

Policy Title: Library Services and Use

Policy Statement:

It is the mission of the Santa Cruz Public Libraries (SCPL) to enhance Santa Cruz County's quality of life by providing vibrant physical and virtual public spaces where people connect, discover, and engage the mind. All ages have the opportunity to nurture their love of reading, find diverse and relevant resources for entertainment and enrichment, and strengthen community networks. As such, SCPL is committed to providing free and equitable access to information in all of its forms, innovative tools and technologies, and learning opportunities in line with evolving community needs.

The Library does not distinguish or discriminate on the basis of age. It maintains collections and provides services that are organized to meet the different needs of children, teens, and adults. The library makes every effort to ensure that its services and collections are free to the community in order to ensure equitable access. However, the library may charge a fee for some services or reproductions of materials in the collection on a cost-recovery basis. All fees and procedures for obtaining services and reproductions will be posted on the library's website.

CONFIDENTIALITY

SCPL complies with all sections of the State of California Public Records Act (Protection of Library Circulation and Registration Records, Government Code Title 1, Division 7, Chapter 3.5). That is, all registration and circulation records of library users, including children, shall remain confidential and shall not be disclosed to any person, local, state, or federal agency except by order of the appropriate superior or federal court.

The Library also treats patron requests for reference information and records of patron internet use as confidential. Further, the Library Joint Powers Authority Board regards any inquiry about library use as an invasion of patron privacy. It prohibits staff from giving information about any library use absent a valid order from a superior or federal court. The common sense exception to this rule is when a law enforcement officer describes a situation involving immediate danger to either staff or the public.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND INFORMATION

The SCPL subscribes to the American Library Association's Freedom to View and Freedom to Read Statements and the Library Bill of Rights. The full text of these statements is available on the library's website:

Freedom to Read: <http://www.santacruzpl.org/policy/11/>

Freedom to View: <http://www.santacruzpl.org/policy/8/>

Library Bill of Rights: <http://www.santacruzpl.org/policy/12/>

The People's Rights:

The free speech clause of the U.S. Constitution gives people the right to say anything they want (short of shouting "Fire!" in a crowded theater) on public property, which is what all our library branches are. It also gives them the right to post notices if space has been made available for that purpose, and to solicit signatures on petitions.

However, a library is a limited public forum, and the people in charge of it are allowed to make rules for its use, provided those rules are reasonable and are equitably enforced. As such, all library users are expected to adhere to the Library Code of Conduct, which states that nobody has the right to interfere with anybody else's right to use the library. This means they may not talk in a loud voice, they may not interrupt people in the use of library materials, they may not block access or further crowd an already-crowded space (such as a lobby), and they may not impinge on the staff's use of facilities (such as bulletin boards) to meet all the peoples' information needs.

The Library's Rights:

We have the right to control the time, place, and manner that citizens exercise their right of free speech, only to the extent that their exercise impedes the operations of the library (i.e. interferes with anybody else's right to use). What this means is that we can stop people from being disruptive, from blocking access, or from interrupting people using library materials or equipment. We can limit petitioning in crowded spaces. But we cannot prevent people from standing on the steps or a path leading to a library building talking to themselves or others, so long as they do not block access.

This policy will be renewed every 3 years.

Adopted:

Updated: