

# **General Principles of Participation in the Winnefox Library System and the WALN Network 2021**

There is a long history of strong cooperation, collaboration, and trust among the Winnefox member libraries. This spirit has been the foundation of the many accomplishments within Winnefox, including the development of the shared automation system

As part of that history, there have been discussions and consensus agreements about how libraries are to operate and of how library staff are to function in this cooperative environment. There are also expectations and requirements based in Wisconsin statutes. This document is an attempt to summarize both. As new directors and staff start working in Winnefox libraries, this document will help to provide a clear summary of what is expected. For existing staff, it provides a review.

## **1. State Requirements for System Membership and Library Operation**

Libraries must meet and follow all of the state statutes that cover library operations and procedures.

## **2. Communication**

Open and honest communication between Winnefox libraries is a crucial component of the cooperation needed for providing good library service.

### **a. Email**

Email is the primary means of communication between Winnefox libraries. Library staff are expected to regularly read email and manage their email accounts. The Winnefox email account is for work purposes. Staff are expected to use a separate email account for personal use. There are many free, web-based options for personal email.

### **b. Communicating Problems**

Information about problem patrons and potential problem situations should be shared with other system libraries.

### **c. Communication to Winnefox Staff**

Libraries must notify Winnefox of any significant changes in status, such as unexpected closings or disruption of services.

### **d. Project Consultation**

Large projects that might affect other libraries or would require Winnefox staff time should be discussed with Winnefox staff as the project is planned.

### **e. Communications with Library Staff**

In many cases, Winnefox staff communication is with library directors or, in larger libraries, department heads. It is expected that directors and department heads will pass along essential communication to staff whose duties may be affected.

## **3. No Special Privileges for Library Board Members and Directors**

*§19.59 Codes of ethics for local government officials, employees and candidates. No local public official may use his or her public position or office to obtain financial gain or anything of substantial value for the private benefit of himself or herself or his or her immediate family, or for an organization with which he or she is associated. [19.59(1)(a)]*

Library board members and the library director are not to receive special privileges. This includes:

- Borrowing new items before they are entered into the system
- Multiple renewals
- Extended loans
- Selective forgiving of fines

Per the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board, the Code of Ethics for Local Public Officials applies to local elected officials and local government employees who are either appointed to serve for a specified term of office or who serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority.

This means the libraries cannot legally provide special services to their board members or to library directors. Ethically, staff members should not receive special privileges either. If a service is offered to the public—extended loans, forgiven fines, etc. staff and board members are allowed to receive those same services.

Staff may check out new, donated material first for the purposes of reviewing a title before deciding whether to add it. Staff may also have different loan periods for material needed for story times, book talks, etc. The emphasis is on material needed for work purposes, not personal use.

## **4. Privacy of Library Patron Records §43.30 Public library records.**

*Records of any library which is in whole or in part supported by public funds, including the records of a public library system, indicating the identity of any individual who borrows or uses the library's documents or other materials, resources, or services may not be disclosed except by court order or to persons acting within the scope of their*

*duties in the administration of the library or library system, to persons authorized by the individual to inspect such records, to custodial parents or guardians of children under the age of 16 under sub. (4), to libraries under subs. (2) and (3), or to law enforcement officers under sub. (5). [43.30(1m)]*

Wisconsin law protects the privacy of library users. As a matter of library ethics, staff should not look at user records unless necessary for library business and should not talk about patron use of the library. Volunteers who deal with the public or have access to records should have the same standards.

Friends of the library groups are not the library and should not have access to patron records. The library can use patron addresses when acting within the scope of their duties in the administration of the library. A Friends group should develop its own mailing list.

## **5. Meetings**

The library director or a representative is expected to attend the county library advisory committee meetings, county funding committee meetings, the Winnefox Annual meeting, and All-WALS meetings. These meetings are usually not eligible for meeting directory certification requirements but are extremely important for other reasons.

## **6. Automation System**

The library director or other library staff need to be trained in the use of the automation system and to maintain those skills as the system changes. Email is used frequently for disseminating information about changes made to the automation system. The All-WALS meetings are the most appropriate settings for discussing the automation system and options for our use of it.

