

**SARA HIGHTOWER REGIONAL LIBRARY**

205 RIVERSIDE PARKWAY  
ROME, GEORGIA 30161-2913  
706/236-4601

***EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK***

Revised: August 24, 2000  
Amended August 22, 2002  
Amended August 28, 2003  
Amended February 26, 2004  
Amended February 22, 2007  
Amended May 24, 2007  
Amended May 28, 2009  
Amended August 16, 2018  
Amended November 15, 2018  
Amended August 15, 2019  
Amended February 18, 2021  
Amended May 19, 2022

**WELCOME****To*****Sara Hightower Regional Library***

We are pleased to welcome you as a new employee and are proud of our system of libraries and our commitment to provide organized access to information and services for the people of Floyd, Polk, Chattooga Counties and all of Northwest Georgia in order to meet their educational, informational, and cultural needs. The men and women whose skills, professionalism, care and dedication make Sara Hightower Regional Library System a leading resource for this area. We are committed to promoting, guiding, and providing direct access to information and materials and to also providing assistance among the surrounding communities.

As a new employee, you may have many questions about your new job. These personnel policies should help you to understand our basic policies, procedures and benefits. We want you to become familiar with its contents. Your immediate supervisor will be glad to answer any other questions that you may have.

***Congratulations***

***To you on becoming a new member of the  
Sara Hightower Regional Library Staff  
and good luck on your new job.***

## TABLE of CONTENTS

<b><u>Notice of Employment</u></b>	5
<b><u>Introduction – Terms of Employment</u></b>	
Equal Employment Opportunity	5
Employment at Will	6
Trial Period	6
<b><u>Absence/Tardiness</u></b>	6-7
Absenteeism and Tardiness	7
<b><u>Leave</u></b>	7-11
Annual Leave	7
Personal Leave	8
Sick Leave	8
Civic Leave	9
Family Medical Leave Act	9-11
<b><u>Benefits</u></b>	11-13
State Health Insurance and Teacher’s Retirement	11
COBRA	11
Pay Periods and Holidays	12
Banking Benefits / Automatic Deposit	13
VALIC Tax-Deferred Retirement	13
<b><u>Dismissal</u></b>	13-14
Substance Abuse	13
Garnishments and Attachments	14
Termination/Resignation	14
<b><u>Dress and Conduct on the Job</u></b>	14-16
Harassment	15
Complaint Procedure	16
<b><u>Employment Practices</u></b>	16-17
Promotion, Transfer and Demotion	17
<b><u>Nepotism</u></b>	17

**TABLE of CONTENTS (cont.)**

<b><u>Procedure for Redress of Grievance</u></b>	<b>18</b>
<b><u>Inclement Weather Days</u></b>	<b>18</b>
<b><u>Staff Development</u></b>	<b>19</b>
<b><u>Travel</u></b>	<b>19</b>
<b><u>Working Conditions</u></b>	<b>20</b>
<b><u>Worker's Compensation</u></b>	<b>20</b>
<b><u>Other</u></b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix A            Acknowledgement of Receipt</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendix B            Sample Evaluation Form</b>	<b>23-24</b>
<b>Appendix C            Sample Resignation Form</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Appendix D            Personal Use of Electronic Devices</b>	<b>26-27</b>

## **Notice of Employment**

Each new full-time employee receives a Notice of Employment from the Administrative Office which states the title of the position, salary, hours of work, starting date, name of his/her supervisor.

The signed original Notice of Employment is kept in the employee's personnel file in the Administrative Office.

Each new employee must also complete state and federal tax withholding forms and an Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9, submit to a criminal background check, and fill out a worker's compensation medical questionnaire. All of these forms are provided by the Administrative Office at the time of employment and must be completed and returned to the Administrative Office within the first week of employment.

## **Introduction – Terms of Employment**

### **A. Purpose of Handbook**

The information contained in this Handbook is designed as an advisory guide to assist Sara Hightower Regional Library and its supervisors with the effective management of personnel. The policies, provisions, and guidelines contained in this Handbook are not binding on Sara Hightower Regional Library and may be changed, interpreted, modified, revoked, suspended, terminated or added to by Sara Hightower Regional Library, in whole or in part, at any time, in Sara Hightower Regional Library's sole discretion, and without notice to employees. Sara Hightower Regional Library's benefits are defined in legal documents such as insurance contracts, official plan texts and/or trust agreements. All employee benefits, including group health and/or life insurance benefits may be changed, modified or reduced at any time both as to coverage, the nature of benefits, and the percentage of each employee's contribution. This Handbook does not create any contractual rights and is not intended to cover every situation. Instead, this Handbook is intended only to give on-site management general advice concerning personnel decisions.

### **B. Equal Employment Opportunity**

Sara Hightower Regional Library hereinafter ("the Library") is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of unlawful conduct. In keeping with this commitment, we will not tolerate harassment, discrimination, or the unlawful treatment of employees by anyone, including any supervisor, co-worker, vendor, visitor or customer of the Library. The Library pursues and will maintain a policy of nondiscrimination with all employees and applicants for employment. All aspects of employment, including retirement, hiring, promotions and transfers will be made on the basis of individual qualifications related to the requirements of the position without regard on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, uniformed service status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions; or any other legally protected category consistent with the Americans Disabilities Act.

