

**Cooke County Library  
Policy Manual**

**2014**

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## I. Mission

The mission of the Cooke County Library is to provide all persons in the community with a safe and confidential environment in which they may freely pursue intellectual, educational, and recreational interests through diverse services and resources collected in a variety of formats.

## II. Introduction

This policy manual contains all of the policies applicable to the Cooke County Library. The library has operating procedures for which the Director of the Library is responsible. Care has been taken to ensure that the policies define the rules without interfering with the operational processes, which are the responsibility of the Director.

The library will operate within the framework of policies. Further, the library is authorized to develop such rules and procedures as may be necessary to carry out these responsibilities.

Each section of the policy will be reviewed and revised as necessary or every three years.

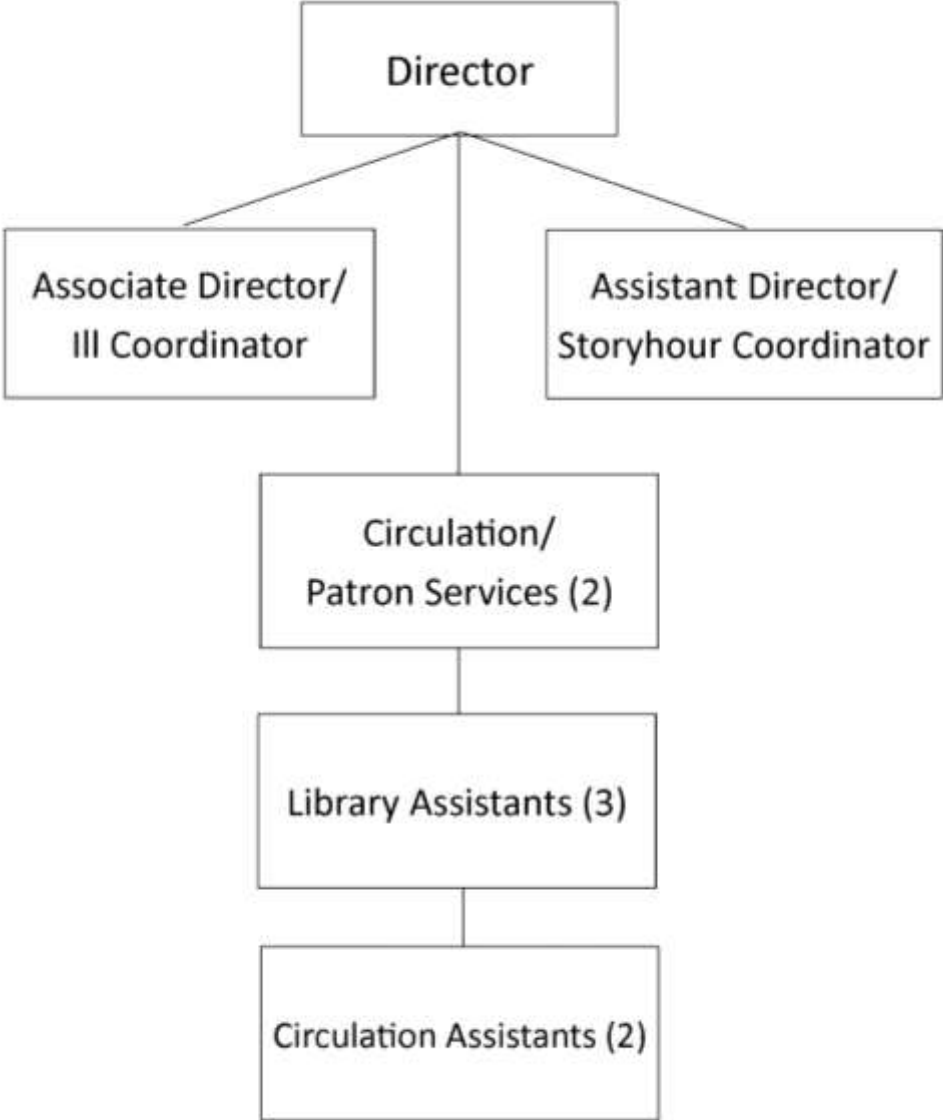
This policy may be revised or amended only with the approval of the Cooke County Commissioners' Court.

## II. Governance of Operations

### A. County Organizational chart



## B. Library Organizational chart





a) Director of the Library

Section 1

The Cooke County Commissioner's Court shall appoint a qualified Library Director who will serve as the chief administrative and executive officer acting on the behalf of the Court and under its review and direction.

Section 2

The Director of the Library shall be a graduate of an American Library Association program.

Section 3

The Director shall carry out the policies adopted by the Court and be responsible for the procedures established to enforce the policies for the operation of the Library. Duties and responsibilities shall be:

- a. Selection of library materials.
- b. Determining the most cost-effective manner for purchase of library materials, equipment, and supplies. Ensure that all purchases are in accordance with county/state provisions.
- c. Maintenance and operation of the physical plant.
- d. Recruitment, training, assignments, and dismissal of library staff in accordance with the County's Human Resources Rules and Regulations.
- e. Informing the Court regarding the finances, public services, physical plant, personnel, collection, and other developments, changes, and problems of the Library through monthly reports.
- f. Overseeing and making daily deposits of funds received from the patrons of the Cooke County Library as per Local Government Code 113.022. (See Appendices.)
- g. Presenting oral reports to the Court as to the progress and condition of the library, as needed.
- h. Submitting to the Court a copy of the Library Statistics as required by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.
- i. Representing the Library at State and National meetings and conventions, whenever possible and as approved by the Court with expenses to be paid from the budget. Expenses include mileage, registration, lodging and meals.
- j. Preparing the annual budget.
- k. Making recommendations to the Court for action, which will improve the Library's effectiveness and visibility in the community.

### III. Building Policies-Facilities and Grounds

#### A. Hours of Operation

The Cooke County Library is normally open to the public Monday through Saturday. Hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 9:00 am to 6:00 pm; Tuesday, and Thursday 10:00 am to 7:00 pm; and Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. When a County holiday is observed on a Monday or Friday, the library is closed on the intervening Saturday to afford the library staff a three day weekend consistent with other County employees. The Cooke County Library will be closed when deemed necessary by the Director with the approval of the County Commissioners. Prior notice will be posted when possible.

#### B. Holidays

The Library observes the following holidays:

New Year's Day	Closed
MLK, Jr. Day	Closed
President's Day	Closed
Good Friday	Closed
Memorial Day	Closed
July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Closed
Labor Day	Closed
Veterans Day	Closed
Thanksgiving Day	Closed
Day after Thanksgiving	Closed
Christmas Eve	Closed
Christmas Day	Closed
New Year's Eve	Closed

#### C. Inclement weather and other closings

The Director is responsible for closing the library due to unhealthy conditions, unsafe conditions, or other emergencies. When the decision to close is made, when possible, the Director will have staff post signs/notices, change the library message and use the library's social media informing the public of the closing.

During inclement weather, the time opening will depend on the storm. If weather conditions are severe, the library will not open. The Cooke County

Library does not necessarily follow the same closings as the County's other offices and the regional Independent School Districts. The decision to open or remain closed will be made by the Cooke County Judge and Director, and will be done as soon as possible.

#### D. Display Issues

Exhibit and display space is primarily reserved for the purpose of highlighting the Cooke County Library collections, services, and events. However, as an educational and cultural institution and as part of its public service, the library welcomes exhibits and displays by non-profit, non-commercial organizations which are considered to be connected with the library's goal of serving the cultural and civic needs of the community. The library provides diverse information and ideas through the use of these materials in designated areas. The library reserves the right to refuse or remove any display, notice or handout that does not comply with these policies and guidelines. Display cases, bulletin boards and areas where handouts may be placed are also needed to publicize library and library related programs, activities, services, materials and to post required legal notices. Priority shall be given to those needs.

Prohibited uses and practices- Library display facilities may not be used to promote or advertise a commercial product or service; to urge support of or opposition to any political candidate; or to urge support of or opposition to any religion or religious belief. Materials urging support of or opposition to candidates for office or to issues on the ballot are prohibited. Materials that a reasonable person would believe to be an endorsement of religious beliefs by the library are also prohibited. No material, which is obscene, defamatory, invades a particular person's privacy, or directly incites violence may be posted or displayed. Prices may not be affixed to any material on display, although an exhibitor's name, address and telephone number may be posted. Materials and equipment that, in the opinion of the Director, are potentially dangerous or distracting to library users, staff, or property, may not be brought into any area of the library.

Sponsorship and endorsement- Use of library space by any organization or individual for display or related activities does not constitute library sponsorship of the organization or individual or the viewpoints or activities they are promoting. Advertisements or announcements that either directly or indirectly imply otherwise shall not be permitted.

The Director will resolve any situation not specifically covered above.

The Cooke County Library endorses the American Library Association's **Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**, adopted by the ALA Council, July 2, 1991; amended June 30, 2004 (See Appendices).

## 1. Bulletin boards

In its role as a center of community information the Cooke County Library supports the free flow of information and exchange of ideas. Approval of all bulletin board announcements rests with the Director or appointed designees. Unapproved materials will be disposed of at the Director's discretion.

