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Code of Ethics

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Library Association of Singapore (LAS)

Code of ethics

Introduction

The Library as an institution exists for the benefit of a given constituency, whether it be the citizens of a community, members of an educational institution, or some larger or more specialized group. Those who enter the library profession assume an obligation to maintain ethical standards of behaviour in relation to the governing authority under which they work, to the library constituency, to the library as an institution and to fellow workers on the staff, to other members of the library profession, and to society in general.

I. The Relations to the Governing Authority

1. The governing authority is ultimately, and the chief librarian primarily, responsible for the operation of the library.
2. The librarian must give complete loyalty and fidelity to the policies set by the governing authority.
3. The librarian is responsible for maintaining professional standards, and encouraging staff to participate in professional activities.
4. The librarian must not use his position for personal gain, at the expense of the governing authority.
5. The librarian will not allow outside activities to interfere with his principal duty of library service in his own library.

II. The Relationship to the Library User

1. It is the librarian's responsibility to make the resources and services of the library known to its potential users. Impartial service should be rendered to all library users.
2. It is the librarian's obligation to treat as confidential any private information obtained through contact with library users.
3. The librarian should never turn the library's resources to personal use, to the detriment of services which the library renders to its users.
4. The librarian should protect library property and inculcate in its users a sense of respect for library property.

III. The Relationship to the Staff

1. The librarian owes a duty to carry his fair share of the library's work load. The work product of individual employees may not be misappropriated to the credit of others.
2. Librarians should endeavour to uphold professional standards in the performance of their duties.
3. Loyalty, honesty and respect toward fellow employees and a spirit of courteous cooperation between individuals and departments is essential for effective library service.
4. The privacy of all library employees should be respected. Confidential information learned about any fellow employee should be retained in confidence. Factors which work adversely on an employee most affected. Criticism may then be offered to the proper authority for the sole purpose of improving library service.
5. The chief librarian should delegate authority, encourage a sense of responsibility and initiative on the part of staff members, provide for their professional development and appreciate good work. Staff members should be informed of the duties and problems of the library.
6. Criticism of library policies, service and personnel should be offered only to the governing authority for the sole purpose of improvement of the library.
7. Acceptance of a position in a library incurs an obligation to remain long enough to repay the library for the expense incident to adjustment. A contract signed or agreement made should be adhered to faithfully until it expires or is dissolved by mutual consent.
8. Resignations should be made long enough before they are to take effect to allow adequate time for the work to be put in shape and a successor appointed.

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IV. The Relationship to Other Libraries

1. Mutual respect, strict adhered to established principles, courtesy, and a willingness to share knowledge and experience are necessary for cooperation between libraries.
2. Visiting librarians should be extended every courtesy by the librarian of the institution being visited. The visitors' search for information concerning the building, organization and workings of the visited library should be facilitated in every way possible.
3. Requests for information about other librarians and references should be handled honestly, tactfully and discreetly. Information furnished should be objective and limited to personal, well-founded knowledge. Particular attention should be given to avoid endangering the position of the librarian being inquired about.
4. Librarians, library experts, organizations or committees shall not visit a library in an advisory, consulting or reviewal capacity except at the express invitation of the governing authority or librarian of the library to be visited.

V. The Relationship to His Profession

Librarians, in recognising the essential unit for their profession, should hold membership in the Library Association of Singapore and other organisations of librarians. They should be willing to attend and participate in the activities and meetings of such organisations at the national, regional and international level.

VI. The Relationship to Library Suppliers and Publishers

1. In his relations with publishers and library suppliers, the librarian:
 - a. in making selections among publishers and library suppliers will reach decisions on the basis of
 - (i) superior products offered at most reasonable cost; and
 - (ii) likelihood of long-range service and responsibility.
 - b. will refuse all personal gratuities.
2. A librarian should never enter into a business dealing on behalf of the library which will result in personal profit.

VII. The Relationship to Society

1. Librarians should encourage a general realization of the value of library service and be informed concerning movements, organizations and institutions whose aims are compatible with those of the library.
2. Librarians should participate in public and community affairs and so represent the library that it will take its place among other educational, social and cultural agencies.
3. A librarian's conduct should be such as to maintain public esteem for the library and library work.