

**South Country Library**  
**Employee Handbook & Personnel Policy Manual**



**Fully Revised & Approved by Board of Trustees 6/16/22**

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The following policies, which also relate to personnel and which all staff should be familiar with, may be found separately within the Library's Policy Manual:

- Whistleblower
- Telecommuting
- Travel & Conference
- Sexual Harassment
- Staff Internet & Electronic Communications Use
- Social Media
- Public Relations

We welcome you to the staff of the South Country Library!

The Library's Board of Trustees, administration and the staff of the Library hope your employment here will be both professionally and personally rewarding. One of our objectives is to provide a work environment that is conducive to both personal and professional growth. With that in mind, this *Employee Handbook & Personnel Policy* has been designed to serve as a reference for many important topics relating to your employment with the Library.

This handbook will acquaint you with the South Country Library and provide you with information regarding working conditions, employee benefits, and the policies affecting your employment. You should carefully read, understand, and comply with all provisions of this handbook. It describes many of your responsibilities as an employee and outlines the policies and objectives developed by the South Country Library to benefit its employees.

No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about policy. As the need may arise, the South Country Library Board of Trustees reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any policy or portion of the handbook. Employees will of course be notified of such changes to the handbook as they occur.

The personnel policies of the Board of Trustees of the South Country Library are to be implemented to provide for the efficient operation of the library. The policies are approved by the Board and delegated to the Library Director to interpret and implement for the day-to-day operation of the Library. Effective compliance with these policies and procedures should result in job satisfaction, harmonious relationships, and efficient work. The library exists to serve its public and the staff is expected to give first priority to the community's needs. We believe that each employee contributes directly to the South Country Library's growth and success and we hope that you will take pride in being a member of our team.

## **SECTION 1**

### **GENERAL EMPLOYEE INFORMATION**

#### **A. Employee Categories**

1. Full-Time (Annual Rate) Employees: employees hired for a full-time position are required to work 35 hours per week and are entitled to full benefits in accordance with this policy.
2. Part-Time (Hourly Rate) Employees: are hired to work no more than 25 hours per week and are entitled to limited benefits (vacation, sick & personal time, holidays occurring on days which they are regularly scheduled to work).
3. Library Pages: Employees are part-time and entitled to sick time in accordance with New York State Paid Sick Leave law, and holiday pay if the holiday falls on their regularly scheduled work day. They are not eligible for any other benefits.
4. Substitutes: Employees are paid at an hourly wage and are not eligible for benefits.

New Hires: New librarian and clerical employees are generally hired at the Clerk I, Librarian Trainee or Librarian I level. Advancement from Clerk I to Clerk II and/or Librarian I to Librarian II will be considered as a promotional opportunity when there is a vacancy in a position which involves the supervision of staff.

#### **B. Recruitment**

The selection of staff members is based on merit, with due consideration of personal and educational qualifications, training and aptitude for the position as listed in the job description. With this in mind, when viable, preference for library employment positions will be given to candidates who reside within the South Country district. This measure better ensures the hiring of staff who already know the community and are stakeholders in its well-being, and also promotes a staff which better reflects the diverse community we serve, including underrepresented segments of the community.

Members of the South Country Library Board of Trustees and members of their immediate families shall not be employed by the South Country Library. Additionally, no more than one member from the same immediate family may be employed to work at the South Country Library. As per NY State, "Immediate Family" refers to an individual's spouse, children, mother, father, siblings, first cousins, nieces or nephews, stepchildren, grandchildren, foster children or any in-laws.

#### **C. Job Posting**

Announcements of all vacancies or new positions will be posted on the staff bulletin board, and may be advertised publicly at the same time. Employees who meet the requirements and are interested should contact the Director or Director's designee.

#### **D. Equal Employment Policy**

It is the Library's policy to employ, maintain, promote, terminate, and otherwise treat any and all employees and job applicants on the basis of merit, qualifications and competence. This policy shall be applied without regard to any individual's sex, race, religion, national origin, age, pregnancy, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, genetic predisposition or carrier status or physical handicap, except where the doctrine of business necessity or a bona fide occupational qualification

can reasonably be established. Any employee or other agent of the Library shall be prohibited from engaging in discriminatory conduct related to work or service. In short, the library does not discriminate against anyone on any basis prohibited by law.

Any employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination or harassment in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their immediate supervisor. Employees may raise concerns without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

### **E. Orientation**

New employee orientation shall include information and documents important for the proper performance of assigned work, as well as an explanation of the Personnel Policy. Each employee will receive a copy of the Employee Handbook and Personnel Policy Manual and sign, date and return the Employee Acknowledgement Form.

### **F. Probation & At Will Employment**

New appointments are made for a probationary period of 26 weeks. During this time, the employee will receive two evaluations of job performance, one prior to the 13th week and one prior to the 26th week. A satisfactory 26<sup>th</sup> week evaluation indicates the probationary period has been successfully completed.

Employees may be terminated for substandard work without notice during the probationary period, and no grievance may lie on the matter of termination.

Even after successful completion of the probation, library employment remains at will.

After completion of the probation period, eligible employees will be provided with a Library logo shirt and name plate.

## **SECTION 2**

### **PAYROLL, SCHEDULES & BREAKS**

#### **A. Pay Period**

For payroll purposes, the Library's work week for all employees begins at 12:01 a.m. on Monday and ends at 12:00 midnight on the following Sunday.

Pay day for all staff is bi-weekly.

Paychecks will not be given to anyone other than the employee or mailed without his or her prior written authorization. Any errors in a paycheck should be brought to the immediate attention of your supervisor.

Staff may opt for direct deposit of their paycheck into the banks of their choice.

Pay stub information is accessible to employees online. Bookkeeping will provide each employee with the necessary log-in information.