Materials may be provided by the library or other nonprofit organizations, community groups, or government agencies. Bulletin board space is available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individual groups requesting the service provided they meet the guidelines above. Posting of materials by the library does not necessarily indicate the Library's endorsement of the ideas, issues, or events promoted by those materials.

### Limitations

- a. Bulletin board material is limited to no bigger than 11" x 17".
- b. Only one copy of the notice is permitted.
- c. Material cannot be placed on top of another display item and must maintain a neat and orderly appearance.
- d. Material will be removed once the event has occurred or at the end of each calendar month. The library will not be responsible for saving notices or posters.
- e. Each piece of material must be dated, include a sponsorship line, i.e., name of organization, group, agency, or individual, and a telephone number.
- f. Materials that support or oppose any current or pending ballot measure or political candidate may not be posted. The library is not intended to be a forum for the support or opposition of political candidates or ballot measures.

## 2. Display case

At the current time, Cooke County Library only has one display case which the library is using for its own purposes. However, the Library should follow the guidelines listed below, just as outside organizations or individuals would be expected to follow.

Each display should be carefully planned and mounted in an interesting and informative manner. Lettering should be legible and attractive. Displays should visually enhance areas in which they are located.

## 3. Exhibits

Library exhibits are provided to assist patrons in their exploration of educational, cultural, and civic activities. Exhibit spaces are available to organizations and individuals engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, charitable and other activities of interest. The exhibits incorporate library materials whenever possible, as a means of informing users of the range of library resources and services. The library endeavors to offer exhibits of diverse subject matter for children, adults, and families. The library reserves the right to ensure that all use of exhibits, whether by Library personnel, Friends of the Library, or patrons, meets the intent set forth in the Mission Statement and the American Library Association's **Exhibit Spaces: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights** (See Appendices).

Exhibit spaces are not intended for ongoing exhibits. Scheduling will be limited to a maximum of one (1) calendar month to ensure equitable access to the space for the entire community. Applicants should be prepared to submit samples or slides of their work for preview.

Each exhibitor is responsible for installation and removal of the exhibit at the end of the reserved period. Failure to remove the exhibit within twenty-four hours may result in an assessment of fees incurred by the Library for removal or storage.

Exhibitors are responsible for any damage to Library property in the mounting or removal of the exhibit. The Library may assess charges for damage.

The exhibit will include a clearly visible sign identifying the organization or individual responsible for the exhibit, as well as title cards and labels. A brief, typed statement should be prepared for each exhibit describing the background, philosophy, and purpose of the individual or group.

The Library does not assume liability or responsibility for materials exhibited in the Library. Each exhibitor is responsible for insurance coverage of the exhibit.

No admission fees will be charged at any Library exhibit, except fundraising to benefit the Library. No exhibit item may be sold on Library property.

#### 4. Brochures and pamphlets

The Library maintains an area for the purpose of passive distribution of library, community, or service information and materials of educational or cultural interest. Passive distribution means leaving the materials for patrons if they so choose to review and/or take the materials. All materials for distribution must be submitted for approval by the Director. The Library distributes free materials such as community pamphlets, flyers, calendars, newsletters, and other information for public awareness and convenience. The Library acts as a distribution point for information that city, county, state, and federal government agencies wish to disseminate. Educational, cultural, and job search information will also be distributed. Materials produced strictly for the purpose of selling merchandise, or for advertising for-profit services, as well as personal items, will not be accepted.

Because of space limitations, materials will be distributed in the following priority:

- a. Cooke County Library
- b. Cooke County government publications
- c. State of Texas, federal government publications
- d. Civic, recreational, cultural, and educational publications

The Library reserves the right to limit or prohibit distribution of materials which represent a threat to the health or safety of patrons. The Library also reserves the right to dispose of materials which are dated or have been displayed for a reasonable period and when

space is needed for other materials. Materials left for distribution without authorization from the Director will be discarded.

Distribution of materials is provided on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups. Although space is provided, no endorsement of the viewpoints expressed in these materials found in the Library is implied.

Brochures are to be distributed only in the approved areas. Only Library related brochures will be kept at or distributed from the circulation desk or any area of the library other than designed locations.

#### E. Solicitation

The Library does not allow the sale of goods or service by members of the public in the library building, on the grounds, or in the parking lot. The only merchandising activities permitted are Library or Friends of the Library sponsored sales or activities. Any similar activities by other organizations or individuals are prohibited unless specifically authorized by the Cooke County Commissioners' Court.

The public may not solicit money or donations in the library, nor place a receptacle/collection box in the Library. Displays, notices and handouts announcing fund-raising programs and activities will be permitted, provided the requirements stipulated in this policy are met.

Individuals and/or organizations are prohibited from asking patrons to sign a letter or petition, as it is not consistent with the Library's passive distribution policy.

#### F. ADA Guidelines

The Cooke County Library endeavors to make its services, facilities, and programs as accessible as possible to the public, including those who have disabilities. The Cooke County Commissioners' Court is committed to meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act: Public Law 101-336. The ADA prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, State and local government service, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation.

## G. MEETING ROOM POLICY

Cooke County Library provides meeting space to the community as a public service for the exchange of ideas, to access and share information, and for patrons to participate in programs, classes and meetings created for the enjoyment of the community. The meeting space may be used by organizations engaged in educational, cultural, intellectual, or charitable activities. The meeting room is not available for purely social purposes, or for the benefit of self-promotion of individuals or commercial concerns. The Library's meeting space is intended for use primarily by the library for library-sponsored or co-sponsored programs and priority for use will be given to these programs. Permission to use a meeting space does not constitute endorsement of a group's policies or beliefs by the library. No advertisements or announcements implying such an endorsement are permitted. The Library Director reserves the right to revoke permission for the use of the meeting room.

All functions in the library meeting room must be free and open to the public, must be in keeping with the Mission Statement of the library, and must conform to the American Library Association's "**Meeting Rooms: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**" (See Appendices). Library staff may attend or observe any meeting or program at any time.

The Cooke County Library does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its programs and services, and organizations must comply with applicable American Disabilities Act requirements by reasonably accommodating persons with disabilities. Applicants must notify the library at least five (5) working days in advance of the meeting or event in order to prepare the necessary arrangements.

Permission to use the meeting room will be denied to an organization whose purpose is to conduct religious services or activities; is illegal; whose conduct would interfere with the proper functioning of the library; who promotes activities and materials that are obscene, defamatory, invade a person's privacy, or directly incite violence; whose purpose is promotional or for monetary gain. The Library Director shall be the final authority in granting or refusing permission for use of the Library Meeting Room.

Use of the library's meeting room is prohibited for the purpose of assisting the campaign for election of any person to any office; or for the promotion or opposition of any ballot issue. The meeting room may be used for



general political purposes, such as information sharing, organizational meetings, and election issues and candidate forums. Rooms are available on a non-discriminatory, equal access basis in compliance with state law.

The meeting room may be reserved in advance. Library-related programs will be given preference in scheduling. The library reserves the right to reschedule or cancel reservations at any time in order to use the meeting rooms for programs or events sponsored by the Library.

At the present, no meeting room fees are charged. If need be, the Cooke County Library has the right to change this policy.

## REGULATIONS

Meetings may be scheduled during normal Library hours, as well as after the library closes.

To avoid conflicts, organizations should verify meeting room reservations one (1) week prior to the meeting date.

Reservations may be made in advance. If the space is available, meeting rooms can be reserved on short notice. The use of the name, address or telephone number of the Cooke County Library as the address for any organization using the library for meeting purposes is prohibited.

No products, services or memberships may be advertised, solicited, or sold. However, the following will be permissible at library initiated programs:

- Fund raising to benefit the Library, sponsored by the Friends of the Library;
- Sale of items by authors or artists as part of a library program.

Children under the age of eight accompanying an adult to a meeting must remain with the adult at all times. Meetings of groups whose members are under the age of eleven (11) must be supervised and attended by a legally responsible adult. No child is to be left unsupervised while the responsible adult is attending a meeting. All meetings involving children must comply with the Library's Unattended Children Policy.

Meetings must not disrupt the use of the Library by others or violate in any way the Library's Code of Conduct. Persons attending meetings are subject to all library rules.

Refreshments are allowed in the meeting room only. When refreshments are provided, the organization using the room is responsible for providing all supplies and refreshment equipment.

The Library is not responsible for user's equipment, supplies, materials or other items. Items and supplies needed must be brought on the day of the scheduled activity and removed at the end of the activity. Items may not be stored in the library.

The user is responsible for care of the room, and will be held responsible for any damage and the general condition of the room following use. The user will be assessed charges for repair or replacement of any damaged contents of the room, as well as flooring, walls, ceilings and anything attached thereto. Care of the room will include the removal of any food or beverage items, signs or posters, and handouts, as well as the removal of all trash.

No signage may be affixed to walls, woodwork, ceilings, or furniture. Decorations are permitted, but certain types of decorations are prohibited. For example: confetti; burning candles; tape on walls, ceilings and woodwork; and nails, thumbtacks or staples on any room surface. The Director of the Library must approve any decorations prior to their use.