### C. **Employment “At Will”**

All employees of the Library are “at will” employees and may be terminated for any reason referenced in this manual, for any reason during the 6 month trial basis, or for no reason at all or any time thereafter. Nothing contained in this Handbook is intended to create, comprise, or define any type of oral or written employment contract, promise, guarantee, either express or implied, between the Library and any one or all of its employees. Nothing in the Handbook is intended to provide any assurance of continued employment. Any written or oral statements or promises to the contrary are hereby expressly disavowed and should not be related upon by prospective or existing employees unless there exists a specific agreement to the contrary which is authorized in writing by the Director of the Library. Since employment at the Library is based upon mutual consent, either the employee or the employer may terminate the relationship at any time and in their discretion and with or without cause.

#### ***Trial Period***

Each new employee is hired on a trial basis for the first 180 days. This 180 day period includes any Saturdays that may be scheduled.

The employee will be evaluated at a 90 day period and given the opportunity to improve in areas the supervisor feels need correction.

Employment may be terminated at any time during the 6 month trial period and recourse to grievance procedures is denied.

At the end of the trial period, the employee’s work is evaluated and a decision is made regarding retention.

#### **Absence/Tardiness**

All employees shall notify their department head before the time they are to report to work in the event that they will be absent or tardy (except in the case of an emergency). The Department Head will determine whether the employee will be penalized in each situation. Unexcused absenteeism and tardiness will be documented and are grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

#### ***Absenteeism and Tardiness***

##### 1. Attendance and Tardiness:

Absence creates problems for your fellow workers who may have to perform your duties. Punctuality and regular attendance are essential to the proper operation of the Library and also help employees establish a good working reputation and add to their opportunity for advancement. An important contribution you can make as an employee is to report to work on time and on a regular basis.

It is your responsibility to be present each scheduled working day. If you are going to be late for work or absent, you must notify your supervisor before the start of your work day. You are required to speak with your supervisor directly or if your supervisor is not available, you must speak with another supervisor. Texting is not an acceptable means of communicating an absence. Only your supervisor or the Director may excuse absence or tardiness.

## 2. Absence Without Notice:

In order for the Library to operate effectively, employees must keep their supervisor informed as to when the employee will be off of work because of illness or accident. If an employee must leave work for any reason before the end of the day, he or she must notify their supervisor. Failure to do so may result in dismissal.

Employees regardless of category, will be automatically discharged for:

- Being absent for any reason for three (3) consecutive days without contacting their immediate supervisor as discussed above.
- Failing to report to work the first working day after the expiration of an authorized leave of absence.
- Misrepresenting the reason for being absent.

## Leave

### *Annual Leave*

Annual leave is awarded to full-time employees according to the amount of time worked and professional education.

After 1 year of employment:

MLS Librarian employed in State Reimbursed position:  
160 working hours

All other Full-Time employees: 80 working hours

After 10 years employment:

All Full-Time employees: 40 additional working hours

After 15 years employment:

All Full-Time employees: 40 additional working hours

Maximum annual leave:

MLS Librarian employed in State Reimbursed position:  
240 working hours

All other Full-Time employees: 160 working hours

Annual leave must be taken in no less than one hour increments.

Any unused annual leave may be transferred to sick leave at the end of the year (employees may only accumulate sixty days of sick leave). Annual leave not taken or transferred by the end of December will be forfeited.

Employees who resign, retire, or are terminated will be paid for accumulated annual leave provided that the employee has been employed by the library for at least twelve consecutive months. Any paid leave will be pro-rated based on actual leave accrued for this calendar year. No accumulated sick leave will be paid to any employees upon their resignation, retirement or termination.

Absence Without Pay may be granted by the Director under special circumstances. It will not be granted automatically when an employee has no accrued leave. A written request must be presented to the Director for approval. All paid leave must be taken before AWOP will be considered.

### ***Personal Leave***

Thirty two hours of personal leave are accrued annually and may be taken any time throughout the first year of employment with prior approval of a department head. Thereafter, personal leave will still require approval of the department head.

Any unused personal leave may be transferred to sick leave at the end of the year (employees may only accumulate sixty days of sick leave).

### ***Sick Leave***

Ninety six hours of sick leave per year are granted on the basis of 8 hours per month.

Sick leave must be taken in at least one hour increments.

Sick leave may be used as it accumulates or it may be accrued up to a maximum of sixty days.

After sick leave is exhausted, employees must use annual and personal leave before requesting leave without pay. Employees needing more than their accumulated leave must apply in writing to the Director for Absence without Pay.

Only full-time employees are eligible for sick leave.

Sick leave may be used in case of illness or death in the employee's immediate family (spouse, children, parents of employee, sister, brother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, or any other person who is acting in one of the above capacities who lives in the employee's residence.)