#### **B. Sunday Hours**

Sunday Library openings provide voluntary hours for extra pay and are separate from an employee's salaried hours. An employee will not accrue any leave time or benefits for Sunday hours worked. To be eligible to work on Sundays, an employee must be: a regularly scheduled employee in that department, and must be up-to-date on that department's procedures and practices.

In the case of an Emergency Closing on a Sunday, employees scheduled for that day will be paid at their regular hourly rate of pay. Should the emergency closing be on a Sunday and the Library already opened, employees working will be paid their Sunday rate of pay.

A holiday that falls on a Sunday is paid at the regular pay rate, not at the Sunday pay rate. Staff should not be "scheduled" on that day.

#### **C. Meals and Rest Periods**

When going to lunch or leaving the building during work hours (i.e. offsite meeting, picking up supplies, etc), employees must clock out, sign out and then clock in and sign in upon return.

Employees who work more than 6 hours in a day must take a 30-minute meal period, on their own time. They are also given the privilege of a 15-minute rest period, if the schedule permits.

Employees who work at least 4 hours in a day may take a 15-minute rest period, if the schedule permits.

Break time is a privilege granted and should never be added on to lunch hours or used to compensate for late arrival or early departure.

**D. Nursing Mothers in the Workplace** (approved by Board 7-20-23)

Section "206-c" of the Labor Law requires all employers to provide time to allow nursing employees to express breast milk.

To avail oneself of accommodations set forth in this policy, employees must submit a request to the Director for a room or location. Requests should, when possible, be provided prior to the employee's return to work to allow the Library to designate a location and schedule to accommodate the needs of multiple employees when needed. The Library must respond to a request within a reasonable time, not to exceed five (5) business days.

The Library will provide employees with at least 20 minutes unpaid break time once every three hours to express milk for their infant child(ren) for up to three years following the child's birth. Employees may utilize their paid break time or meal time as well. A break may be postponed for no more than thirty (30) minutes if there is no coverage for the employee at the time.

The Library will designate a room or other location to be made available to nursing employees. The room may not be used for any other purpose while it is being utilized by nursing mothers. If the designated room or other location is not solely used by nursing employees, the room or location will be made available to nursing employees when needed. All employees will be given notice as to when such rooms or other locations will be designated for use by nursing employees. The room or location should have a door equipped with a functional lock. If a door with a functional lock is not available, as a last resort the Library will utilize a sign indicating the room is in use and not accessible to other employees or the public.

If the Library is unable to provide a dedicated room or other location, we may provide the use of a vacant office or other available room on a temporary basis so long as the room is not accessible to the public or other employees while the nursing employee is using the room for expression purposes.

The Library must designate a room or other location, other than a restroom or toilet stall, to be made available to employees who make such a request. The room will be (i) in close proximity to the work area; (ii) well lit; (iii) shielded from view; and (iv) free from intrusion from other persons in the workplace or the public. The room or other location will contain a chair, working surface, nearby access to cleaning running water, and an electrical outlet so long as the workplace is supplied with electricity. Expressed milk can be stored in the Library refrigerators provided it is sealed. Milk should not be stored overnight. The Library is not responsible for the safekeeping of any milk stored in Library refrigerators.

The Library may not discharge, discriminate, threaten, penalize, or in any other manner discriminate or retaliate against any employee because such employee has exercised their rights afforded under this section. This policy will be provided to all employees annually, upon hire, and to employees returning to work after the birth of a child.

**E. Work Schedule Exchange**

The exchange of workdays is permissible, however, such exchanges must be approved in advance by appropriate supervisory personnel.



## **F. Emergency Work Hours**

In cases of emergency, employees may be required to work unusual and/or reduced schedules. All employees must keep the Library advised of a current address, telephone number and person to contact in case of personal emergency. Staff scheduled to work will be paid as scheduled if the Library closes.

The Library may also close for dangerous weather conditions or other emergencies, at the discretion of the Director or designee. Every attempt will be made to notify personnel as to whether there will be a closing or delayed opening as early as possible. Often, emergencies may result in delayed openings and scheduled employees should be prepared to report to work at a later time or use time other than sick time if they do not report. Any employees unable to report to work because of the weather on days when the Library is officially open must take either annual leave, personal leave, compensatory time, or leave without pay. Staff on sick leave, annual leave, or otherwise not scheduled during the period of emergency closing are not affected.

## **G. Holidays**

The Library will observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve Day, Juneteenth. To better serve the community, the Director may keep the Library open on designated holidays.

If the holiday falls on a Sunday when the Library would normally be closed, it will be observed on Monday. If the holiday falls on a Sunday when the Library would normally be open, it may be observed on that Sunday (i.e., Library closed) or the Library may open and staff will be compensated as outlined below. If the holiday falls on a Saturday, it may be observed on that Saturday (i.e., Library closed) or the Library may open and staff will be compensated as outlined below.

A decision regarding holiday scheduling will be made by the Director at least one week in advance of such holidays. Staff regularly scheduled to work on that day will receive the normal rate of pay for hours worked plus compensatory time for the holiday. Staff not regularly scheduled to work on that day will not receive pay or compensatory time.

Anyone not needed by their supervisors to work with the public will take these days off as a holiday. If a full-time employee's normal day off falls on a holiday, he/she will receive compensatory time off. Part-time employees will be paid for holidays that fall on days they are regularly scheduled to work; they will be compensated for the hours they were scheduled to work.

## **H. Religious Observance Days**

Religious observance days taken in addition to those included in holidays must be charged to annual or personal leave or compensatory time.

## **I. Staff Health & Wellness Initiatives**

The following staff Health & Wellness initiatives were Board-approved on 6-15-23\*

- 1. Program Attendance:** Staff will be able to attend one Library program per pay period on work time. The program must be related to Health & Wellness. This includes yoga (and related programs), meditation, cooking, crafts, nutrition, gardening, and exercise. Programs cannot be offsite and any fees must be covered by the staff member.
- 2. Wellness "Walking Club" Breaks:** Staff are able to take a 30 min. "Walking Club" wellness break with co-workers once per week on work time. 2 designated days/times will be established. Participants must clock in and out and note the break on their timesheet.
- 3. Work-from-Home (Full-Time Staff):** Full-time staff members whose job responsibilities make it possible for them to perform their work remotely, can work from home one day per pay period. Please see separate "Telecommuting" Policy.