The group is free to change the arrangement of furniture prior to or during the meeting. However, at the conclusion of the meeting, the room must be returned to the original condition. All tables must be broken down, chairs stacked neatly and the heating/cooling unit turned off.

The Cooke County Library is a non-smoking and, smoke-free area and use of all forms are prohibited. Cooke County passed new ordinance, No. 10-24-11.03 in 2011 in reference to this. (See Appendices.)

All safety requirements must be met. These include compliance with the room limit of 50, no blocking of exits, and leaving all doors unlocked during the hours of using the meeting room.

Failure to comply with the Meeting Room Policy and Regulations governing use, the maximum occupancy limit (50), and the Library's Code of Conduct, may result in withdrawal of future meeting room privileges.

## H. Emergencies and Disasters

In the event of an emergency or disaster, the primary concern is for the safety of patrons and staff. The Library staff will follow the procedures recommended by the Cooke County Emergency Management staff and the Library Director.

## I. Library Parking Lot

The Library has a parking lot behind the library for the use of patrons during the time that the library is open. Cars must be parked in designated parking spaces, honoring spaces designated for handicapped parking and library staff. Cars blocking drivers or cars abandoned in a parking space will be towed from the premises at the owner's expense. A car is considered abandoned when it has been ticketed and/or when it has been left in the parking space for over forty-eight (48) hours.

When the library is closed, the lot may be used by non-profit and/or town organizations with the Director's and Cooke County Commissioners' Court approval. Requests are made by submission to the Director either orally or by a letter explaining the event and its use. The lot is available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting its use. Permission to use the parking lot does not in any way constitute or imply endorsement of the users' beliefs or programs by the Library or Commissioner's Court.

### Regulations-

1. No admission fee or collections are permitted;
2. Non-alcoholic beverages only;
3. Smoking or use of tobacco in any forms is not permitted;
4. The use of skateboards and rollerblades is not permitted.

## **IV. CIRCULATION SERVICES**

Who may use the Cooke County Library?

The library will serve all residents of Cooke County. Service will not be denied or abridged because of religious, racial, social, economic, or political status; or because of mental, emotional, or physical conditions; age; or sexual orientation.

The use of the library may be denied for due cause. Some examples of due cause may be failure to return library materials pay fines or fees, destruction of library property, disturbance of other patrons, or any other illegal, disruptive, or objectionable conduct on library property.

#### A. Library Cards

Possession of a valid library card in good standing is required to borrow materials from the Cooke County Library. Each patron must have a current card application on file, thereby assuming responsibility for use of the card, and constituting an agreement to abide by rules set forth by the Cooke County Commissioners' Court. If the card has not been used in the last one (1) year, the patron must start their current borrowing record over. A current borrowing record means that a patron must have a minimum of 2 check outs over a one (1) month or thirty (30) day period. This means that there will be a month of checking out materials and waiting period, before the patron can check out movies or request Interlibrary Loans. Patrons are responsible for all materials borrowed on their cards. Each library card will be limited to a maximum of twenty-seven (27) items borrowed at any one time. The twenty-seven (27) items borrowed applies to TexShare patrons as well. Juvenile patrons will be limited to a maximum of twenty-three (23) items borrowed at any one time. A Cooke County Library card becomes invalid after two (2) years of no use. This is a safe guard to protect the patron and library so that misuse of the card does not occur.

Registration: Patrons must fill out an application form to register for a library card. At this time applications are only available in English. New cardholders are limited to two items at time of registration (See Limits, below).

#### Requirements for a Cooke County Library Card

1. You **MUST** be a permanent resident of Cooke County.
2. Texas Driver's license or official Texas picture I.D. This will be used for the patron's photo I.D. in the library's ILS.
3. One other official document with name and current physical Cooke County address of applicant. If I.D. **DOESN'T** have current physical Cooke County address or doesn't match official document, two (2) official documents will need to be shown.

4. Call Reference: A person with a different address and phone number of applicant.
5. Parents only, or person with custody of a minor, may fill out registration card for a juvenile under the age of sixteen (16).
6. Library card must be picked up at the library, with license or photo I.D. shown. This is for your protection.

Acceptable forms of identification and documentation include:

1. Valid Texas driver's license;
2. Texas I.D.;
3. Student I.D. with photograph and address;
4. Other picture I.D. with name and address;
5. Rent or lease agreement;
6. Voter's registration card;
7. Car insurance card;
8. Utility bill;
9. Letter from a government agency or social service organization.

All above forms of identification must show current name and address in Cooke County.

Responsibility: A parent or legal guardian's contact information is required on a registration card for a patron under the age of eighteen (18). The parent or guardian assumes responsibility for any fines, fees, damages, or loss of materials, which may result from the applicant's use of the library. Parent or guardian must obtain their own library card before getting one for their child(ren). The Library will not restrict a patron's access to library materials due to age, with the exceptions of movies. No movies can be checked out to patrons under twenty-one (21). The Library requests that parents who are concerned about their child's access to materials accompany them to the library and assist them in making their selections.

Library patrons age sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) may apply for their own card. Parent or guardian must be used as their call reference and assumes responsibility for any fines, fees, damages, or loss of materials, which may result from the applicant's use of the library. Library patrons age eighteen (18) and over applying for a library card assume their own responsibility. If patron had a juvenile library card, once they turn

eighteen (18) they must re-apply for a library card showing required documentation.

## 1. Individual (personal) card

Cooke County Residents: Must meet above requirements.

Cards are available at no charge to persons residing in Cooke County, and will be issued subject to the completion of all applications and procedures.

North Central Texas College Students: Cards are available to a non-resident student who is currently enrolled in NCTC. The student must show a TexShare card issued by the NCTC Library, a valid NCTC I.D. and a driver's license to be issued a Cooke County library card. If a student has any overdue items and/or fines of \$1.00 or more the NCTC Library staff will be notified. A hold will be placed on the student's circulation and permanent academic record until payment is received.

## 2. TexShare Card

Cooke County Library participates in the TexShare card program, which is a reciprocal borrowing program established by the Texas State Library. It is designed as a service to offer wider access to information and services. This card allows the cardholder borrowing privileges at all TexShare libraries throughout the state of Texas. Many public, private and academic libraries participate in TexShare.

The card program allows registered users of participating TexShare libraries to obtain a TexShare card at their home library and use the card to borrow materials directly from other participating libraries. In order to receive a TexShare card, a patron must have a minimum of 2 check outs over a one (1) month or thirty (30) day period. This means that there will be a month of checking out materials and waiting period, before new cardholders can apply for a TexShare card. The cardholder's account must be in good standing with no fees or fines. The card will only be validated for six (6) months at a time. Then the patron will need to come back and renew their TexShare card.

Out-of-county borrowers must have a valid TexShare card from their own library, a valid driver's license or state issued I.D. card with photo showing their home address, a valid library card from their home library. Renewal of materials and fines are assessed the same way as Cooke County residents.

The cardholder should return items to the lending library and is solely responsible for any expense involved in returning the items and for all fines and fees accrued at other libraries. Patrons may have their TexShare card revoked if they have outstanding fees or fines with any TexShare Library. Failure to return materials or to pay outstanding charges will result not only in the cancellation of TexShare privileges, but in the suspension of borrowing privileges with the Cooke County Library.

#### B. Privacy/Confidentiality of Records:

The Cooke County Library supports every patron's right to have his or her records remain confidential. Library records include patron registration data, circulation records, overdue and reserve records, participation in library sponsored programs, library visits, and/or any data that contains information that links specific materials or services used. It is the intent of the Cooke County Library to protect the privacy of those who use the Library.

Each patron has individual control over his/her borrower's card and presentation of the card permits access to information about borrower's current circulation record. Patron information will be retained only for the proper and efficient functions of the library, and only for as long as is necessary. Personal information, such as name, address, and telephone number, are kept indefinitely. Except during the actual period of transaction (circulation, maintenance of record on unpaid fines, reservation of materials), the library will not maintain a record of transaction.

Library program records, with names and telephone numbers, are kept for library files only and are destroyed when the time of limitations has passed. Meeting room reservations with contact names, telephone numbers, and purpose of meeting are also kept for library files only and are destroyed when the time of limitations has passed.

In compliance with Chapter 552 (Texas Open Records Act) of the **Local Government Code**, confidentiality of the records of any library or library system which is supported in whole or part by public funds, that identify or serve to identify a person who requested, obtained, or used library materials or service, no information will be released to any person,

agency, or organization except in response to a valid court order or subpoena of district court properly presented to the Library Director.

Nothing in this policy shall prevent authorized library personnel from using library records in the administration of their regular duties.

The Cooke County Library affirms the provisions of the American Library Association's statement on **Privacy: An Interpretation of Library Bill of Rights** (See Appendices).

Be advised that **The USA Patriot Act** of 2001 (P.L. 107-56) overrides all state laws protecting the patron's right to privacy. According to Section 215 Access to Records Under Foreign Intelligence Security (FISA):

"Allows an FBI agent to obtain a search warrant for "any tangible thing," which can include books, records, papers, external drives, and computers with hard drives.

Permits the FBI to compel production of library circulation records, Internet use records, and registration information stored in any medium.

