Writing Policy Without Worry

Beka Lemons
Huntington City-Township Public Library

A Note

Policy vs. Procedure

Why is policy important

- Make rules known to all staff and patrons
- Address points of conflict
- Uniform way of doing things
- Ensure employee accountability
- Empower employees to make decisions
- Avoid unnecessary mistakes and misunderstanding
- Ensure fair decision making
- Provide legal protection*

What are some policy pitfalls

- Reduces innovation and may hinder necessary change
- May be open to interpretation if not written correctly
- Can be overly restrictive
- Needs to be updated regularly

Policy Writing In 6 *Easy* Steps

1. Identify Your Goals/Need

Policy Writing In 6 *Easy* Steps

1. Identify Your Goals/Need
   a. Know why you need a policy
   b. Understand your mission and write your policy with that in mind

Policy Writing In 6 *Easy* Steps

1. Identify your goals/need
2. Gather Content

Policy Writing In 6 *Easy* Steps

1. Identify your goals/need
2. Gather Content
    a. Do some research
    b. Find examples of similar policies
    c. Brainstorm and get input from other stakeholders
    d. Create an outline of everything you think you need in the policy

Policy Writing In 6 *Easy* Steps

1. Identify your goals/need
2. Gather Content
3. Write the Policy

Policy Writing In 6 *Easy* Steps

1. Identify your goals/need
2. Gather Content
3. Write the Policy
   a. Style
      i. Standard format
      ii. Write to the most basic audience understanding
      iii. Break text into scannable chunks
      iv. Define terms when necessary
      v. Omit excess words
      vi. Mind your obligations
      vii. Minimize abbreviations
      viii. Avoid complicated sentences
      ix. Use simple language

Policy Writing In 6 *Easy* Steps

1. Identify your goals/need
2. Gather Content
3. Write the Policy
   a. Style
   b. Substance
      i. Make it relevant
      ii. Keep it simple
      iii. Keep it general
      iv. Make sure its enforceable

Policy Writing In 6 *Easy* Steps

1. Identify your goals/need
2. Gather Content
3. Write the Policy
4. Edit and Review

Policy Writing In 6 *Easy* Steps

1. Identify your goals/need
2. Gather Content
3. Write the Policy
4. Edit and Review
    a. Consult stakeholders before final approval to ensure that the policy works in practice.
    b. When to get legal advice
        i. Ensure compliance with legal requirements
        ii. Avoid discrimination or other legal issues
        iii. Personnel policies
    c. Make sure it aligns with procedures. Create new procedures if needed.

Policy Writing In 6 *Easy* Steps

1. Identify your goals/need
2. Gather Content
3. Write the Policy
4. Edit and Review
5. Implement

Policy Writing In 6 *Easy* Steps

1. Identify your goals/need
2. Gather Content
3. Write the Policy
4. Edit and Review
5. Implement
   a. Get approval from your Board
   b. Have a training plan if new procedures are needed
   c. Give the employee tools to implement the policy
      i. Talking points to explain the policy to patrons
   d. Store in a common place where it can be accessed easily

Policy Writing In 6 *Easy* Steps

1. Identify your goals/need
2. Gather Content
3. Write the Policy
4. Edit and Review
5. Implement
6. Update

Policy Writing In 6 *Easy* Steps

1. Identify your goals/need
2. Gather Content
3. Write the Policy
4. Edit and Review
5. Implement
6. Update
   a. Review on a schedule
   b. Make changes whenever they are needed
   c. Make your policies future proof
      i. Don't include anything that will become dated quickly
      ii. Don't include information that is likely to change (staff names)
      iii. Don't include the same information that is in other policies (refer to policy instead)

Notes on equality and fairness

- Policies must be written using gender-neutral and gender-sensitive language.
  - Do not use masculine or feminine pronouns as the default; use "they" or "the individual."
  - Avoid using gendered-nouns such as chairman, man, mankind. Instead, use gender-neutral nouns such as chair, department head, coordinator, humanity, individual, or person.
- Never make policy for a specific group
- Consider how the policy might create barriers - will it have a disparate impact on any group
- Don't make policies totally restrictive. Think about why you are restricting things and if that is really necessary.

Title: Employee Dress Code
Effective Date: 2/17/02
Authorized By: Library Board of Trustees
Date of Last Revision: 4/14/23

Work attire should complement an environment that reflects a(n) _____, _____, and _____ organization. As part of that effort, Anywhere Public Library requires employees to maintain a neat and clean appearance that is appropriate for the workplace setting and for the work being performed. This policy is intended to define _____. This dress code should be followed at all times when an employee is representing the library at any community activity, convention or other library event.

General Guidelines
- Clothing should be neat and clean. Torn, dirty, or frayed clothing is unacceptable.
- Any clothing or accessory that has words, terms, or pictures that may be offensive to others is unacceptable.
- Clothing or attire must not interfere with the safe operation of duties or equipment.
- Piercings and tattoos are _____
- Undergarments should be covered at all times and should not be visible through clothing.
- Open toe shoes are not permitted as there is a significant safety risk.
- Library name tags must be worn and visible to patrons at all times.
-
-

Title: Employee Dress Code
Effective Date: 2/17/02
Authorized By: Library Board of Trustees
Date of Last Revision: 4/14/23

Work attire should complement an environment that reflects a(n) _____,_____, and _____ organization. As part of that effort, Anywhere Public Library requires employees to maintain a neat and clean appearance that is appropriate for the workplace setting and for the work being performed. This policy is intended to define _____. This dress code should be followed at all times when an employee is representing the library at any community activity, convention or other library event.

General Guidelines
- Clothing should be neat and clean. Torn, dirty, or frayed clothing is unacceptable.
- Any clothing or accessory that has words, terms, or pictures that may be offensive to others is unacceptable.
- Clothing or attire must not interfere with the safe operation of duties or equipment.
- Piercings and tattoos are _____
- Undergarments should be covered at all times and should not be visible through clothing.
- Open toe shoes are not permitted as there is a significant safety risk.
- Library name tags must be worn and visible to patrons at all times.
-
-

Acceptable business attire
Men:
- sport coats or blazers
- slacks, chinos or dockers
- clean and professional jeans
- polo shirts
- button-down shirts with or without a tie
- sweaters and cardigans

Women:
- dresses
- skirts (no shorter than 2 inches above the knee)
- dress slacks
- dress capris (no shorter than mid-calf)
- clean and professional jeans
- blouses
- polo shirts
- sweaters

In general, casual business attire will be the standard.

Personal Hygiene and Grooming

Employees are expected to meet the following standards or guidelines with respect to personal grooming and hygiene upkeep:

-
-
-

Exceptions

- Reasonable exceptions to the dress codes will be made for_____. Any employee who wishes to request an exception must contact Jane or Jill in the business office.
- T-shirts that have been approved as official library t-shirts may be worn at any time.
- Maintenance staff may wear jeans, shorts and appropriate t-shirts at any time.
-

Enforcement

_____ will be responsible for ensuring that all employees meet the dress code. Any employee found to be in violation of the dress code _____ be asked to leave work until they are in compliance with the policy. Employees will not be paid for time that they are away from the workplace for a dress code violation. Repeated violations of the dress code _____result in progressive discipline up to and including termination.

Contact
rlemons@hctpl.info