*\*These initiatives are not always guaranteed and are contingent on the scheduling needs of each department and the approval of the department supervisor, who will be taking into account things like workload, staffing levels and desk coverage priorities.*

## **SECTION 3**

### **LEAVE TIME**

In order to accrue vacation, sick leave and personal time, an employee must actually meet his/her scheduled hours during a pay period either by working the hours, or using vacation, sick leave or personal time (or a combination of the preceding) to meet those scheduled hours.

#### **A. Annual Leave (Paid Vacation)**

Annual leave must be requested in advance of use. Approval must be sought from the employee's supervisor and Director. Efforts will be made to accommodate leave requests but staffing needs may preclude approval of all requests. Neither sick leave nor personal time may be claimed while on vacation.

Annual leave can accumulate only to the amount earned in 18 months. Exceptions may be granted by the Director with approval by the Board of Trustees. Accrued annual leave time will be converted to pay for an employee upon termination but may not total more than 10 days or 70 hours. This compensation shall constitute a form of severance benefit.

No annual leave time will be accrued while an employee is on any type of unpaid leave of absence.

Employees out on any type of unpaid leave of absence will not be paid for holidays and will not accrue any type of leave time.

All employees are entitled to accrue annual leave as set forth below, but employees on probation may not use them until successfully completing probation.

#### **Annual Leave Accrual**

**Full-Time Librarians & I.T.** - The amount of paid vacation time received each year increases with the length of their employment as shown in the following schedule:

- Upon initial eligibility, the employee is entitled to 20 vacation days each year, accrued at the rate of 5 hours and 30 minutes per pay period.
- At the start of the 3rd year from the employee's date of hire, the employee is entitled to 21 vacation days each year, accrued at the rate of 5 hours and 45 minutes per pay period.
- At the start of the 5th year from the employee's date of hire, the employee is entitled to 22 vacation days each year, accrued at the rate of 6 hours per pay period.
- At the start of the 7th year from the employee's date of hire, the employee is entitled to 23 vacation days each year, accrued at the rate of 6 hours and 15 minutes per pay period.
- At the start of the 9th year from the employee's date of hire, the employee is entitled to 24 vacation days each year, accrued at the rate of 6 hours and 30 minutes per pay period.
- At the start of the 11th year from the employee's date of hire, the employee is entitled to 25 vacation days each year, accrued at the rate of 6 hours and 45 minutes per pay period.

**Part-Time Librarians & I.T.** - Upon initial eligibility, part-time librarians are entitled to 7.68% of their scheduled hours worked in a pay period. In addition, every 2 years, beginning with the 3rd year of employment and up to and including the 11th year of service, 7.68% of the employees scheduled hours worked will be added to their accrued leave.

**Full-Time Clerical, Security & Maintenance Staff:** The amount of paid vacation received each year increases with the length of their employment as shown in the following schedule:

- Upon initial eligibility the employee is entitled to 13 vacation days each year, accrued at the rate of 3 hours and 30 minutes per pay period.
- At the start of the 3rd year from the employee's date of hire, the employee is entitled to 14 vacation days each year, accrued at the rate of 3 hours and 45 minutes per pay period.
- At the start of the 5th year from the employee's date of hire, the employee is entitled to 15 vacation days each year, accrued at the rate of 4 hours per pay period.
- At the start of the 7th year from the employee's date of hire, the employee is entitled to 16 vacation days each year, accrued at the rate of 4 hours and 15 minutes per pay period.
- At the start of the 9th year from the employee's date of hire, the employee is entitled to 17 vacation days each year, accrued at the rate of 4 hours and 45 minutes per pay period.
- At the start of the 11th year from the employee's date of hire, the employee is entitled to 18 vacation days each year, accrued at the rate of 5 hours per pay period.
- At the start of the 13<sup>th</sup> year from the employee's date of hire, the employee is entitled to 19 vacation days each year, accrued at the rate of 5 hours and 15 min per pay period.
- At the start of the 15<sup>th</sup> year from the employee's date of hire, the employee is entitled to 20 vacation days each year, accrued at the rate of 5 hours and 30 minutes per pay period.

**Part-Time Clerical, Security & Maintenance Staff:** Upon initial eligibility, part-time clerical, security and maintenance staff are entitled to 5% of their scheduled hours worked in a pay period. In addition, every 2 years, beginning with the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of employment and up to and including the 15<sup>th</sup> year of service, 5% of the employee's scheduled hours worked will be added to their accrued leave.

## **B. Sick Leave**

Sick leave is to be used for absences due to personal illness. The Director has the right to require medical certification for any absence longer than 3 days, or in cases of suspected abuse. Sick leave may be used for the employee or for a family member for whom the employee is providing care or assistance with care. The term "family member" means an employee's child ("child" means biological, adopted or foster child, a legal ward or a child for whom the employee is standing in loco parentis), spouse, domestic partner, parent ("parent" means a biological, foster, step or adoptive parent, or a legal guardian of an employee, or a person who stood in loco parentis when the employee was a minor child), sibling, grandchild, grandparent, or the child or parent of an employee's spouse or domestic partner.

Sick leave may be used for the following reasons:

1. For a mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition, regardless of whether the illness, injury, or health condition has been diagnosed or requires medical care at the time the employee requests the leave.
2. For the diagnosis, care or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury or health condition, or need for medical diagnosis, or preventive care.
3. For an absence from work due to the employee or employee's family member having been the victim of domestic violence, a family offense, sexual offense, stalking or human trafficking.

Upon return from sick leave, absent evidence of abuse of time, misconduct or incompetence, employees will be restored to the same position as held before the leave with the same pay and terms and conditions.