Does not require the agent to demonstrate "probable cause," the existence of specific facts to support the belief that a crime has been committed or that the items sought are evidence of a crime. Instead, the agent only needs to claim that he believes that the records he wants may be related to an ongoing investigation related to terrorism or intelligence activities, a very low legal standard.

Libraries or librarians served with a search warrant issued under FISA rules may not disclose, under penalty of law, the existence of the warrant or the fact that records were produced as a result of the warrant. A patron cannot be told that his/her records were given to the FBI or that she or he is subject to investigation."

The above section is taken from the American Library Association's **The USA PATRIOT Act in the Library** (See Appendices).



## C. Loan periods and limits

The following loan periods and limits have been established to provide patrons with sufficient time to both use materials and return them so that they are available within a reasonable time for other users. If patrons choose, they can now be notified by email or text when the items are due.

1. Loan periods: The majority of items within the library's collection may be borrowed for a period of fourteen (14) days, with an extension of two (2) renewal periods or twenty-eight (28) additional days. If the due date falls on a day (either holiday, inclement weather or other closing) when the library is closed, the loan period will be extended to the next day the library is open. Special loan periods have been established for the following library materials:
  - a. Movies-Three (3) days
  - b. Interlibrary Loan materials- Due date is chosen depending on when item must be returned to lending institution.

Limits: New library card applicants who have not yet picked up their physical library card may checkout no more than 2 items per card. Once the library card is ready and has been picked up, the patron may checkout the normal circulation amount of twenty-seven (27) items. However, there is a one (1) month or thirty (30) day borrowing period before a new patron can check out movies or request ILLs. The one (1) month or thirty (30) day borrowing period means the patron must have 2 check outs in thirty (30) days.

2. Loan limits for specific media are as follows:
  - a) Books (including paperbacks): Twelve (12) items. An exception is made for teachers (including home schoolers), who may check out items for classroom use. The limit is fifteen (15) for them.
  - b) Movies: Four (4) items. There is also a limit of 4 per family. No movies can be checked out on a card that is registered to a patron under twenty-one (21).
  - c) Audio books on compact disc: Six (6) items.

d) Non-circulating items: Certain selected items may not be taken out of the building:

- 1) Materials in delicate condition or that are susceptible to damage;
- 2) Those materials that are rare/impossible to replace;
- 3) Reference materials;
- 4) Periodicals, which includes newspapers;
- 5) Vertical files.

3. Return of items: Items must be returned to the Cooke County Library, either within the Library or via the outside drops. The outside drops are only open when the library is closed. If materials are put in any of the drops when the library is open there is a \$1.00 charge for each item.

Audio/CD books are to be returned inside as other materials dropping on them may cause damage. DVDs may be returned in the designated "DVDs only" outside drop. There is a \$1.00 charge for all movies and Audio/CD books returned in the inside building or outside book drops

D. Renewals: Two fourteen (14) day renewal of materials are permitted, if the item is not reserved by another patron. There are no renewals for movies.

Items may be renewed in person, by telephone or online unless there is a reserve or hold placed on the item. If done in person, a new printed receipt is given. If done by phone, the date is orally given to the patron. If done online, date is changed immediately in the patron's record which they can see.

Materials that are overdue cannot be renewed until the patron's account has a zero balance. Interlibrary loan materials may not be renewed, unless the lending institution permits. Renewals should be requested a few days before the item is due.

#### E. Damaged or Lost Items

Charges are assessed for damaged or lost materials to encourage library users to be responsible for library property. If an item is lost or damaged to such an extent that it must be replaced the patron will be charged the cost

of the item plus a \$3.00 processing fee. Once the patron has paid for the item and the appropriate paperwork is done, the patron may keep the item.

The following charges will be assessed when materials have been returned, damaged or have been lost:

- \$1.00 for each damaged page (torn, marked or otherwise damaged)
- \$1.00 barcode
- \$1.00 spine label
- \$1.00 for movies or audio artwork
- \$2.00 for each plastic book jacket that must be replaced
- \$5.00 for each compact disc or DVD case
- \$10.00 for each individual replacement audiobook CD plus \$3.00 processing fee

When an item(s) cannot be found by the original due date, the staff will renew the material(s) for two (2) more check out periods of fourteen (14) days. This allows the library staff and the patron the time to conduct a thorough search for the materials in question. Fines do not accrue during this time period. However, if fines have already begun before the first renewal, the patron must pay these fines. The renewal only stops the fines for the time being. The payment of these designated charges must be done prior to allowing a patron to check out more items. If the material is found during the renewal period, the patron's record will be cleared. If the material is not located, the patron will be assessed replacement and processing costs.

## F. Special services

1. Reserves: A reserve is a hold placed on an item that is checked out or is otherwise unavailable at the time of the request. Patrons may place a reserve at the Circulation Desk, by phone or online on a specific item that is currently checked out. When more than one reserve is placed on the item, a queue will be established, and each request will be filled in the order that they were received. When the item is returned to the library, the patron will be notified that the item is being held for them at the Circulation Desk for three days. The specific date will be included in this notification in order to avoid confusion. Patrons will be notified by phone, email or text.

A patron may have no more than five (5) outstanding reserve requests at one time. Further, the patron may only place one reserve per title. Patrons are responsible for notifying the Library if they no longer require a reserved item and wish to be removed from the waiting list. Removal of a reserved item can be done online as well.

2. Interlibrary loan requests: Materials from the collections of other public, academic, and special libraries may be borrowed through Interlibrary Loan. Patrons may request that the Library attempt to locate books, copies of journal or periodical articles, movies, music or videogames that are not available in the Cooke County Library. Requests may be done at the library or online. Libraries are under no obligation to lend materials.

There is a limit of five (5) open requests at one time per patron. A patron must have a one (1) month or thirty (30) day borrowing record before requesting an ILL. The one (1) month or thirty (30) day borrowing period means the patron must have a minimum of 2 check outs in thirty (30) days.

Interlibrary loan materials cannot be renewed. If these materials are returned late they will be assessed with the fine of \$5.00 per day. If a patron requests, the Library staff will request a renewal. Renewal must be requested before item is due. The patron will be notified either way. Patrons who fail to return materials borrowed on their behalf will be charged the cost of the item (as determined by the lending library).

3. Electronic Services: The Cooke County Library offers a variety of online electronic services for its patrons. In order for a patron to use these services they must have no outstanding fees or fines.

- a) Databases: The Cooke County Library provides access to the TexShare Databases, commercial databases subscriptions that are paid for by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

These databases allow patrons to find full-text articles in encyclopedias, almanacs, journals, newspapers and other resources on a wide variety of subjects.

In order to access the databases, patrons must be a registered Cooke County Library cardholder or a cardholder from a

participating TexShare member library. Patrons may access the databases in the library or remotely. Staff will provide the information and passwords necessary to access the databases.

b) eBooks: The Cooke County Library offers several eBook options for patrons. Each option has different selections and limitations. The number of books a patron may have at one (1) time varies depending on the service chosen by the patron. eBooks may be returned early and can be renewed. Staff will be able to help patrons with the use of these services.

c) Downloadable Audiobooks: The Cooke County Library offers patrons a downloadable audiobooks service. The number of books a patron may have at one (1) time is based on the number set by the Library (See section C. Loan periods and limits). Downloadable audiobooks may be returned early and can be renewed. Staff will be able to help patrons with the use of these services.

#### G. Fees, Charges and Fines (including fees for printing, photocopying and faxing)

Fines/Overdue Charges: A fine of \$0.10 per day, including Sundays and holidays is charged for each overdue item (See exceptions below). There is no grace period without fines, unless the library closes unexpectedly. Any patron with overdue materials will be held responsible for all fines, postage costs, and legal costs involved in the recovery of the materials. Each patron has a maximum fine of \$200.00 for each patron card. If one (1) member of a family has outstanding charges, payment must be made before any members of that family can borrow materials. Fines will be held for an unlimited time period.

Refunds and reductions are done on a case by case basis and are approved by the Director. There is no credit given under any circumstances. Patrons with overdue materials will be notified by telephone or email and informed of their fine and requested to return the movies.

Fines- movies:

- \$1.00 per day per overdue movie
- \$1.00 per movie returned in book drop
- Movies overdue more than thirty (30) days will be assessed the cost of the movie.

Maximum fine: In order to encourage return of long-overdue materials, there is a maximum per item fee of \$10.00, exclusive of item replacement, damage and processing charges, for overdue materials returned within one (1) year. However, for items that are returned after one (1) year, the Director has the right to decide what charges have accrued and the amount the patron will be fined.

Replacement Cost-Damaged: When an item has been damaged enough to warrant replacement, the patron will be charged the replacement cost of the item, plus a non-refundable \$3.00 processing fee. The Library does not accept replacement copies.

Replacement Cost-Lost: The fee for lost items is the price of the item, plus a non-refundable \$3.00 processing fee. The Library does not accept replacement copies.