Employees returning to work after a lengthy illness or surgery must have a written release form from their doctor stating any restrictions (i.e., light work, reduced hours) and the date the employee is able to return to work.

Hospitalization of any kind requires a written release from the doctor upon the employees return to work.

Employees out of work for 5 days or with a chronic medical disorder will require a written statement from their doctor before they may return to work.

### ***Civic Leave***

Serving on jury duty and voting are your civic responsibilities and are encouraged by the SHRL Board of Trustees.

Employees will continue to draw their salary during service of jury duty.

In accordance with Title 86, Sec. 1109 of the Georgia Code, full time employees who are members of the National Guard or military reserve forces shall be allowed a leave of absence for up to thirty days not charged against their annual leave for attending training camp. Employees called to summer camp or other active duty should provide their supervisor with a copy of his/her orders, which shall include active duty rate of pay, as soon as possible. For up to but not to exceed two weeks (e.g., the annual two-week training period (summer camp), the library will compensate for any difference in pay if the military pay is less than that earned at the library.

### ***Family Medical Leave Act***

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides up to twelve (12) weeks unpaid leave to eligible employees for certain family and medical reasons, without loss of health insurance benefits.

The following information is provided to explain the employee's rights and obligations when requesting a family or medical leave under FMLA:

1. To be eligible for leave under this policy an employee must have been employed for a total of twelve (12) months, must have worked at least 1250 hours during the twelve-month period preceding the commencement of the leave, and the employee must also work at a facility with 50 or more employees within a 75-mile radius of this work site.
2. A family and/or medical leave of absence for up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave may be taken for one or more of the following reasons: (1) the birth of the employee's child; (2) placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care; (3) to care for a child, spouse, or parent who has a serious health condition; or (4) when the employee is unable to perform the essential functions of his or her position because of a serious health condition.
3. An employee may take a total of 12 work weeks of unpaid leave for the reasons specified above during a rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave.

If you and your spouse are employed by the Library, the two of you together are entitled to a total of 12 weeks of FMLA leave for the birth, adoption, or placement of a child, or to care for a covered family member with a serious health condition. The right to FMLA leave for the birth, adoption, or placement of a child expires 12 months after the date of the birth, adoption or placement.

4. The FMLA permits eligible employees to take leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary for: (1) a serious health condition (either the employee's or family member's); (2) periods of disability due to a chronic serious health condition; or (3) to provide needed care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition, including psychological care when such care would prove beneficial to the patient. Intermittent leave is not available for the birth, adoption or placement of a child unless agreed by the Library. The Library may transfer the employee temporarily to an alternative position with equal pay and benefits that better accommodates any recurring period of intermittent leave.

5. If an employee is entitled to paid leave under another benefit plan or policy, which includes but is not limited to short-term disability, unused paid vacation, sick, annual, family or personal leave, the employee must take any and all paid leave first. Such available paid leave will be counted against the FMLA 12-week unpaid leave entitlement. Unless otherwise required, no employee will be entitled to more than a total of 12 weeks, paid and/or unpaid, for leave, which qualifies under the FMLA.
6. Employees who request a family and/or medical leave due to a serious health condition of the employee or covered relative will be required to provide medical certification of that serious health condition using the form provided. Failure to provide medical certification may result in the delay of leave. When planning any medical treatment, the employee must consult with his or her supervisor so that operations are not unduly disrupted by the employee's absence(s).
7. To request family and/or medical leave, the employee must complete and sign a Request for Family and Medical Leave form, and forward it to the employee's supervisor or the Director, along with the medical certification form, if required. When the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable, the forms must be submitted at least thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the effective date of the leave, or within two business days after an employee's request for leave. If this is not possible, the employee must provide a completed medical certification form within 15 calendar days of being requested to do so. When the need for FMLA is not foreseeable, the necessary forms should be submitted within two (2) business days of when the FMLA leave commences.
8. The employee will be notified within two (2) business days of his or her written request for family/medical leave whether the request is approved and whether the leave will be designated as FMLA leave.
9. During an approved family/medical leave, employees are entitled to the same health insurance they had before the leave began. Employees who pay their health insurance premiums will be required to continue benefit coverage during the leave period. The employee is responsible for making arrangements to pay any premiums due during the leave period.
10. Employees will be required to advise whether they intend to return to work at the conclusion of the family/medical leave and their expected date of return and must provide notice to the Library at least two (2) business days prior to their return to work. Employees who do not return to work following a family/medical leave will be liable for the payment of any health insurance premiums paid by the employer during unpaid family/medical leave, unless the failure to return to work was due to continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition or for other circumstances beyond the employee's control.
11. Other information, such as periodic re-certification of the employee's or covered relative's serious health condition may be required while the employee is on FMLA leave.
12. Employees returning from an approved family/medical leave due to their own serious health condition will be required to present medical certification from their health care provider upon their return to work which that indicates they are medically able to return to their job. Failure to provide such information may preclude the employee from returning.
13. Employees returning from family/medical leave will be restored to the same or an equivalent job upon their return to work, at the Library's discretion. The FMLA does not entitle a

restored employee to any right, benefit or position of employment other than any right, benefit or position to which the employee would have been entitled had the employee not taken leave.