Employees out on any type of unpaid leave of absence will not be paid for holidays and will not accrue any type of leave time.

### Sick Leave Accrual

All employees are entitled to accrue sick leave as set forth below, but employees on probation shall not be permitted to utilize sick leave until after thirty (30) days of employment.

- 5% of an employee's regularly scheduled work week during a pay period is credited to sick leave, accumulating up to 1/20 of the total number of hours worked in 10 years (maximum 910 hours of accrued sick leave for full-time employee with no absences).
- If the maximum accumulation of sick leave is reached, the employee will be paid for 1/3 of the unused additional accrued sick leave time at the end of the fiscal year (June 30) rate of pay, and the sick leave total will be reduced to the maximum.
- Employees who use no sick time for any calendar quarter may choose to transfer ½ the amount to their annual leave by filling out a transfer form and notifying the Director. Such transfers may be requested at the beginning of each calendar year.
- When an employee leaves employment at the Library, he/she is entitled to be paid for ½ of all sick time accrued up to the employee's maximum limit.

### **C. Sick Leave for Page Positions**

In compliance with the New York Labor Law Section 196-b of 2021, South Country Library shall provide its employees working in the page position with sick leave as follows:

For all page positions, paid sick leave will be accrued at a rate of 1.5 hours per pay period, with an additional hour of sick leave being given the first pay period in July and totaling a maximum of 40 hours of paid sick leave per fiscal year. The leave will be allowed to carry over to the following year, however employee's will be limited to using 40 hours of sick time per year.

Upon return from sick leave, absent evidence of abuse of time, misconduct or incompetence, page employee's will be restored to the same position as held before the leave with the same pay and terms and conditions.

Unused sick leave will not be paid out upon a page employee's separation or termination of employment.

### **D. Leave for Cancer Screening**

All employees are entitled to take "up to" 4 hours of paid leave per year for a cancer screening. This leave would be without any deduction to an employee's accrued vacation, personal, or sick time. In order to be eligible for payment for this leave, an employee should be previously scheduled to work on the day in question, and submit a paid time off form, at least two business days in advance of the appointment, for the day they will be undergoing the screening. In addition, the Library requires documentation from your provider, on his/her letterhead, including the provider's signature and date and time the employee was screened. Failure to follow this procedure may result in either not being paid or the time being docked from the employee's accrued time.

### **E. Sick Leave Donation Program**

Sick time hours that accrue beyond 150 hours for full-time and 100 for part-time, may be voluntarily donated to another individual staff member's sick time accrual. The number of hours donated may not reduce the donating staff member's sick time accrual balance to fewer than 150 for full-time and 100 for part-time. Pay for the use of donated days will be at the rate of the employee using the days.

Staff members wishing to donate their sick time will complete the sick time donation form and submit it to the Director for approval.

### **F. Compensatory Time**

Compensatory time may be accrued by full time staff in 15-minute increments when it is necessary to meet the needs of the department or library. Permission of the Department Head is required, except in special circumstances such as the inability to close the building due to a problem patron. This means that no compensatory time will be given without a signed form from the employee's supervisor.

Part-time staff working more than their normally scheduled hours will be paid for that time unless their Department Head approves the granting of compensatory time in writing. This means no compensatory time will be given without a signed form from the employee's supervisor.

Compensatory time should be used in a timely manner and generally not accumulate beyond 10 hours. Whenever possible, it should be used during the pay period in which it is accrued.

When an employee leaves employment at the Library, he/she is entitled to be paid for any compensatory time remaining to a maximum of ten hours.

### **G. Bereavement Leave**

Full-time Employees:

- Bereavement leave of up to 5 work days, to be used within a 30-day period, will be granted following the death of an employee's spouse, domestic partner, child, parent, grandchild, brother or sister.
- Bereavement leave of up to 3 work days, to be used within a 30-day period, will be granted following the death of an employee's father-in-law, mother-in-law, maternal or paternal grandparent, uncle, aunt, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, niece, or nephew.

Part-time Employees:

- Bereavement leave shall be granted for up to 5 or 3 days consistent with the categories of family members applicable to full-time employees, but each day for the part-time employee shall be measured by the number of hours which comprises the employee's normal work day.

All employees will be granted up to 1 day of bereavement time for the loss of a household pet.

Additional bereavement leave may be granted at the discretion of the Director. Bereavement leave time beyond the above granted time will be deducted from annual leave time.

If an employee is on vacation and there is a death in the family, he/she is allowed to change the vacation request to bereavement leave for the appropriate number of work days.

## **H. Personal Leave**

Personal leave requires advance approval of the employee's supervisor and Director. In the case of an emergency, an employee may use a personal leave day, without advanced approval, so long as the Library is notified.

Personal leave days may not be added to annual leave or sick time. Personal leave days do not accumulate from one year to another and must be utilized prior to the end of each fiscal year (June 30).

When an employee leaves employment at the Library, he/she is not entitled to be paid for any remaining personal time.

### **Personal Leave Accrual**

All employees are entitled to accrue personal days as set forth below, but employees on probation may not use them until successfully completing probation.

- Each full-time employee is entitled to 3 personal leave days with pay annually.
- Part-time employees are entitled to 3 pro-rated days annually.
- Probationary employees are not eligible for personal leave with pay.

## **I. Leave Without Pay**

Employees may request a leave of absence without pay or employment benefits for a period not to exceed 3 months. Approval of such a leave is at the discretion of the Library. Requests should be submitted in writing to the Director as far in advance of the anticipated leave date as possible. The request must state the reason, circumstances, duration & geographic location of the leave. During such leaves of absence, the employee must either discontinue or pay the total cost for maintaining any employee-related insurance, health or retirement benefits, etc. Employees out on any type of unpaid leave of absence will not be paid for holidays and will not accrue any type of leave time.

All approved leaves without compensation must be reported to the full Board at its next regular meeting. Leave of this type is only granted when all forms of accrued time are exhausted.