Other charges: It is the policy of the Cooke County Library to charge for faxes, photocopying and printing at public-access computers to defray financial costs, conserve resources, and ensure equity-of-access standards. The following fees will be charged which have not been covered elsewhere:

- Local or 800 number fax- \$0.50 per page to send.
- Long distance fax- \$2.00 1st page and \$1.00 each additional page of letter size paper. However, if using legal paper and sending it long distance, the cost is \$1.25 after the initial \$2.00 charge.
- Fax to receive- \$0.50 per page.
- Overseas fax- a call is placed to the operator for the charge to that location. The price ranges from \$3.00 to \$5.00 per minute.
- Photocopying/printing/scanning prices:
  - Black & white copies on letter size paper: \$0.20 per page.
  - Black & white copy on legal size paper: \$0.25 per page.
  - Black & white copy on larger size paper: \$0.50 per page.
  - Color copy on letter size paper: \$0.50 per page.
  - Color copy on legal size paper: \$0.75 per page.
  - Color copy on larger size paper: \$1.50 per page.
  - Microfilm printing: \$0.35 per page.
  - Scanning documents: \$0.75 per page.
- Replacement of lost library card: \$3.00 per card.

The Library does accept credit and debit cards for payment of fines, fees and other charges.

## **V. PATRON SERVICES**

### **A. Patron services statement**

The mission of the Cooke County Library is to provide all persons in the community with a safe and confidential environment in which they may freely pursue intellectual, educational, and recreational interests through diverse services and resources collected in a variety of formats. In order to fulfill these objectives, the staff of the library embraces the following philosophy:

The staff of the Cooke County Library cares about our patrons and believes in providing the highest standard of service;

We seek innovative approaches to serve our patrons, whether within the resources of the library or beyond;

We believe in meeting our patrons' information needs by providing guidance, assistance and accurate, complete, up-to-date information, with each research request treated with confidentiality;

We believe that all patrons have the right to equal treatment regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin;

We believe that patrons are entitled to excellent service from a staff that is knowledgeable and motivated to provide patron satisfaction;

We believe in knowing and understanding our patrons and responding to their ideas and concerns;

We value teamwork and recognize that all staff is important to quality service;

We strive to make decisions with input from those most likely to be affected;

We encourage differing points of view, creativity and risk-taking;

We believe staff is special and that one person can make a difference.

## B. Patron Code of Conduct

Patrons of the Cooke County Library have the right to expect a safe, comfortable, and pleasant atmosphere in which all library patrons can use the library's materials and services most effectively. Further, patrons have the right to assume that their visit to the library will be free from harassment, physical discomfort, danger and psychological stress.

Unfortunately, the behavior of a few library visitors may destroy this environment. Behavior becomes unacceptable when it infringes on the rights of others or when it could result in loss or damage to patron or library property. Depending on the severity of the offense, the library will institute discipline ranging from verbal warning, denial of specific privileges, denial of the right to use the library for a specified time period, to legal prosecution.

General rules of behavior are designed to protect the rights of library patrons, to outline for staff members acceptable and appropriate behavior by patrons, and to preserve library materials and facilities from damage. This policy is to be used in conjunction with local, state, and federal laws and policies of the Cooke County Commissioners' Court. The Cooke County Library observes the American Library Association's **Guidelines for the Development of Policies and Procedures Regarding User Behavior and Library Usage** (See Appendices).

- a. Staff members observing unacceptable behavior shall take appropriate action. This action will vary depending on the severity of the behavior. Library staff has the authority to exclude any disruptive patron and may summon police if necessary. Some examples of appropriate action would be denial of Internet use for a period of time to trespassing from the library permanently. A written or oral report of the behavioral problem will be done and forwarded to the Director. If necessary, a copy of the report will be sent to the appropriate people or authorities.

General Prohibitions- For the comfort and safety of patrons, volunteers, and staff, and the protection of library property, the following actions are not allowed on library property. This list is not exhaustive or inclusive.

- a. Use of any smoking and/or tobacco product including cigarettes, chewing tobacco, electronic cigarettes in the building or on the



Library property. Cooke County passed new ordinance, No. 10-24-11.03 in 2011 in reference to this (See Appendices.)

- b. Spitting.
- c. Loitering at entrances, in lobbies, walkways, restrooms, the parking lot, or other non-study areas. For the purposes of this policy, loitering is defined as staying in such an area for more than thirty (30) minutes or remaining in the library without being engaged in library activities.
- d. Use of library facilities for prolonged or chronic sleeping.
- e. Carrying into the library sleeping bags, bedrolls, bed blankets, large plastic bags, large boxes, sports equipment, shopping carts or camping backpacks.
- f. Soliciting, panhandling, or distributing handbills.
- g. Approaching library users for the purpose of obtaining signatures for petitions or conducting surveys or similar investigations. Obtaining signatures cannot take place inside the Library nor can a petition be left on a table.
- h. Leaving personal property unattended. The Library is not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen property.
- i. Littering, or in any way defacing or vandalizing library property.
- j. Consumption of food or beverages in the library.
- k. Bathing, shaving, washing clothes, or otherwise misusing restrooms.
- l. Appropriate apparel, including footwear and shirts must be worn at all times.
- m. Using opposite gender restrooms (except young children accompanied by parents).
- n. Engaging in voyeurism/peeping.
- o. Entering non-public areas of the library unless conducting official library business, as part of a library tour or accompanied by Library staff.
- p. Possessing or consuming drugs or alcohol.
- q. Excessive display of affection.
- r. Gambling.
- s. Bringing animals inside the library, except for special service animals for the blind, hearing impaired and disabled or for program activities. Leaving animals outside unattended is also prohibited.
- t. Sitting or standing on display or work surfaces such as tables, end tables, counters, desks and so on.
- u. Occupation of more than one seat or study space, and overcrowding at study tables.
- v. Relocating furniture or equipment.

- w. Placing feet on chairs, tables, or other furniture or equipment where it is inappropriate to do so.
- x. Carrying a weapon into the library unless the individual is a licensed peace officer of the state of Texas or a federal law enforcement agent authorized to carry a firearm as part of the officer's duty, or is a person licensed to carry a concealed weapon.
- y. Vandalizing, intentional damage or destruction, or defacing library materials.
- z. Removing or attempting to remove library materials, equipment, or property without proper checkout or authorization.
- aa. Engaging in any activity in violation of Federal, State, local or other applicable law, or Library policy.

Special prohibitions:

- a. Cell phone use: In order to avoid interfering with other library patrons use of the library, it is prohibited to carry on a conversation via cell phone in public use areas of the library. Before entering the library, cell phones must be turned on vibrate or silent mode. Having the phone on vibrant or silent mode does not change the requirement that you leave the library to use the phone.
- b. Bicycles, tricycles, wagons, and similar equipment are not to be brought into any enclosed area of the library. A bicycle rack is provided in front of the library in the lawn next to the ramp. Skateboards, rollerblades, folding scooters, and similar equipment may be brought inside the building, but must be checked at the Circulation Desk. The checked item will be placed behind the circulation desk while the patron uses the library. All items will be returned when the patron is ready to exit the library. At the discretion of the library staff, patrons may be required to check other objects, equipment, etc. which may pose a potential hazard to the safety of other patrons or staff members or to library collections, equipment or facilities.
- c. Skateboarding, rollerblading, riding scooters or bicycles, etc., on library property is not permitted.
- d. Unauthorized gatherings by social clubs, organizations or gangs are not permitted. Members of any group who gather within the library, parking lot or use the facility in any manner which may discourage or exclude use by any member of the public may be asked to disperse, or leave the building.

Persons who violate this policy may be excluded from the library. Refusal to leave the building when asked to do so by a member of the library's staff shall result in a criminal prosecution and arrest.

Display of gang signs, symbols, or paraphernalia is forbidden.

Disruptive behavior:

- b. Patrons will not physically, verbally, or with gestures, threaten, abuse or assault another person on library property. Any person committing such an offense will be evicted from the premises and may be subject to prosecution where applicable.
- c. Harassing staff or patrons, either verbally or through actions. This may include verbal abuse, use of profanity or other abusive language whether oral or written toward patrons or staff, intimidation, staring at another person with the effect of annoying a person of reasonable sensibilities. Further, following with the intent to disturb, lurking, sexual harassment or harassment on account of race, religion, ethnic or national background, gender or sexual orientation.
- d. Patrons may not interfere with the staff's performance of its duties. This includes engaging in inappropriate conversation or behavior, sexual advances, or physical and/or verbal harassment.
- e. Exhibitionism/flashing/indecent exposure.
- f. Fighting or challenging to fight, pushing, shoving or throwing things.
- g. Running or jumping in the library.
- h. Noisy behavior, including whistling and loud talking or shouting.
- i. Any act which is in violation of the laws of the State of Texas or Cooke County and City of Gainesville ordinances is expressly forbidden in the library.
- j. Disciplining children in a manner which disturbs others.
- k. Abandonment of individuals, both adults and children, who are unable to take care of themselves. A responsible adult must attend to children under the age of seven (7). The responsible adult must be close enough to both see and hear the child and monitor all behavior and activities of their child in the library. See also Unattended Children Policy below.