## **7. Interlibrary Loan System**

The library director or other library staff need to be trained in the use of the interlibrary loan system and to maintain those skills as the system changes. Interlibrary loan is used to get material from libraries other than Winnefox members.

## **8. Technology Skills and Awareness**

The library director and other library staff need to be familiar with technology used by the public in their communities and to be aware of technology trends.

## **9. Collection Development**

Using material from other libraries via the hold system is not a substitute for an adequate local library budget for library material.

### **a. In-demand items**

Libraries are expected to buy their own copies of high-demand titles as determined by local patron needs.

Additionally, titles identified as being in high demand across the system will be assigned a shorter loan period (i.e., set to ShortLoan status) than those less in demand. This practice insures that waiting lists for popular titles will be reduced more quickly and that more patrons will have access to the title while it is very popular.

### **b. Material Purchases Meet Community Needs**

Material coming from other libraries to fill holds should be monitored and buying patterns adjusted when appropriate. This includes types of material and subject areas.

### **c. Lucky Day Collection**

These collections are designed to create browsing interest for visitors to library buildings. The intention is that these items will remain in the owning library's building until checked out. Holds will not be allowed on them, and they will be clearly identified in the catalog (i.e., set to No Hold/Lucky Day status), and in the library.

Libraries must add enough copies (at least one copy in smaller libraries) that may have holds placed upon them by patrons system wide before they may add non-holdable copies for a Lucky Day collection.

## **10. Sharing of Library Material**

**One important purpose of the shared automation system is the access to the combined collection of all of the member libraries. To maximize that access, each individual library must follow the same practices:**

### **a. Materials move freely across the system to fill holds**

Libraries are expected to share all transportable materials freely across the system. Materials that cannot be safely transported may be set as Local Hold, allowing only local patrons or the local library to place a hold on that item.

Prioritization is automatically given to patrons for their own library's materials. This allows for local collections to circulate to local patrons first.

### **b. Renewal of Library Material**

To provide fair service to library users, library material must be handled in a consistent manner. Overriding renewal limits to provide special service to one user may mean poorer service to another user and could harm the library's reputation.

- i. Items with holds should not be renewed, even if the renewing library is the owning library. If the user keeps the item past the due date, the library has the option of forgiving the fine.
- ii. Multiple renewals of items without holds should be done infrequently, especially if it is owned by another library. An item should not be renewed more than 3 times without permission of the owning library.

### **c. Holds**

The holds system is designed to maximize patron access to materials held by all member libraries. Peak efficiency of this system depends on each library diligently fulfilling its responsibility to keep materials moving. The hold system is set to randomize the selection of the library to fill the hold.

To handle holds fairly and promptly:

- The on-shelf holds list should be processed every day the library is open.
- The hold system queue should not be manipulated.
- The Clean Holds list should be used to clear expired and canceled holds from the holds shelf in a timely manner so items can be used by another user.

### **d. Rotating Collections**

The items received by the library in rotating collections should be handled in a timely manner, and damages and missing items reported.

### **e. Interlibrary Loan**

Interlibrary loan is a special loan of material from one library to another. Items received from non-Winnefox libraries may not be renewed without permission of the owning library and should be returned promptly.

## **11. Follow Established Procedures**

For the shared automation system to function efficiently, libraries must be consistent in entering and maintaining records. Libraries are expected to follow the instructions and guidelines provided to them through system communication channels such as All-WALS meetings, emails, and extranet pages.

## **12. Library Websites**

The library website is an important means of marketing library services. The information on the library's website must be kept up to date.

### **13. Licensed Databases**

Databases licensed by the library or Winnefox are for the use of eligible patrons only. These databases are listed on the library's Research Tools page of their website. Winnefox must be informed of local libraries' intentions to subscribe to local-use databases in order to coordinate user authentication required by the vendor.

Library cards may not be issued to non-local residents for the purpose of using databases. This clause is intended to restrict access of persons who do not live in the area and have no local contacts whose sole purpose of acquiring a card is to obtain access to online resources which their local library does not subscribe to.

Many databases are licensed and billed based on population or library circulation.

### **14. Telecommunication Network and Equipment and Security**

The sophisticated telecommunication system linking Winnefox libraries makes shared automation possible. State and federal funds make it affordable. The following steps will help maintain the effectiveness and security of the network.