Leaves of more than 3 months must have the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Reinstatement to the same or comparable position is not guaranteed on leave in excess of 3 months, nor is the employee guaranteed the same salary upon his/her return.

## **J. Extended Leave (Beyond 3 Months)**

Leave taken may be extended beyond 12 weeks on a month-to-month basis after:

1. Letter of request from employee
2. Approval of the Board of Trustees
3. Proof of continuing serious health condition (if applicable)

Reinstatement to the same or equivalent position is not guaranteed on an "extended leave", nor is the employee guaranteed the same salary upon his/her return. The employee is responsible for paying the entire health insurance premium during this time, or may apply for a waiver of premiums due to

disability through the Health Plan provided by the Library. In any case, a return to work note from a physician must be submitted.

### **K. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

\*Employers in New York State are subject to FMLA benefits only if they have at least 50 employees for at least 20 weeks in the current or previous year. *As of the most recent review of this policy, South Country Library is exempt as it does not meet the minimum threshold of employees.*

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) affords employees 12 work weeks of unpaid family and medical leave. Employees who have been employed for a total of at least 12 months prior to such a leave are eligible for this benefit. Employees are entitled to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for any of the following:

1. The birth of a child to an employee or the placement for adoption or foster care of a child with the employee. The FMLA requires that employees who do take such leave must do so within 12 months of the arrival of the child.
2. For the care of a son or daughter, spouse or parent who has a serious health condition.
3. For an employee where a serious health condition renders the employee unable to perform the functions of his/her position.
4. For qualifying exigency leave and/or military care-giver leave.

The 12-month period in which the 12 weeks of leave entitlement occurs is a “rolling” 12-month period measured backward from the date any FMLA is used. Each time an employee takes FMLA leave, the leave entitlement would be the balance of the 12 weeks which has not been used during the immediately preceding 12 months.

While out for one of the above reasons, the employee must use their own accrued time as part of this 12 week leave. All forms of accrued time (vacation, sick leave, comp time, personal time) will be applied toward this leave. Additional unpaid leave will be granted for up to the 12-week period. If an employee has more than 12 weeks’ worth of accrued time, FMLA will still run out at the end of the 12 weeks. This means that the employee may not be on approved leave after the 12-week period.

An employee must provide the South Country Library with at least 30 days’ notice of his/her intention to take leave when the need for such leave is foreseeable; in emergency situations, the Library is entitled to receive such notice as is practicable. In the event leave is foreseeable based upon medical treatments, leaves are to be scheduled so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the Library. Medical leave may be taken on a reduced leave schedule.

An employee is required to provide medical certification. Forms are available from the Bookkeeper.

For the duration of FMLA leave, the employee’s health coverage will be maintained with the employee paying his/her normal share of the coverage for that period. An employee’s health care coverage will cease if his/her part of the premium payment is more than 30 days late. Leave is unpaid although employees may be eligible for disability payments or worker’s compensation benefits. The employee will be restored to the same or equivalent position upon return to the South Country Library.

Employees out on any type of unpaid leave of absence will not be paid for holidays and will not accrue any type of leave time.



## **L. New York State Paid Family Leave**

South Country Library fully complies with the New York State Paid Family Leave Act; any changes or updates to mandated benefits will be due the employee even if the language of this policy has not yet been updated to reflect the change. Pursuant to the NYSPFL eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of approved leave, and will receive 67% of their average weekly salary up to a maximum benefit of \$1,068.36 per week. The benefit is calculated as per the rate of pay in effect on the first day of the leave. *Please note: 403b contributions are not taken out of your NYSPFL weekly wages.*

NYSPFL (PFL) is funded by employee payroll contributions. It provides wage replacement and job protection to employees who need time away from their job to:

- bond with a newly born, adopted or fostered child;
- care for a family member with a serious health condition; or
- assist loved ones when a family member is deployed abroad on active military duty.

The Library will adhere to the following provisions:

- Employees cannot utilize PFL for their own illness.
- Employees are entitled to be reinstated to their same or a comparable job upon return from PFL.
- SCTY will continue an employee's health insurance while on PFL as long as the employee continues to pay their portion of the health insurance premiums while on leave. Payment must be received by the Library prior to the time it must be sent to the plans or coverage will be automatically dropped without chance of reinstatement until the employee returns to work on a full time basis.
- An employee may not receive both disability benefits (your own serious health condition) and PFL benefits for the same period. If taken separately, both cannot exceed 26 weeks during the same year.
- An employee cannot receive PFL during periods when the employee is collecting sick pay or paid time off.

While on PFL, employees will not continue to accrue sick or vacation time.

### **Eligibility**

Full-time employees: Employees who work 20 or more hours per week are eligible after 26 consecutive weeks (6 months) of employment.

Part-time employees: Employees who work fewer than 20 hours per week are eligible after working 175 days.

### **Taking Paid Family Leave Procedures:**

1. **Notice:** Employees must provide the employer with at least 30 days' advance notice of their intent to use Paid Family Leave, if it's foreseeable. If the event is not foreseeable, the employee must notify you as soon as possible.
2. Obtain required forms. Contact your employer, or visit [paidfamilyleave.ny.gov](http://paidfamilyleave.ny.gov) to obtain the required forms.
3. **Employer Portion:** When an employee is preparing to take Paid Family Leave, they will request that you complete Part B of the *Request for Paid Family Leave (Form PFL-1)* and

return it to them. This includes providing the employee's last 8 weeks of gross wages and calculating the employee's average weekly wage.

- a. **You must complete and return the form to your employee within three business days. Make a copy of this form for your records.**
4. **Submit:** Employees are responsible for submitting their requests directly to the insurer.
5. **Pay or Deny:** The insurance carrier must pay or deny the employee's request within 18 calendar days of receiving the completed request for Paid Family Leave, or the employee's first day of leave, whichever is later.
  - a. Insurance carriers do not have a specific legal requirement to notify an employer about whether an employee's request for Paid Family Leave is approved or denied, but employers may be in contact with their insurance carriers to develop a process for this.