### C. Children in the Library

The library welcomes children of all ages to use its materials and services in a positive manner, and encourages children and families to use the

library together. The library, however, is a public building with staff trained to provide library services, who are not licensed to provide childcare needs that serve in lieu of parental responsibility. Although staff will always respond with care and concern, responsibility for the care, safety, and behavior of children lies with his/her parents/guardian, both within the library building and on library grounds. In order to promote a safe environment for children, the Cooke County Commissioners' Court and the Library have established the following policy:

Parents/guardians are responsible for teaching their children the proper behavior in the library and respect for other patrons and books. All children are expected to follow the library's general patron behavior policy so as not to be disruptive to others.

All children should know the telephone number of their parent/guardian. Library staff will attempt to notify the parent or guardian when:

- Closing due to inclement weather, power outage, etc.
- The child's behavior disturbs other users of the library.
- There is cause to believe that the child's health or safety is in danger.
- The library staff is unable to provide the necessary degree of supervision that is desirable for young children.

A child under age seven (7) should never be left alone in the library even for a short period of time and must be directly supervised by an adult. Parent/guardian must be in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with the child, ensuring that the child's behavior is not disturbing to other patrons. An exception would be children over age four (4) attending a library program without the parent/guardian in the room. However, the parent must remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.

Children from seven (7) to twelve (12) should be accompanied by a person over fourteen (14) years of age who acknowledges responsibility for the child.

Children thirteen (13) years of age or older may use the library unattended provided proper behavior is maintained. Teenagers are treated as adult users. However, they are still the legal responsibility of their parents and should have emergency contact available.

Child protective services or law enforcement may be contacted if:

- An unattended child is being disruptive.
- A child under age thirteen (13) is habitually left unattended for long periods of time.
- A child is deemed to be at risk of coming to harm (as in the case of a child being left alone when the library closes).

Procedure:

Child under age eight (8): A child who is left unattended and is frightened or crying should be taken to the children's area and comforted while another staff member tries to find the child's caregiver. When the responsible caregiver is located, library policy should be explained. If the child continues to be left unattended, the Director will contact the police.

Child ages eight (8) to twelve (12): If the child is left unattended and the responsible caregiver cannot be located within a fifteen (15) minute search by library staff, the caregiver will be notified by phone that it is unacceptable to leave a child unattended at the library, and the policy will be explained. If the child continues to be left unattended, the Director will notify police. Staff will not take the child outside the building or transport the child under any circumstances.

The Director will contact parent(s) or guardian(s) of children who are left for long periods of time. If the same children are repeatedly left in the library without parental supervision, a letter will be sent to the parent.

After Hours: If the parent(s) or guardian(s) have not arrived to pick up their child under sixteen (16) at closing time and the child has no means of transportation, the staff will assist the child in calling a parent or guardian. After the library closes, two (2) staff members must remain with the child until the situation is resolved.

If the parent(s) or guardian(s) have not arrived to pick up their children within fifteen (15) minutes after closing time, the police/Child Protective Services will be contacted.

Library programs-

No child under the age of four (4) may be left in any program or special event alone. The responsible adult should remain in the building for any child under eight (8), where the responsible adult is available for the child if

s/he must leave a program. The responsible adult is expected to join the child immediately at the end of the program.

Disruptive children will be asked to leave the program after one warning. Parents with children who are crying or engaging in other disruptive behavior such as running, scuffling, or yelling will be asked to take their children away from the program area until the behavior can be corrected.

Persons responsible for children who have special needs related to physical or mental ability, disruptive behavior, emotional problems, lack of adequate attention span, incomplete social skills, and so on, must remain with their children at all times.

The library Director will contact day care groups who cannot control their children. If this problem is not corrected, the day care group will be asked not to return until the problem is corrected.

#### D. Xeroxing, printing, and faxing

##### 1. Copyright compliance:

Under the Copyright Act, the Cooke County Library provides copy, printing, and fax service to its patrons. The library is committed to complying with the copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) and other federal legislature related to the duplication, retention and use of copyrighted material.

The Cooke County Library is not responsible for the improper or illegal use of any copies of materials from its collections. It is the user's responsibility to guard against the infringement of rights that may be held by others and for clearing reproduction rights and copyright restrictions. The Cooke County Library does not claim to control the copyright for all pictorial and textual materials in its collections. Library staff will provide any information available for specific items that it has available to the user in this regard if a specific request is made. It is the patron's obligation to determine and satisfy copyright or other use restrictions when publishing or otherwise distributing materials from the Library's collections. Patrons are reminded that these materials are provided by the Cooke County Library for non-profit educational, personal or scholarly purposes and that transmission or reproduction of protected items beyond that

allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright holders.

#### E. Proctoring Exams

There will be no proctoring of exams in the Cooke County Library. No exceptions will be made to this rule. However, patrons can contact other facilities such as North Central Texas College, Muenster Public Library and Whitesboro Public Library regarding this issue.

#### F. Violations of Patrons Services Policies

The library may exclude from use or revoke privileges for anyone known to have violated any rule of these policies.

#### G. Patron communications

- 1) Patrons are encouraged to make suggestions for improvement.
- 2) All written forms of correspondence are welcomed.
- 3) The Director will review and evaluate suggestions and complaints and will respond in a timely manner.
- 4) If the patron is dissatisfied with the Director's reply, the patron may communicate directly with the Cooke County Judge and Commissioners. The names and addresses are on public record and available upon request.

#### H. Responsibility and Authority

The library will operate within the framework of policies and principles adopted by the Cooke County Commissioners' Court. Further, the library is authorized to develop such rules and procedures as may be necessary to carry out these responsibilities.

### **VI. GROUP SERVICES**

#### A. Programs in the library

As part of its mission to provide for the educational, informational, and recreational needs of its patrons, the Cooke County Library offers a variety of programs planned and sponsored on a regularly scheduled

basis throughout the year. These programs, which are presented for adults, young adults, and children, include such examples as storyhours, classes, lectures, performances and informational meetings. There is no charge for admission to any program solely sponsored by the library.

1. Performers/presenters policy: Performers/presenters are invited to participate in programs that are sponsored by the library. All performers/presenters must abide by the following policy:
  - a. Presenters affiliated with a business and/or product is not permitted to promote specific business and/or product as part of the information session. Exempt from this requirement are authors or performers who speak about their creations and are permitted to sell their books or creations as part of a library fund-raising effort.
  - b. The names, addresses, and phone numbers of program participants may not be solicited in any manner.
  - c. Publicity of library-sponsored programs is the responsibility of the library. Guest speakers will not initiate any publicity for programs without prior approval of the Director.
  - d. The library may mention the affiliation of the presenter in promotional materials. However, this does not constitute endorsement by the library.
  - e. Performance content must be appropriate for a library setting and for the audience age.
  - f. Performers will not include material that advocates any personal beliefs or doctrines.

## 2. Public performance license

As defined under current copyright laws, a public library building or a meeting room that is part of a public library building is considered a public venue. To be legally displayed, media used for programming in such a venue must have either been purchased with public performance rights or be covered by a public performance site license. It is a violation of copyright law to display "Home Use Only" media or programs that have been taped from broadcast television. It is also a violation to knowingly allow a patron or community group to display such media while using the public library meeting room. It is also illegal for a library or community group using the library meeting room to charge admission to attend any program where public performance licensed media is being used. In the case of limited



public performance site licenses, the companies that sell such licenses will usually allow libraries to hold one fund raising event each year to recoup license costs, subject to the terms of the license contract.

## B. Co-sponsored Programs in the library

In order to further the mission of the Cooke County Library, the library will also co-sponsor activities with various groups within the community. Such groups include local, state and federal government agencies; educational institutions; non-profit organizations; Friends of the Library; other library organizations or associations; and community organizations and clubs. There will be no charge for admission to any program co-sponsored by the library, except in the case of fund raising activities by the Friends of the Library.

## C. Tours of the library

Cooke County Library welcomes tour groups of all ages, preschool through adult. Library tours are available for groups of five or more, not to exceed thirty (30) participants.

The following information will be required from groups at the time the reservation is made:

- Date of visit
- Time of visit
- School or group name
- Phone number
- Leader's name
- Age or grade
- Number in group
- Type of program

### Guidelines:

Leaders should be aware of proper library behavior and supervise children accordingly. Recommended ratio of adult to child is one (1) adult to every five (5) children.

Brief visits are recommended for younger patrons.

Transportation must be factored into the schedule in order that the tour may begin on time.

The length of the tour may be shortened or lengthened depending upon the attentiveness of the participants and the number of questions

Library tours must be scheduled in advance.

#### D. School visits

In order to provide awareness of the library, members of the library will visit classrooms throughout the county's Independent School Districts. Visits will be scheduled as needed throughout the school year for library programs or to acquaint staff, students and parents with programs and services available at the library.

#### E. Youth Services

The library has a commitment to serve children and young adults, their families, teachers, and caregivers while fulfilling the mission of the Cooke County Library.

Youth Services contribute to the growth and development of children and young adults by:

- Treating children with patience and respect in an environment that is welcoming;
- Providing a collection in a wide variety of print and non-print formats that is current and representative of different points of view;
- Teaching children how to use library resources, enabling them to work independently while encouraging them to seek help when necessary;
- Offering activities and programs that educate children, enrich their lives and encourage their lifelong use of libraries;
- Cooperating with schools, childcare centers and community organizations that serve children to provide a network of services in the community; and
- Providing physical facilities that are inviting, attractive, and accommodating.