#### **a. Staff Network Access**

Library staff must follow established guidelines for the use of the network.

- i. Passwords must be kept secure.
- ii. The public must not have access to staff computers. A breach of security on a staff PC exposes the entire network and grants access to sensitive information.
- iii. The public must not be allowed to plug devices into the network. The only exception is when the library's network has dedicated specific jacks to secured, public access.
- iv. Winnefox staff must be notified when a library staff person leaves so that we can disable that person's access to the network.
- v. If a staff person is discharged, WALS must be notified immediately. Passwords will need to be changed.

#### **b. Not Connect Unauthorized Equipment to the Network**

Only authorized equipment may be connected to the network. Library staff must work with Winnefox staff when adding new equipment such as photocopiers, security systems or HVAC controllers. This section is not intended to cover connections to the public wireless network by smartphones, laptops, or similar devices.

### **c. Consult Before Purchasing Network-dependent Software**

Software that interacts with network resources (such as the integrated library automation system or library web sites) should not be purchased without consulting first with Winnefox staff.

### **d. Maintain and Upgrade Equipment**

The library must budget for and replace equipment on an ongoing basis. The library must maintain PCs using the appropriate anti-virus and PC protection software. In some cases software does not automatically update or scan; this must be done by library staff.

### **e. Use of Network Resources**

Planned library projects that will use network resources must be discussed with Winnefox staff before being undertaken. Other network resources not already mentioned above include: patron authentication or any connections to the ILS and/or catalog, network storage and/or backup of large quantities of digital data.

### **f. USB Flash Drives and Other Storage Devices**

USB flash drives are commonly used to spread viruses and other malware, sometimes without the knowledge of the person using them. Staff must never plug non-library devices into staff computers.

## **15. Access to the Network by Library Volunteers**

We recognize that volunteers play an important part in the operations of member libraries and that they have access to staff-only areas of the library. Nevertheless, care should be taken to protect network security and patron privacy.

It is recommended that libraries have a written Volunteer Policy. For duties that entail access to sensitive information, network resources, or the ILS, it is recommended that volunteers be required to read and agree to the Volunteer Policy.

Volunteer Policies used by other libraries are available on the Division's Wisconsin Public Library Policy Resources page <https://dpi.wi.gov/pld/boards-directors/policy-resources#Volunteers> and in WAPL's Sample Library Policies for the Small Public Library <https://www.owlsweb.org/l4l/sample-library-policies-small-public-library>

## **16. Penalties for Non-compliance**

The purpose of imposing penalties on a library that fails to abide by these principles and practices is to prompt the library to change its practices and procedures and cooperate with other libraries rather than to punish.

- a. Penalties imposed will be limited to reducing services, imposing fees for services, or increasing fees for services.
- b. Penalties will be designed to impact only the library concerned. Services to other libraries and their users should not be affected by another library's non-cooperation.
- c. Penalties will be imposed in proportion to the degree of the library's non-cooperation. If initial measures are not successful, more severe penalties may be imposed.
- d. Penalties must not impact a library's compliance with system membership requirements or jeopardize its membership in Winnefox Library System.
- e. Penalties must be approved by the system board.

## **17. Process for Imposing Penalties**

If system staff believe that a member library is not abiding by the established rules and procedures as outlined above, Winnefox will follow these procedures:

### **a. Work with the Director to correct the issue**

- i. System staff will contact the library director to determine the facts of the case and reasons for a violation.
- ii. Staff will attempt to work out a process with the director to correct the problem.

### **b. Work with the Library Board to correct the issue**

- i. If the problem is not resolved within three months, system staff will contact the president of the library board and request time at the next board meeting to discuss the issue.
- ii. System staff will present the problem to the library board and attempt to work out a process to correct the problem.

### **c. Involve the System Board**

If earlier steps have not succeeded in resolving the problem, the system board may choose to impose penalties on that library. The process for doing so shall be:

- i. System staff developing a plan for imposing penalties on the noncompliant library.
- ii. The library receiving at least three weeks' notice of the Winnefox board meeting at which the proposed penalties are to be discussed.



iii. A public hearing held at the Winnefox board meeting. Representatives of the library will be given opportunity to present their case.

*Approved by the Winnefox Library System Board 3/31/2021*