14. A request for paid leave for leave covered by the FMLA, or for any leave not covered by the FMLA may be subject to additional approval, certification and reinstatement requirements. In addition, employees requesting paid leave for FMLA leave or other approved leave will be required to complete all applicable forms. However, the FMLA does not require any paid leave.

### **Benefits**

All full-time employees are eligible to participate in the *State Health Benefit Plan*. Each employee may decide whether to select **standard** or **high** option **PPO (single or family coverage) OR an HMO** provider available in this area (**single** or **family** coverage). The Library is mandated to pay a portion of the employees *State Health Benefit Plan* per month.

A current *State Health Benefit Plan* handbook is distributed annually to Library employees enrolled in the plan. All new employees will receive a handbook after they have been enrolled by Administrative Office personnel.

All full-time employees are eligible to participate in the *State of Georgia's Flexible Benefits Plan*. The plan allows employees the option of selecting, at the employee's expense, options as provided in the *State of Georgia's Flexible Benefits Plan*. Open season for enrollment and changes in current coverage will be held one time a year. New employees will be provided with a *Flexible Benefit* option statement, and may choose the type of coverage they desire at this time.

The library provides life insurance equal to the employee's yearly salary at no cost to the employee. The employee may increase life insurance coverage during the annual open season enrollment period or when hired.

All library employees participate in the Federal Social Security Plan.

All full-time library employees are required to be members of the *Teacher's Retirement System of Georgia* and pay a specified percentage of their regular salary. The Library pays a percentage based on the mandated TRS requirements.

### **COBRA**

COBRA-Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985

COBRA provides that an employee who is covered by a health care plan, and the person's covered dependents, will be entitled to a temporary extension of coverage under that plan when his or her participation ends because of loss of eligibility.

-Resignation of employee

-Termination of the covered employee (other than for reason of gross misconduct)

-Death of the covered employee

- Reduction in a covered employee's hours of employment
- The divorce or legal separation of the covered employee from the employee's spouse
- The covered employee becoming entitled to Medicare coverage
- A dependent child ceasing to be an eligible dependent under the plan
- Runs out of coverage while on approved leave without pay (AWOP)

Eligibility for continuation coverage begins on the date the coverage is lost. Coverage for terminated employees and employees losing coverage because of reduced work hours may be provided for up to 18 months.

Note: For more detailed information please check the current issue of the *State Health Benefit Plan*.

### ***Pay Periods and Holidays***

Payday will be on the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 30<sup>th</sup> of each month. If those days falls on a weekend or Holiday, payday will be on the preceding Friday.

Paid Holidays are:

<b>New Year's Day</b>	<b>January 1st</b>
<b>Martin Luther King Day</b>	<b>Third Monday in January</b>
<b>Memorial Day</b>	<b>Last Monday in May</b>
<b>Juneteenth</b>	<b>June 19</b>
<b>Independence Day</b>	<b>July 4th</b>
<b>Labor Day</b>	<b>First Monday in September</b>
<b>Thanksgiving Day</b>	<b>Fourth Thursday in November</b>
<b>Day after Thanksgiving</b>	<b>Fourth Friday in November</b>
<b>Christmas Eve Day</b>	<b>December 24</b>
<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>December 25</b>
<b>Day after Christmas</b>	<b>December 26</b>

\*If a holiday falls on Saturday, it will be observed the preceding Friday. If a holiday falls on Sunday, it will be observed the following Monday.

Full-time employees who are required to work a holiday shall be granted double compensatory time for the holiday. Holiday work must be scheduled and approved by department heads, branch heads, the Associate Director, or the Director.

### **Banking Benefits/Automatic Deposits**

It is preferred that all employees have their wages direct deposited in the financial institution of their choice.

### **VALIC Tax –Deferred Retirement**

A payroll deduction for VALIC (the library's 403-b tax-deferred retirement plan) may be set up in the Administrative Office with the Financial Officer. All employees are eligible for this plan.

### **Dismissal**

Given that all employees are employees "at-will," any of the following items of conduct may lead to disciplinary action including immediate termination. Disciplinary action is not limited to the offenses listed:

- Stealing private or library property
- Falsification of records or reports
- Deliberate destruction or abuse of library property
- Reporting to work or working while under the influence of intoxicating beverages or illegal drugs
- Failure to carry out instructions of department head
- Rudeness to patrons
- Faulty work after attention has been called to same
- Personal work on company time
- Sleeping during working hours
- Solicitation for any cause during work time without permission
- Leaving premises during work hours without permission
- Continual tardiness in reporting to work
- Absent without department head's approval
- Rowdy behavior on the job
- Interfering with other employee's work
- Misuse of telephone.
- Unkempt personal appearance.
- The use, selling, buying, dispensing, or possession of either alcohol or controlled substance while on duty is prohibited. The abuse of prescribed drugs while on duty is prohibited. A violation of this policy shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- An employee exhibiting symptoms of drug/alcohol use or intoxication, or abuse of prescribed drugs when reporting for duty or while on duty may be required to submit to appropriate testing. Refusal to submit to testing may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### ***Substance Abuse***

All employees are forbidden to use or possess alcohol or illegal drugs at any time during the workday or anywhere on the employer's premises. Workers are also forbidden to engage in any sale or other transaction involving illegal drugs on the employer's premises. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action including immediate dismissal. All employees who are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on the job are subject to dismissal.