### **M. Military Leave**

An employee who enters active military duty in a branch of the U.S armed forces will be granted an unpaid military leave for that period of time in which re-employment is protected by law.

Employees required to engage in Military Reserve Duty will receive their regular rate of pay for normal hours to be worked during this period of duty, up to a maximum of 10 days per year.

### **N. Voting Leave**

New York State Election Law allows for time off for employees to vote. A registered voter may, without loss of pay for up to 2 hours, take off so much working time as will enable him or her to vote at the primary and the general elections. You may take time off at the beginning or end of your working shift, as your employer may designate, unless otherwise mutually agreed. You must notify your employer not less than 2 days before the day of the election that he or she requires time off to vote in accordance with the provisions of this section.

### **O. Jury Duty**

Employees serving on jury duty will receive their normally scheduled pay for hours served during their normally scheduled hours, provided that proof-of-service documentation is submitted to the bookkeepers. Without the required documentation, time will be deducted from employee accruals. Employees on standby jury duty are expected to be at work.

## **SECTION 4**

### **HEALTH INSURANCE & RETIREMENT**

#### **A. Health Insurance**

Full-time employees are eligible to participate in the Health Plan provided by the Library, as set forth herein. See the Bookkeeper for full details about this health coverage. The library will contribute 85% of the costs for the Individual Plan and 75% for the Family Plan. After 6 weeks of employment, a new full-time employee may alert the bookkeeper if he/she is interested in applying for health benefits. The employee will receive these benefits no later than 3 months after the hiring date.

Full time employees who are on a leave of absence, authorized by the Board of Trustees, may have their health insurance coverage continued but the employee must bear the full cost of the insurance as well as a small service charge recommended by the plans. Payment must be received by the Library prior to the time it must be sent to the plans or coverage will be automatically dropped without chance of reinstatement until the employee returns to work on a full time basis.

#### **Post-Retirement Health Benefits**

The Library adheres to the following provisions regarding health insurance retirement benefits:

- Employees must have worked at the South Country Library full time, for 20 consecutive years.
- “Retirement” shall mean termination of employment within 5 years of the date on which the employee is entitled to receive a retirement allowance, i.e. Social Security, TIAA-CREF.
- Employee’s hired prior to January 1, 2010: Employees will pay 50% of the premiums; the Library will pay 50% of the premiums.
- Employee’s hired on or after January 1, 2010: Employees will pay 70% of the premiums; the Library will pay 30% of the premiums.
- A surviving spouse of a deceased retiree will receive continuing coverage for an individual at the 50% rate for three months, after which the surviving spouse may choose to continue in the group plan at his/her expense, if permitted by the Plan.
- Employees must meet the Library Health Plan requirements for eligibility in order to continue health insurance coverage in retirement.
- Employees who fulfill the above requirements but are retiring before being eligible to receive a retirement allowance and who wish to continue in the Health Plan offered by the Library must pay a full share of their coverage until becoming eligible to receive their retirement allowance, if permitted by the Plan. After that time, the Library will pay the applicable share of the premiums.

Future Boards of Trustees of the Library have the right to change any of these benefits or percentages of costs for those not yet retired. Those already retired will not have their benefits changed.

#### **B. Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA)**

The law provides for a temporary extension of health care coverage to full-time employees who have been terminated from their job for any reason other than gross misconduct. Benefits may be continued for up to 18 months and the former employee must pay the full amount of health insurance coverage costs.

### **C. Workers' Compensation Insurance**

The South Country Library provides a comprehensive workers' compensation insurance program at no cost to employees. This program generally covers any injury or illness sustained in the course of employment that requires medical, surgical, or hospital treatment. D. Employee Assistance Program All employees are covered by BOCES Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a crisis intervention, counseling and referral service.

### **E. Retirement/Pension Plan**

Full-time employees are eligible to participate in the South Country Library's Retirement Plan (TIAACREF) after they have been credited with 1,000 hours or more of employment during any 12 consecutive calendar months commencing with their date of employment. Any full-time employee who has attained age 21 and has completed one year of service with another public or private library, is eligible to participate upon employment at the South Country Library. Part-time employees may contribute on their own up to the maximum allowed by law. The library does not make a corresponding contribution for part-timers.

## **SECTION 5**

### **EMPLOYEE CONDUCT**

#### **A. Public Relations & Customer Service**

Employees should be aware that their behavior and attitude not only affect their work, but also affect the people with whom they work and those they are serving. An employee attitude is often telegraphed to co-workers and the public non-verbally, and is often most evident in stressful situations. By staying calm, even under pressure, employees help maintain a comfortable working atmosphere, promote good relationships with fellow staff members, and project a more positive image. Conversations, efficiency and attitude are important. All conversations should be conducted in a low tone, and should not include any comments or judgments about patron behavior, co-workers, or the Library. Conversations that cannot be handled in such a way should be conducted in a non-public area.

Every patron who enters a staff member's area should be acknowledged and greeted.

When helping a member of the public, listen attentively and show a willingness to be of assistance. No matter how mundane a question may seem, remember, it is important to the person asking it. All patrons deserve the best help staff can give them. Staff members should never point to an item's location, but rather walk with the patron to the area. When a request is outside an employee's area of responsibility or ability to answer, seek help from other staff members or refer the person to the appropriate resource. Remember each time one answers the phone, writes a letter, attends a meeting, or greets someone from the public, that employee IS the South Country Library.

#### **B. Employee Conduct & Work Rules**

To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, the South Country Library expects employees to follow the rules of conduct in order to protect the interests and safety of all employees and the organization.