The entire collection, besides movies is open to all patrons. A patron's age cannot be used to deny or abridge library use. Library staff is not responsible for an individual's selection of material. Parents or legal guardians have the right and responsibility to restrict access to library resources for their children only. They should inform their children of their expectations and visit the library with them if they are concerned about choices (See Appendices - **Free Access to Libraries for Minors**).

## F. Special Services

Cooke County Library is committed to providing a full range of library and information services to all persons with special needs living in Cooke County. Residents with special needs should be able to conveniently identify and obtain for their use library material, which will meet their needs in a format they can use.

1. Audio books or downloadable audio books-This collection provides recreational reading for people who have physical or visual disability that limits their use of standard printed materials.

In addition, the Talking Book Program established by the Texas State Library provides free library services to patrons who are unable to read standard print material due to visual, physical, or reading disabilities whether permanent or temporary.

2. Large print books-The library maintains a large collection of current fiction and non-fiction materials in large print format that may be used by any library patron.
3. Staff will assist patrons in retrieving materials from top or bottom shelves, locating accessible restrooms, and other needed items in the building.

## VII. Additional Services

### A. Reference Services

The mission of the Reference services the library provides is to anticipate and support the information requirements and reading

interests of the community. Reference services are made available on an equal basis, regardless of age, gender, nation of origin, religion, or ability thus reflecting the full spectrum of the population it serves.

### Objectives of service

Cooke County Library strives to develop and implement, through continuous evaluation and adaptation, a program of reference services which effectively meet the informational, recreational, and cultural needs of the community. Essential to achieving this purpose is a broadly developed collection and a means of providing for effective interpretation and use.

### Confidentiality

All reference questions are confidential and treated with respect. The nature of the question asked and the identity of the patron will not be discussed with other patrons. When referring questions among staff members, discussion about the nature of the question asked and the identity of the patron will be kept to the minimum required by the referral.

### Handling inquiries

1. Staff will provide directional assistance to patrons. When necessary, staff will accompany patrons to the appropriate area of the library.
2. The staff will attempt to answer each question asked using the best source possible according to their professional judgment. Staff will cite the source of the answer at each reference transaction and will avoid personal opinions or interpretation of material.
3. Staff will help patrons search for materials, will instruct them in the use of resources and equipment, and will assist them with search strategies, in order that the patron can locate the information on their subject.
4. Staff will not interpret or give opinions on any reference question. This is especially true with medical, legal, financial or copyright questions.
5. Staff will do the research for the patron, which includes in-depth research. There will be a minimum charge of five (5) dollars. This

charge includes the following: one (1) hour of staff research, five (5) photocopies and for the results to be mailed to the patron.

### Circulation of Reference Materials

As a general rule, reference materials do not circulate. Some rare items never circulate and require that a patron leave their driver's license to even look at the items in the library. Photocopies of reference materials can be made, as long as it does not violate the Copyright Act. Whether or not copyright is violated is the user's responsibility.

Liability-The Cooke County Library is not liable for any damage caused by the use of the information used in or provided by the library. The library is not responsible for the accuracy of the information contained in the sources in the collection or of the information provided from other sources.

### Recording Statistics

All public service departments gather and analyze statistics on the number and nature of questions answered. These statistics are maintained continuously to better evaluate reference service and as part of the annual report submitted to the Texas State Library. Statistical information on library tours, programs, online searches, interlibrary loan requests, and other services is also maintained.

## B. Internet Usage and Accessibility

The Cooke County Library offers patrons access to the Internet through Wi-Fi and public access computers.

### Cooke County Library Internet Use Policy and Guidelines:

#### Mission:

The mission of the Cooke County Library is to provide all persons in the community with a safe and confidential environment in which they may freely pursue intellectual, educational, and recreational interests through diverse services and resources collected in a variety of

formats. In response to advances in technology and the changing needs of the county, the Cooke County Library provides access to a broad range of informational resources, including those available through the Internet.

Disclaimer:

The Cooke County Library only assumes responsibility for the information provided on our website. Since the Internet is a global entity with a highly diverse user population and information content, the Library has no control over what information may have been placed on the Internet and does not accept responsibility for its content. While the Internet offers many valuable local, national and international sources of information, not all sources provide accurate, complete or current information. It is the responsibility of the user to evaluate the validity of information found. The Internet and its available resources may contain materials of a controversial or offensive nature. Parents of minor children must assume the responsibility for their children's use of the Internet through the Library's connection.

Rules Governing Use:

General Use (Applies to All Patrons):

1. Access to the Internet is available only on certain designated workstations in the library.
2. If requested, the library staff will show patrons how to access the Internet and will explain basic navigational commands. Lengthy one-on-one tutorials are not possible due to staff constraints.
3. Use of an Internet access computer is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Those using the Internet access computers will have a one (1) hour time limit assigned, and will not disregard the limit when the library staff notifies them their time is up or the computer management system shuts off the computer.
4. Patrons will be allowed to use the computers only one (1) hour at a time, twice a day. Only if there are no other patrons who have not used the computer that day, will the patron be allowed to use the computers twice in one day.
5. All computers will be closed down fifteen (15) minutes prior to library closing.

6. Due to limited space no more than two (2) persons may work at any computer station. Only two (2) persons can share one computer session and only as long as they do not disturb fellow patrons.
7. Patrons may not install or download software programs onto the library computers.
8. Downloading of files or documents may be done to external hardware only, such as CDs or external drives.
9. If you wish to print from the computers, you will be charged. (See section G. Fees, Charges & Fines) for complete list of charges. Prompt payment is required or patrons will not be allowed to use the computers for 30 days.

#### Use by Minors (under age 18):

1. It is the Library's policy that parents or legal guardians should supervise their child's use of library computers and printers.
2. The Library does not have the right or responsibility to act in place of a parent.
3. Minors will be assigned to use the one (1) of the two (2) "minor" computers. Minors will not be allowed to use the adult computers.

#### Responsibilities of the User:

1. The use of a computer is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a patron losing this privilege. Examples of unacceptable use include, but are not just limited to:
  - a) Using the workstations to gain access to the Library's networks or computer systems or to any other network or computer system.
  - b) Make any attempt to damage or alter computer equipment or software configurations.
  - c) Make any attempt to cause degradation of system performance.
  - d) Unauthorized access to restricted files, networks or the control panel.

- e) Violation of copyright laws or software licensing agreements.
- f) Viewing or printing sexually explicit materials that are not suitable in a public setting.
- g) Use of Library computing resources for harassment, libeling, or slandering of other users.
- h) Unlawful dissemination of personal identification regarding minors.
- i) Use of computers for disruption or unauthorized monitoring of electronic communications.

## 2. Computer etiquette:

- a) Once your time has expired, vacate the area promptly. Please remember to sign out in the computer use book.
- b) Do not violate other patron's privacy by standing behind them.
- c) A patron with small children must keep them by their side at all times while using the computer.

## Sanctions:

1. Violations of the rules described will result in the user having privileges suspended for thirty (30) days. A second episode will result in a ninety (90) day suspension. Additional incidents will cause the patron to forfeit all privileges permanently.
2. Illegal acts involving library property or online violations will be subject to prosecution by local, state or federal authorities.
3. Users are financially liable for any damage caused directly or indirectly to any Cooke County Library equipment or software.
4. The Cooke County Library reserves the right to terminate a patron's computer session at any time the staff deems the use to be in conflict with the Library's Internet Use Policy and Guidelines.



Procedures for use:

1. Computers are available at the following times:
  - a) 9:00 am – 5:45 pm Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
  - b) 10:00 am – 6:45 pm Tuesday and Thursday
  - c) 10:00 am – 3:45 pm Saturdays
2. You must complete the necessary information in the computer sign-in book in order to use the Internet Access computer.
3. You may use the Internet Access computer for only one (1) hour at a time, twice a day. However, if there are no other patrons waiting to use the computers, the Library staff may allow you to stay on until the computer is needed.

## **VIII. Personnel**

### Policy statement

The staff of the Cooke County Library are employees of Cooke County. Therefore, the personnel policies that are recognized are the policies that all Cooke County employees must follow. When a person is hired they receive a handbook, "Cooke County Personnel Policy," which contains all the policies for all Cooke County employees.

All personnel questions and issues should be directed to the Cooke County Human Resource Office.

Complaints about library staff should be directed to the Director of the Library or to the County Judge's office.

## **IX. Support Groups**

### A. Friends of the Library

Friends of the Cooke County Library is a non-profit 501(c)(3) volunteer organization comprised of members who wish to advance the role of the library as a vital community resource and as an institution critical to the culture, education, and enrichment of our community.

Friends of the Library always serve at the pleasure of the Cooke County Commissioner's Court, which is the only legal authority to establish policy for the development of the library.