Disciplinary action will be dependent on the severity of the circumstances and may include an oral or written warning, suspension, probation or termination.

In the case of warning or probation, the Administrative Offices or Department Head will provide the employee with information about local sources where the employee may receive drug or alcohol counseling or rehabilitation. An employee who chooses to participate in the above programs may have disciplinary actions suspended. An employee who refuses to participate in or fails to complete the programs or an employee who after completing the programs again engages in substance abuse shall be terminated.

The use, selling, buying, dispensing, or possession of either alcohol or a controlled substance while on duty is prohibited. The abuse of prescribed drugs while on duty is prohibited. A violation of this policy shall result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

An employee exhibiting symptoms of drug/alcohol use or intoxication, or abuse of prescribed drugs when reporting for duty or while on duty may be required to submit to appropriate testing. Refusal to submit to testing may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### ***Garnishments and Attachments***

The library does not voluntarily accept attachments or garnishments to an employee's pay except through the judicial process.

### ***Termination/Resignation***

Retirement shall be as specified by the Teacher's Retirement System of Georgia. Each employee will receive the *TRS Facts*, a pamphlet published yearly listing rights and rules of the Georgia Retirement System.

Terms of resignation:

- MLS Librarians shall give 28 (twenty-eight) calendar days notice of resignation.
- Semi-professional and part-time employees shall give 14 (fourteen) calendar days notice of resignation.
- Resignations must be submitted in writing to the Director.
- Employees who do not give notice as specified shall forfeit any unused vacation pay.

### **Dress and Conduct on the Job**

- Staff members should dress for the situation, location, and job and should be appropriate to the work performed.
- Dress should adhere to the current Dress Code
- Neatness and cleanliness shall be expected.
- No smoking or vaping in the building, or within 25 feet of an entrance to the building.
- Staff members are expected to treat fellow employees, supervisors, and patrons courteously at all times.

## ***Harassment***

Any form of harassment of any staff persons, employees, customers, vendors, suppliers, clients, visitors, patrons, or applicants for employment is unacceptable conduct which will not be tolerated. Harassment, discrimination and/or improper conduct consists of misconduct that includes unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based upon a person's protected status, such as sex, color, race, gender, religion, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability or other protected group status as provided for by law. Harassment also includes, but is not limited to, any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature. This impermissible conduct may include making offensive or derogatory remarks, sexually explicit, offensive, or off-color jokes, verbal commentaries about an individual's body parts, sexually degrading words used to describe an individual, display in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, sexual gestures, and other visually or verbally offensive behavior that results from or is based upon an individual's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, pregnancy, gender, or disability, as required by state and federal law. The Library will not tolerate conduct that adversely affects work performance or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

### **Sexual harassment is prohibited.**

Sexual harassment is also prohibited. Sexual harassment is defined as: 1) threats or insinuations to an individual (an employee, customer, or other staff), either explicitly or implicitly, that the individual's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the individual's employment, evaluation, wages, or advancement; 2) intimidation, ridicule, insult, or other such conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or an offensive working environment. Failure to follow this policy will result in appropriate disciplinary sanctions up to and including immediate termination.

Each supervisor and employee has a responsibility to take all steps possible to maintain the work place free of any form of sexual harassment. No supervisor or employee is to threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that an employee's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the employee's condition of employment as outlined in the preceding paragraph. Furthermore, no employee is to sexually harass any other employee, staff person, supervisor, client, visitor, or customer. Failure to follow this policy will be cause for disciplinary action including termination.

Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual flirtation, unwanted teasing, touching, advances, or propositions, repeated requests for dates;
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature; dirty jokes; jokes about gender-oriented traits;
- Graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body;
- Display in the work place of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, including nude or pornographic photographs.

### ***Complaint Procedure***

Any employee who believes he/she has been harassed should first speak with the Director, or if speaking to the Director is not feasible under the circumstances, to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Library in an attempt to reach a resolution. Again, if you feel that you have experienced or witnessed harassment, discrimination or unlawful treatment, you are to promptly notify (preferably within 24 hours) your supervisor, the Director or the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Where necessary, you should also report any form of harassment to any member of the Board of Trustees.

The Library will promptly investigate all allegations of sexual harassment, or any other form of harassment, in as confidential a manner as possible and take corrective or remedial action, as is appropriate. Furthermore, the Library will not retaliate against any employee or other person for coming forward with a complaint, or for assisting in the investigation of any matter that is reported.

Sexual harassment shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by any member of the library staff to a patron or to another staff member. Such conduct shall be considered to be sexual harassment when:

-Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment, or when,

-Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for an employment decision affecting that individual or when,

-Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's professional performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for the use of library service.