It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. The following are examples of infractions of rules of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment:

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of Library property
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs; gambling on company time or company premises; possession of a weapon or other dangerous materials
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of Library-owned property
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace
- Harassment, intimidation or bullying of any nature
- Falsification of library records, including timekeeping records
- Removing, sending, or furnishing library records and information to unauthorized persons
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct toward management, co-workers or patrons
- Violation of health and safety protocols
- Acts of dishonesty, deception or fraud
- Repeated absences or tardiness; unauthorized absence from work station during the workday; sleeping on the job

- Abandonment of job or failure to report to work without notifying a supervisor
- Misuse of Library Time: extended breaks or lunch hours; persistent or extended personal phone calls; inappropriate or excessive use of library time or library computers for personal matters (more than occasional) (also see separate “Staff Internet” policy)
- Persistent negativity, gossiping, or complaining in such a manner that it undermines the morale of co-workers, or interferes with the normal flow of work
- Illegal use of e-mail or communication systems
- Unauthorized use of library facilities, tools, or equipment
- Allowing unauthorized person(s) access to library facilities
- Any conduct contrary to common decency or morality, or liable to incite or provoke others because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, veteran status, or disability

#### Use of Phones

Cell phones or other personal mobile devices are generally not to be used during work time. Personal calls, when they must be made, should be kept brief and to a minimum, and away from public areas. Refrain from talking on cell phones in the break room while others are breaking.

Before making any personal phone calls outside Suffolk County on Library phones, staff must have permission from their supervisor.

#### Smoking

Consistent with NYS Public Health Law §1399-0, there is a no smoking policy in all locations within the Library and on Library property.

### **C. Attendance**

Employees are expected to be punctual and are expected to remain at work for the entire work period excluding meal periods.

Poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive. Either may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

As meetings are for the benefit of the staff, it is the responsibility of any staff member who is absent from any type of staff meeting to make himself/herself familiar with the information that was discussed.

#### Unauthorized Absence

An employee who is absent from his/her job without excused leave shall be considered absent without authorized leave. Any employee on an unauthorized absence for more than 3 scheduled work days will be deemed to have abandoned the position and will be automatically terminated. Unauthorized leave or unexcused absences will not be compensated in any form.

### **D. Personal Appearance** (Revised by Board 6-15-23)

The Library follows a “Dress for your Day” approach to personal appearance and attire which mixes casual and professional appropriately. Staff are permitted to be flexible and individually choose their appropriate dress for each day’s responsibilities, using common sense and with the understanding

that their appearance represents the Library. This means attire that is casually professional, comfortable and suited for whatever each day's particular needs are. For example, one day a staff member might dress casually as they perform weeding, and the next day more business-like as they attend a meeting.

Examples of the range of daily acceptable attire includes, but is not limited to, items such as jeans, sneakers, knee-length shorts, Library logo shirts, khakis, slacks, sweaters, plain and pressed tee-shirts (no images, slogans, phrases), polos, button-downs, knee-length skirts/dresses.

Ultimately it is up to the judgement of supervisors/administrators to determine if an employee's appearance meets the expectations of this policy.

For reasons of professionalism and/or safety the following items are deemed unacceptable:

- Gym/athletic wear, sleep wear or beach wear
- Tee-shirts with images, logos or slogans
- Halter/crop tops, tops with exposed waistlines, or tops with spaghetti straps
- Footwear should be safe for the work environment, so no flip flops
- No caps or head coverings other than those for religious purposes
- Earbuds on the public floor

Employees who have been given name plates are required to wear them at all times.

### **E. Health and Safety**

Each employee, supervisor or other involved person should survey the work area frequently to eliminate unsafe conditions such as slippery surfaces, uneven walkways, broken furniture or glass, unsafe shelving, unsafe floor or window coverings, improper equipment, fire hazards, etc.

In the event of an injury to an employee or to a member of the public, staff should immediately: Notify the appropriate supervisor and the Director or the Director's designee. Obtain appropriate qualified medical attention.

Incident reports should be completed and promptly submitted to administration whenever a situation of significance occurs on Library property. This includes but is not limited to injuries to staff or patrons, accidents, theft, vandalism, drug/alcohol use, violence or hostility, and notable or repeated violations of Library policy.

Staff should refrain from sharing with any member of the public the work schedule of another Library staff member or any other information about a staff member that is of a personal nature.

All staff should read and be thoroughly familiar with the Library's *Emergency Response Plan*.

### **F. Signing/Witnessing**

Apart from the Public Notary or exam proctoring, Library staff are not permitted to act as a witness or to sign any verification documents for any member of the public.

### **G. Staff Use of Library Materials & Equipment**

Staff must exercise extreme caution in the access and use of materials and equipment placed in their trust. Library materials for personal use must be checked out if they are to be removed from the

library. Staff will not be charged overdue fines, may be subject to disciplinary action if materials are not returned after the system generates a billing notice.

The Library may loan you property, materials or written information to help you do your job. You are responsible for protecting and controlling any property the Library loans you and must return it promptly if asked to do so. If you stop working at the Library, you must return all Library property immediately. If you do not return Library property, the Library may take monetary reimbursement from your regular or final paycheck to cover the cost.

### **G. Conflicts of Interest/Gifts & Gratuities**

Employees are not permitted to solicit, obtain, accept, or retain any personal benefit from any supplier, vendor, customer, etc. or an individual or organization doing or seeking business with the South Country Library. As stated here, personal benefit means a gift, gratuity, favor, and service, compensation in any form, special treatment or anything of monetary value.

Exceptions include: *one-time* gifts with a monetary value of under \$25; unsolicited advertising or promotional materials of normal intrinsic value such as pens or calendars; awards for meritorious civic service contributions; consumable items that are donated to the entire work group in the appropriate non-work area.

### **H. Confidential Nature of Library Affairs**

It is the policy of the South Country Library that the internal affairs of the organization represent confidential information that each employee has a legal obligation to protect.

Employees authorized to have access to confidential information must treat the information as proprietary Library property for which they are personally responsible. Employees are prohibited from attempting to obtain confidential information for which they have not received access authorization. Employees violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination and may be subject to legal action.