The Friends fulfill their mission by:

1. Supporting libraries, literacy and lifelong learning.
2. Supporting the Cooke County Library in its service to the community through volunteerism.
3. Promoting the services and activities of the library through public awareness.
4. Assisting the library in maintaining a welcoming and user-friendly environment.
5. Enhancing the library by providing financial support through gifts, grants, bequests and other fund-raising efforts.
6. Supporting legislation to strengthen libraries.
7. Building a team of advocates with depth, leadership ability, and desire to support a premiere library program.
8. Acting as an advisory group to the library administration.

### Fundraising Activities

Efforts to raise money by the Friends of the Library are to enhance the financial efforts by local government, not to diminish them. To that end, the Friends conduct sale of books and other materials.

## X. Collection Development

### A. Purposes and objectives

It is the purpose of the Cooke County Library to provide library resources and services necessary to meet the educational, recreational, and informational needs of the public, thus enhancing individual and community life.

Accordingly, the library attempts to provide materials, whatever the format, to fill these needs of both actual and potential users.

Materials should be selected and services and programs planned that address the residents' needs as individuals and as members of groups with concern given for all ages, backgrounds, interests, abilities, and levels of

education. It is vitally important that every citizen today have ready and free access to the world of ideas, information and creative experience.

Final responsibility and authority for the selection of library materials rests with the Director who will operate within a framework of policies and principles adopted by the Cooke County Commissioner's Court. The staff of the Library will operate under the Director's delegated authority.

#### B. Collection selection criteria

The Cooke County Library selects, makes available, and promotes the use of library materials which:

1. Meet the information needs of its library patrons.
2. Meet the recreational needs of its library patrons.
3. Supplement formal and informal study.
4. Reflect a variety of opinions (minority and majority), and differing points of view (even those points which may be regarded by some as controversial, whether because of political expression, affiliation, or moral implication) on a subject.
5. Support business, cultural, recreational, and civic activities in the county.
6. Stimulate self-understanding and growth.
7. Enhance job-related knowledge and skills.
8. Increase knowledge of and participation in the affairs of the community, the county, the country, and the world.
9. Enhance leisure time in the enjoyment of reading, listening and viewing.

#### C. Gifts, memorials and other donations

The term "gifts" as generally applied here refers to those materials, which are given primarily as clearance projects and not necessarily for their monetary value.

1. The Cooke County Library will have the right to accept or refuse all donations to the library regardless of their nature. Typically the library director would assume the responsibility for the acceptance of books, periodicals, recordings, etc. Items of this nature will be accepted only when they can be used to the best advantage of the library's overall program.

2. Because of limitation of space, budget and staff, the library reserves the right to accept or discard, at its discretion, any unsolicited materials. The library cannot guarantee that any gift will be part of the collection or kept permanently.
3. The decision to include the materials in the library's collection will be based on the same principles of selection as are applied to purchases of materials by the library. In addition, consideration will be given to the number of copies of the item currently in the collection and the physical condition of the gift materials.
4. All books and materials are to be accepted with the understanding that the library reserves the right to make such disposition as is fitting of duplicates and titles not needed by the library. The library will dispose of all gift materials, which are rejected to the best advantage.
5. Due to lack of space and relevance to the collection the library cannot accept old reference books, textbooks, or condensed books.
6. If the donor wishes the materials which are not added returned, he may so state and leave his address and telephone number for notification purpose.
7. It is the policy not to accept special collections of books to be kept together as a separate physical collection or entity. Collections will be accepted only with the understanding that they will be integrated into the general collection.
8. Except for temporary exhibit or other special use, the library will not accept storage responsibility of historical documents or objects owned or controlled by groups or individuals. When such materials are held at the library for temporary exhibit, etc., the library will endeavor to protect the materials.
9. The acquisition of valuable or rare books is not a function of the Library. An exception is made when an item is of bibliographic importance to a particular area of the collection wherein the library has a special responsibility, e.g. the Genealogy Collection.

When gift materials are deemed no longer useful, the library will dispose of them on the same basis it disposes of other materials.

## Memorial or Honor Donations:

Memorial or Honor donations are welcomed as they provide the library with an opportunity to add materials or equipment, which it might not otherwise be able to afford. In addition it is felt that such donations provide individuals with a rich opportunity not only to express sympathy, but also act as a long-term statement of respect for the deceased.

Donations received for this purpose will be handled as follows:

1. Memorial or Honor Book form will be completed by the donor or library staff.
2. Selection of materials will be made by the librarian who will consider suggestions from the donor.
3. The nature or subject of the book will be based where possible on the interests of the deceased.
4. A bookplate indicating in whose memory or honor the book is being purchased and the donor's name will be placed in the book prior to inclusion in the collection.
5. A letter or other appropriate form of notification will be forwarded to the family of the deceased or other designated parties.

In those instances where an individual wishes to donate a book from his personal library, the decision to accept the gift will be based on the principles enumerated under the Gifts section of this statement.

## XI. Weeding of the collection

In order to understand this section of the policy manual the term "weeding" needs to be defined. The definition of "weeding" is the process of examining items in a library collection title by title to identify for permanent withdrawal those that meet pre-established weeding criteria, especially when space in the stacks is limited. Public libraries usually weed routinely on the basis of circulation. <sup>5</sup>Before implementing any kind of weeding plan, the Director must carefully evaluate the library's materials selection policy and goals for the collection. Goals are based on the roles that the library plays in the community, all of which help to determine the weeding policy.

The Director shall weed the collection periodically. Several factors must be considered in the weeding process, including: the library's roles in the community and resultant goals; the needs and demands of the library's community of users; whether funds for buying more satisfactory titles are available; the relationship of a particular item to others on that subject; cooperative agreements with other libraries; the degree to which the library is to function as an archive or local history center; the possible future usefulness of a particular item.

Once the weeding process has begun, the Director may also wish to check the library's holdings against any centralized databases (union catalogs) to which the library belongs. Titles that are not circulating may be weeded with more impunity if they can be obtained from another library through interlibrary or lateral interlibrary loan. The Director should also consult bibliographic aids when evaluating the quality of a given item considered for weeding. These can serve as general guidelines for determining the value of the item to the collection.

#### A. General Guidelines

Retain local history, writings by local authors, and materials with local settings. Sets and series often have one or two volumes of special merit; these volumes should be retained even though the rest of the set is discarded. Some older reference volumes, such as quotation books, should be kept, because later editions augment rather than supersede. It is a good idea to include in the selection policy a list of items that should not be weeded (e.g., genealogy, local authors, Caldecott and Newbery Book Award prize winners, etc.).

Keeping these guidelines in mind, it is important to remember that **guidelines are not intended to act as a substitute for professional judgment calls and common sense.**

#### B. Criteria used to weed items

##### Checklist of Weeding Factors

For all materials, consider:

- Date
- Author
- Publisher
- Physical condition
- Additional copies

- Other books on the same subject in the collection
- Expense of replacement
- Shelf-time (i.e., time spent on the shelf without circulating)
- Relevance of the subject to the community

For juvenile and young adult materials, also consider:

- Format
- Reading level
- Current interest in the subject matter
- Jacket art (contemporary vs. outmoded)

For periodicals, consider:

- Current use
- Indexing available
- Space available
- Electronic available

Materials/Books of Poor Content:

- Outdated and obsolete information (especially on the subjects of computers, law, science, space, health and medicine, technology, geography, travel, and transportation)
- Trivial subject matter
- Mediocre writing style
- Inaccurate or false information
- Unused sets of books
- Repetitious series
- Superseded editions
- Not on standard lists
- Biased or sexist terminology or views
- Unneeded duplicates
- Unsolicited and unwanted gifts

Materials/Books of Poor Appearance:

- Worn out, ragged items
- Poorly bound or poorly printed editions
- Items that are dirty, shabby, warped, bug infested, or otherwise marked up, mutilated, or "edited" by patrons
- Small print, poor quality pictures

- Brittle film, (in the case of microfilm and movies) or paper
- Yellowed, torn, or missing pages

#### Unused Materials:

- Items uncirculated for 3-5 years and not needed for reference or in-house use
- Duplicate copies no longer needed
- Periodicals that are not indexed
- Unused volumes of sets
- Unneeded titles in little-used subject areas
- Materials on the "hot topics" of past years
- More books than are needed on any one subject

#### Topics No Longer Within Your Collection Priorities:

- Titles (print and non-print) readily available elsewhere in your community
- Subjects no longer relevant to your changing clientele <sup>6</sup>

## XII. Appendices

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<sup>5</sup> Reitz, Joan M. ODLIS —Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science. 5 December 2005, <[http://lu.com/odlis/odlis\\_w.cfm](http://lu.com/odlis/odlis_w.cfm)>

<sup>6</sup> Boon, Belinda. The CREW Method: Expanded Guidelines for Collection Evaluation and Weeding for Small and Medium-sized Public Libraries. Austin: Texas State Library, 1995.



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Policy manual approved by the Cooke County Commissioners Court on July 28, 2014. Their signatures and that of the Cooke County Library Director are below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Judge John Roane

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Commissioner Gary Hollowell-Pct. 1

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Commissioner BC Lemmons-Pct. 2

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner Alan Smith-Pct. 3

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner Leon Klement-Pct. 4

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Johnson-Spence  
Director, Cooke County Library

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Date