### **Employment Practices**

Sara Hightower Regional Library System is an "at will" employer.

In compliance with Federal and State equal opportunity laws, qualified applicants are considered for all positions without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, or presence of a non-job-related medical condition or disability.

Whenever possible, positions will be filled by promotion within the library. However, positions will be simultaneously posted within the library and with the legal organ of each county served. All professional positions (MLS) will be advertised in appropriate professional journals and in on-line databases.

Personnel files will be maintained on all employees, containing all information pertinent to their employment. These files are the property of the Library and may not be taken or altered by the employee. In order to maintain strictest confidentiality, we do not permit employees to remove, copy or distribute any portion of the information contained in personnel files. However, upon request, and in the presence of either the Director or the employee's supervisor, the employee may review his or her personnel file. It is up to the employee to be sure that personal information is current with the Administrative Office.

Full-time employees are those employed for a minimum of 40 hours per week.

Part-time employees are those employed 29 hours or less per week.

New employees will be evaluated at 3 month, 6 month, and 12 month intervals. All employees will be evaluated annually by March 31st. A copy of the evaluation will be maintained in the Administrative Office.

If an employee refuses to sign their evaluation, they must attach a signed statement as to why they refused to sign it. The evaluation will be documented that the employee refused to sign but will remain valid.

All employees will be given a copy of their evaluation.

### ***Promotion, Transfer & Demotion***

#### 1. Promotions:

A promotion is advancement of any eligible staff member to a higher position where the maximum salary is greater. Promotions are based on qualifications and on how well present duties are performed. It is library policy to fill vacancies when possible by promotion from within the library staff. However, it is sometimes necessary to advertise positions and employ persons from outside. The employee's work record and dependability are very important and will be strongly considered. He/she must be interviewed and selected by the director. Any employee who is promoted is required to complete a six-month working-test period in the new position during which he/she retains permanent status in the lower position.

#### 2. Transfers:

Consideration will be given to those individuals who wish to make a transfer within the Library system. Please be aware, however, that the transfer will be made at the discretion and in the best interest of the Library and its employee staffing. Employees may request a transfer if they have been in their present position for one (1) year and once they have notified their current supervisor. A department head may fill a vacancy through the acceptance of a transfer by a permanent employee from another position in the same class, or from a different class of the same pay grade. If the transfer is to a position of a lower classification, the employee must agree to a lower salary. Employees may not take their current salary with them. The library director has full authority to make transfers of personnel within the library where needs of the system are paramount.

#### 3. Demotion:

Occasionally, it may be necessary to make changes in an employee's position as a result of less demanding job duties or responsibilities due to individual circumstance; for example, when a recently promoted employee cannot adequately perform new job duties after a sufficient trial period has elapsed. In these instances, wages, and benefits may be adjusted to reflect the position change.

### **Nepotism**

No employees may serve in a supervisory position over a relative. No employee may work in the same department if they are related by blood or marriage.

A relative is defined as a spouse, child, parent, sister, brother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, or any other person who is acting in one of the above capacities.

No relative of a person working in the Administrative Office may be employed at any of the libraries in the system.

### **Procedure for Redress of Grievance**

Employees past the 6 month trial basis, have the right to participate in or access the Library's grievance procedure for due process when they feel a written policy or rule has been misapplied. Appeals for adverse termination or disciplinary action will go directly to the Personnel Committee of the Sara Hightower Regional Library Board. This grievance procedure may not be used in connection with lay-offs.

If an employee believes they have not been treated fairly, their first course of action is to:

1. Discuss the problem with their department head.
  - a. If the employee remains dissatisfied they must submit the complaint to the department head in writing within five (5) workdays.
  - b. The department head must respond in writing within five (5) work days after receipt of the written complaint.
2. If a satisfactory agreement has not been reached following the above procedures, the employee shall submit a written request to meet with the Director within five (5) working days after receipt of response from their department head.
3. The department head must request, in writing, a meeting with the Director.
4. The Director will respond to the employee's request in writing, within five working days and will schedule a meeting with the persons involved to review the facts, documents, and information within the following five (5) working days. The Director shall issue a written decision within five (5) working days of any scheduled conference or meeting with the persons involved.
5. If a satisfactory resolution has not been reached following the above procedures then:
6. The employee shall request, in writing, that within five working days that the Director will schedule a meeting with the Personnel Committee of the Board of Trustees.
7. The Personnel Committee shall hear the grievance including witnesses, within thirty (30) business days after the request is received in writing. The Personnel Committee shall make the final decision within 10 days and shall order all appropriate corrective measures, if any.

### **Inclement Weather Days**

In the case of inclement weather, the library Director or designee will make the decision by 7:30 A.M. whether the library will open or close. The announcement will be made on local media outlets and social media accounts and the library's webpage. Cedartown, Rockmart and Cave Spring Library Branch Managers are responsible for local decisions.

