in such commercial activities must request approval in advance.

In order to protect the rights of individual patrons and to prevent disruptions, interferences with staff or patrons or conduct inconsistent with the library’s mission, photographing and video or audio recording on library property are restricted as follows:

- Under no circumstances may the public, members of the media or library staff take photographs or record video or audio without the express permission of any library patron or staff member who would be included within the

composition. In the case of minors, permission must come from the parent or legal guardian.

- Media are subject to the provisions of the code of conduct policy and may not disturb the normal operations of the library.
- In the event of a critical incident or emergency requiring police or fire response, public and media access may be limited to allow emergency personnel to ensure safety and security.
- The terms above apply to the media as well as to amateur photographers and audio/video creators.

## Emergency Situations

In the event of an emergency situation, official statements to the public and media will be made by the library manager, board president or designee placed in charge of the library.

If it is necessary for the library staff to provide the public with information, the library administration will inform the staff what is to be said.

In the event that the library has to close due to an emergency situation or inclement weather, the library manager will follow the protocol as described in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of Ticonderoga and the Ticonderoga Black Watch Memorial Library.

Revised by the Board of Trustees

Date

Adopted by the Board of Trustees

3/7/2024