

Valley Center Public Library Media Relations Policy

Authorized Library Spokespersons

In order to provide the most current and consistent information about the library, all contact with news media will be carried out through the Library Director, Office Manager, or Library Board President, although at times individuals occupying such positions may refer the media to specific staff members. The Library Board President is the spokesperson for the Library Board of Directors. All inquiries from reporters or other media persons should be reported immediately to the Library Director or Office Manager.

When asked by the public for information related to library business or policy, staff should respond in accordance with library guidelines regarding such requests and, in the case of doubt, should consult with the Library Director or Office Manager. Library employees who represent the library as media spokespersons should avoid speculation on any topic and refrain from offering personal opinions about library policies even when asked to do so by a reporter.

Questions from the public regarding the general operations or direction of the library should be referred to the Library Director or Office Manager. Inquiries related to the underlying principles of a policy that are open to interpretation from a political, constitutional, and/or legal perspective should be referred to the Director or Office Manager. Examples of such policies include but are not limited to those covering Internet Access, Filtering, Intellectual Freedom, etc. Inquiries regarding the library budget should be referred to the Library Director.

Newsgathering in the Library

Members of the media or other organizations who wish to conduct newsgathering in the library must make themselves known to either the Director or Office Manager, or to the staff member in charge of the building in their absence. Newsgathering must not disrupt normal library business or patrons' use and enjoyment of the Library. Examples of behavior that can be disruptive, or interfere with, the operation of the library or its use by other patrons or be inconsistent with the library's mission, include (but are not limited to) interviewing at other than normal conversational voice level, photographing, video recording, or audio recording customers or staff. (See **Photography, Video or Audio Recording by Media, or Other Organizations** below.) Staff members witnessing members of the media or others engaged in such activity must inform them of the policy and ask that they request and gain permission from the Director before further conducting newsgathering in the library. This policy does not apply to a member of the media in his/ her capacity as a patron using the library's resources.

Photography and Video or Audio Recording by the Library Staff or Designated Agent

Valley Center Public Library staff has the right to photograph, film, and record open, public library events including Library users for promotional use. Participation in any library event acts as consent to being photographed, filmed or recorded, unless participants otherwise clearly indicate to the contrary to library staff. To ensure the privacy of all individuals, their images will not be identified using full names or personal identifying information without approval from

the photographed or recorded subject. Photographs or recordings of minors will not include any identifying facial images or any information about the minor without consent of parent or legal guardian. Closed events such as class visits require releases and/or permissions from the supervisor of the visiting organization.

Photography and Video or Audio Recording by Media, Visitors, or Other Organizations

The public library space is defined by law as a limited public forum, and even though open to the public, only activities consistent with the nature or mission of the forum are allowed within the library. To protect our patrons' and staff members' rights to privacy, information access, safety, convenience, and freedom from possible harassment, persons or groups wishing to take photos, film, and/or record audios in the Library must abide by these policies:

- 1) Photography, video or audio recording for personal, non-commercial use only is generally permitted provided all library policies are strictly adhered to.
- 2) Photography, video or audio recording for commercial purposes are permitted only if the activity has been expressly approved by the Library Director, in writing and at least 48 hours in advance.
- 3) Photography, video or audio recording is restricted to public areas only. Staff areas, offices, circulation desk areas, public computer areas, restrooms, private study areas, and such other areas where such activities could interfere with a patron's or staff member's privacy, safety, etc., are strictly off limits to photography, video or audio recording;
- 4) Photography, video or audio recording that would include any library user's personally identifiable information is prohibited;
- 5) Filming, recording, and/or photographing patrons without patron's written consent is prohibited; filming, recording, and/or photographing minors without written consent of minors' parent or legal guardian is prohibited;
- 6) Filming, recording and/or photographing must not disrupt normal Library business or activities, and must not interfere with patron's use or enjoyment of the Library;
- 7) Filming, recording, and/or photographing must not block aisles or any access points;
- 8) Filming, recording, and/or photographing must not damage any City, Library, Library users' or staff property;
- 9) All behavior of those filming, recording and/or photographing must preserve all individual patron's and staff's rights to receive information free from harassment, intimidation, threats to safety, well-being, and privacy.

Those engaging in newsgathering, filming, recording and/or photography must adhere to all other Library policies. Those engaging in newsgathering, filming, recording and/or photography who are deemed to be in violation of any Library policy including those outlined above will be required to immediately leave the premises.

Adopted by Valley Center Public Library Board of Directors - January 13, 2025