**\*All Department and Weekend Coordinators should have a copy of the employee roster at their home for this type emergency.**

If the Rome-Floyd County Library is closed because of hazardous weather at the start of the day, all scheduled full-time employees will be paid. If the Rome-Floyd County Library is open for half a day, all those able to travel to work will be given a half day of compensatory time.

**Saturday coordinators should call the director for closing information in the case of inclement weather.**

Employees who are unable to travel to work because of weather when the library is **open** must use a personal or vacation day.

### **Staff Development**

Development of staff is an integral part of the library's programs and is one of the most important functions of all department heads. Training includes:

- Orientation
- Training to increase efficiency
- Training for promotion

**Memberships** in professional library organizations and attendance of their regular meetings and workshops are encouraged. Personnel will attend workshops at the discretion of the Director. Board members are encouraged to attend such meetings.

### **Travel**

ALL travel must be approved in advance or the person traveling shall not be reimbursed by the library.

Mileage for the normal commute between home and the staff member's assigned work location(s) do not qualify for reimbursement.

Travel Forms-must be completed and turned in during the month the trip was taken and must include signature, date.

Receipts- you must provide these to be reimbursed for lodging, gasoline purchases, registration forms, luncheons and meetings. Prepaid amounts-these need to be marked as such on the form and an explanation given.

Prepaid is using the library charge card or paid in advance by the financial officer.

Transportation- always use the library vehicles when available. If they are not available you must have your mileage approved by the administration office to be reimbursed for your mileage.

Mileage, food and room allowances are set at the current approved rate set forth by the State of Georgia. Please see a copy in Administration.

If you are staying overnight the accommodation bill is paid with the library credit card. If you are sharing a room, the total bill should be split equally and a copy of the original bill needs to go with each employee's travel form. A tax-exempt form must be turned in at the accommodation at the time of check-in. Make sure the State of Georgia local hotel/motel excise tax is taken off of the bill before paying.

## **Working Conditions**

The Library workweek is Monday through Saturday.

An employee's weekly schedule depends on the needs of each department and the Department Head and must have the approval of the Director.

Lunch breaks are for one (1) hour for full time employees. This hour is paid and included in the (40) forty-hour workweek.

All employees are entitled to one (1) fifteen (15) minute break period for every four (4) hour work period.

An employee cannot use break time to extend a lunch hour or use lunchtime and/or break time to change the beginning or ending of a workday.

If an employee is asked to work overtime, compensatory time off will be given for time earned. Compensatory time must be taken within the current pay period, and should be scheduled with their supervisor's approval. If it is not feasible to take compensatory time earned during the current pay period, scheduled time off must be approved by the department supervisor and Director prior to when leave is taken. Employees cannot decide to work outside of their scheduled time at their own discretion in order to take compensatory time later. In computing compensatory time the Library's official workweek will be Monday through Saturday.

All employees are expected to work the schedule established by each department based on the libraries' needs. Modification to an employees' schedule must be approved by their supervisor.

## **Worker's Compensation**

Any employee who is injured on the job must report that injury immediately or within twenty-four (24) hours of the injury if no one is immediately available for receiving such a report.

A first report of the injury must be filed by the Administrative Office with the company providing Worker's Compensation Insurance coverage to the library, with the employee providing the necessary information for this report.

A worker injured on the job must visit a doctor from the "Panel of Physicians" posted in the employee break room and the Administrative Office. These doctors have agreed to provide services to our employees injured on the job in compliance with the Georgia Workers Compensation Law.

**Other**

All notices, which affect employees in any way, will be posted on bulletin boards, including information on safety, library matters and policy changes. No one may post information on the bulletin board without first obtaining approval from the Administrative Office.

Key cards are given out to active employees and volunteers only.

Any accident involving a Library vehicle will require a drug test.

**APPENDIX A Acknowledgement of Receipt**

**APPENDIX B Sample Evaluation Form**

**APPENDIX C Sample Resignation Form**

**APPENDIX D Personal Use of Electronic Devices**

**APPENDIX A**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT**

I have received the Personnel Policy Manual (Employee Handbook) of the Sara Hightower Regional Library and recognize that it is my responsibility to read the policies, practices, and rules contained therein. I agree to comply with all terms of the Policy Manual during my employment with the Sara Hightower Regional Library. I agree and acknowledge that this Personnel Policy manual is not a contract of employment.

I acknowledge and agree that Sara Hightower Regional Library reserves the right to change or modify any portion of these personnel policies at any time. I agree and acknowledge that I will abide by such policies and any changes and modifications as and when made.

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand the Personnel Policy attached.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sara Hightower Regional Library

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

This form must be signed by the employee and the Director or the employee's supervisor. The original is to be filed in the employee's personnel file and a copy retained by the employee.

**APPENDIX B**  
**Employee Performance Evaluation**  
**Sara Hightower Regional Library**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Soc. Sec. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Department \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_ Date entered position \_\_\_\_\_

=====

**Performance Levels for evaluation purposes:**  
**5 Superior 4 Exceeds Requirements 3 Meets requirements 2 Needs Improvement 1 Unacceptable**

**Performance Evaluated                      Rating    5   4   3   2   1    Comments**

=====

**Job knowledge/Skills:**

To what extent does the employee maintain a satisfactory level of job knowledge and skill?