Library administration is responsible for coordinating security and control of Library information and for approving any exceptions to this policy.

All media inquiries and other inquiries of a general nature should be referred to an administrator, and all press releases, publications, or other official declarations must be approved in advance by administration, other than those published in the Library's newsletter or in flyers.

All information pertaining to patron records including records and reference request information is, by law confidential. It is against the law to disclose this information to anyone, including family members or police organizations. Refer requests for such information to administration.

Inquiries seeking information concerning current or former employees should be referred to the Director or bookkeeper. Generally, the Library will not release reference information without the employee's authorization, or will limit the information to verification of the employee's position, job location, and dates of employment at the Library.

Employees in the following roles will be required to sign a separate confidentiality agreement: administration, bookkeeping, I.T. and security.



## **SECTION 6**

### **HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES**

#### **A. Performance Evaluation**

Each employee will be evaluated once per year after the probationary period is completed. If an employee's performance becomes unsatisfactory, additional evaluations may be given. All evaluations will be discussed with the employee, who will always be given the opportunity to comment.

#### **B. Personnel Records**

All personnel records are considered confidential and the property of the Library. Personnel records and files will be available or disclosed only to those persons who are authorized by the Director.

Employees may, upon reasonable advance notice and administrative approval, inspect their own personnel files in the presence of the bookkeeper and a Library administrator, in the bookkeeper's office.

Employees may submit in writing to the Director, statements for inclusion in their own personnel file related to items already in their file.

#### **C. Disciplinary Procedures**

It is the South Country Library's position to administer equitable and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory conduct in the workplace. The best disciplinary measures are those that do not have to be enforced and come from good leadership and fair supervision at all employment levels.

In the event that such measures are needed, disciplinary action may call for any or all of the following four steps:

1. Verbal warning(s)
2. Written warning(s)
3. Suspension with or without pay
4. Termination of employment.

Implementation is dependent on the severity of the problem and the number of occurrences. There may be circumstances when one or more steps are bypassed.

By using progressive discipline, the Board of Trustees hopes that most employee problems can be corrected at an early stage, benefitting both the employee and the South Country Library.

The Library recognizes that there are certain types of employee problems that are serious enough to justify either a suspension, or in extreme situations, termination of employment, without going through the usual progressive discipline steps. While it is impossible to list every type of behavior that may be deemed a serious offense, the "Employee Conduct & Work Rules" section of this handbook includes examples of problems that may result in immediate suspension or termination of employment. The problems listed there are not all necessarily serious offences, but may be examples of unsatisfactory conduct that will trigger progressive discipline.

#### **D. Grievance Procedures**

A grievance is a specific, formal statement of dissatisfaction about a specific working condition or procedure that directly involves the employee expressing the grievance. After successfully completing probation, any staff member who has a grievance, or the Employee Association on behalf of those concerned, shall follow in order the procedures below:

1. Staff or Association member shall first meet with their supervisor to discuss the matter (if the grievance is with the supervisor, see step # 2).
2. If the staff member is dissatisfied following the discussion, or if the grievance is with the supervisor, then the grievance shall be brought to the Library Director, either in person or in writing, along with the specific relief requested. The Director may respond in writing, if appropriate. Grievances must be brought or submitted to the Director within 5 days of the initial meeting in step # 1. The Director or Director's designee must respond within 14 days.
3. If the staff member is still not satisfied after the above steps, or if the grievance is with the Library Director, he/she may send the grievance in writing to the Board of Trustees Personnel Committee. The matter will be discussed by the Personnel Committee, and the employee will be given an answer within 30 days.
4. If the staff member still feels the problem has not been resolved, he/she may present the grievance in writing to the entire Board. The matter will be taken up by the Board in executive session at the next regular Board meeting. The decisions rendered by the South Country Library Board of Trustees will be final and binding.

#### **E. Resignation**

A librarian is required to submit a written resignation to the Director at least 4 weeks prior to the effective date. Clerical staff must submit such notification at least 2 weeks prior to the effective date.

#### **F. Compensation Upon Employment Separation**

An employee who is terminated or who resigns will receive salary and benefits due to him/her through the last official day of work. Final regular pay will be paid to the former employee when the next normal Library pay period occurs. Any severance pay benefits due to the former employee will be paid within 45 calendar days of the final day of employment.

When a non-page employee leaves employment at the Library, he/she is entitled to be paid for ½ of all sick time accrued up to the employee's maximum limit; all vacation time accrued to the employee's maximum limit; and any compensatory time remaining to a maximum of ten hours. The Library does not compensate for any remaining personal time.

If the employee owes the Library any monies or is responsible for any lost or damaged property or has not returned any items that are considered Library property, such accounts are to be settled as originally agreed or by deduction from final pay, unless prohibited by law.

## **Employee Acknowledgement Form**

The employee handbook describes important information about the South Country Library, and I understand that I should consult the Library Director regarding any questions not answered in the handbook. I have entered into my employment relationship with the South Country Library voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of employment. Accordingly, either I or the South Country Library can terminate the relationship at will, with or without cause, at any time, so long as there is no violation of applicable federal or state law.

Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, nothing in the current personnel policy handbook shall be construed to limit the absolute discretion of the Board of Trustees of the South Country Library when making, or the right of the Board to make, all final determinations with respect to personnel (including policies, the addition of new positions, personnel procedures, salary and compensation matters). Nor shall the current document be construed to in any way, to limit the Board of Trustees from revising any policy, administrative procedure, etc. as the Board deems necessary. Since the information, policies, and benefits described here are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur, except to the South Country's policy of employment-at-will. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies. Only the Board of Trustees of the South Country Library has the ability to adopt any revisions to the policies in this handbook.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document. I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions to it.

EMPLOYEE'S NAME (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please sign, date and photocopy this page (for yourself) and give the original to the Bookkeeper