=====

**Quality of work:**

To what extent does the employee's work meet the required standards; i.e. accuracy, neatness and thoroughness?

=====

**Productivity:**

To what extent does the employee accomplish the quantity of work expected of the position?

=====

**Record keeping/Documentation:**

To what extent does the employee prepare and maintain records, written reports, etc.?

=====

**Dependability:**

To what extent does the employee perform work without close supervision or assistance?

=====

**Adaptability:**

To what extent does the employee adapt to new situations and changes in routines, work load and/or work assignments?

=====

**Initiative:**

To what extent does the employee present ideas, improve procedures, or demonstrate awareness of the need for changes?



**APPENDIX C Sample Resignation Form**

To whom it may concern,

I am submitting my resignation from the \_\_\_\_\_ department or branch of the Sara Hightower Regional Library.

It will be effective \_\_\_\_\_.

My reason for resigning is \_\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

## Sara Hightower Regional Library

### ***POLICY: Personal Use of Electronic Communications***

Telephone access, Internet access, e-mail, and other electronic tools such as Instant Messaging, are provided by the Sara Hightower Regional Library system staff members for work-related purposes.

The Library is responsible for e-mail transmitted under its name, as well as for electronic access and communications conducted by staff members. The Library is the owner of all such communications and reserves the right to access, monitor and disclose all messages and files received by, transmitted by, accessed via or stored on its communications systems.

#### **RULES:**

Library email should be used only for work-related purposes. All Library email should be professional and courteous. E-mail requires extensive network capacity. Sending unnecessary e-mail, or not exercising constraint when sending very large files, or sending to a large number of recipients consumes network resources that are needed for critical library business.

During scheduled work hours, with the exception of approved breaks and lunches, computer resources should be used only for work-related purposes. This includes Internet access, Instant Messaging and any other electronic communications tools.

Library servers should not be used to store personal data or files.

During scheduled work hours, with the exception of approved breaks and lunches, personal telephone calls and personal use of cell phones must **be brief and limited to staff areas only (it is understood that many staff no longer subscribe to a land line at home and have chosen family cell phone plans)**. Emergency long distance calls made for personal purposes must be reimbursed to the Library.

Outside of scheduled work hours, staff may use the Library's computing, printing and photocopying resources, at the same cost charged to patrons:

- a. Payment for copies and prints may be made at the Public Services Desk or in the office.
- b. The Business Office copier is not to be used for personal copying.

While using electronic communications equipment and tools provided by the Library for staff use, staff is forbidden to:

- Permanently install software without approval.
- Violate the Library's guidelines for Acceptable and Unacceptable Use of Library Computers found in Internet Policy Statement of the Library's Materials Selection Policy.
- Violate the Acceptable Use Policy of the Library's Internet Service Provider.
- Access, send or solicit sexually graphic messages or images.
- Send or respond to discriminatory or harassing messages disparaging others based on their race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, or political beliefs.
- Disseminate or print copyrighted materials in violation of copyright laws.
- Carry on a private business or solicit money for personal gain.
- Gamble or engage in any online activity that violates state or federal laws.
- Transmit chain letters.

GEORGIA CONFIDENTIALITY LAW: The Georgia Confidentiality Law (O. C. G. A. 24.9.46) prohibits the disclosure of any patron information, including titles checked out, amount of fines/fees owed, and phone numbers/addresses. All PINES library staff recognizes the strict confidentiality of library records, and shall not disclose any information regarding library patrons unless legally compelled. If proper legal documents are presented, a Library Director or designee must approve the decision to release confidential records.

*Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia*

*Issue Date: October 29, 1999*

*Revised: December 2008*

#### INADVERTENT OR UNAVOIDABLE VIOLATIONS

Staff should self-report inadvertent or unavoidable violations of this policy to their supervisors, to avoid possible disciplinary action.

#### FILTERED AND UNFILTERED USE OF STAFF COMPUTERS

The Library uses an electronic Technology Protection Measure (Internet filter) on all Sara Hightower Regional Library system computers to comply with the requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act. Staff may disable the Internet filter on staff computers as required in the performance of work-related research that does not violate this policy.

---Adopted by the Sara Hightower Regional Library Board of Trustees on May 28, 2009

#### **Sara Hightower Regional Library EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

POLICY: Personal Use of Electronic Communications

I have received a copy of the Sara Hightower Regional Library's ***Policy on Personal Use of Electronic Communications***, adopted by the SHRL Board of Trustees on May 28, 2009.

I understand the terms of the policy and agree to abide by them. I realize this policy applies to me, and I understand that violation of this policy may subject me to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

I understand that all communications conducted with Library equipment and all data stored on or transmitted by Library servers are the property of the Library and are subject to monitoring and disclosure by the Library.

**I understand that failure to comply with any parts of this policy will lead to a warning. Any subsequent failure will lead to termination.**

I understand this policy can be amended by the Sara Hightower Regional Library Board of Trustees at any time.

Staff Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_