

**OAK LAWN PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD POLICY
MEDIA CONTACT GUIDELINES**

The Director and Marketing Manager are responsible for managing all media contacts in order to present a consistent message in the best interest of the Library. This policy also assures that the most up-to-date information is provided and that media exposure is tracked.

LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Individual Trustees should not initiate contact with the media, social networking venues and online community bulletin boards on matters related to the Library without prior consultation with and approval by the full Board and in cooperation with the Director and/or Marketing Manager. Contacts initiated by the media seeking comment on issues upon which there is a definite Board consensus or about which facts are clearly understood and available can be answered directly by Trustees. However, in cases where facts may be unclear or where controversy among Trustees may exist, Trustee contact with the media should be coordinated through the Director and/or Marketing Manager.

Library Trustees seeking re-election may share personal views with the media concerning their service to the Library and issues they hope to address if their seat is retained on the Board.

When speaking to the media about matters related to the Library, Trustees should be careful to define when their remarks represent personal opinion and when their remarks represent official Board positions.

LIBRARY STAFF

In compliance with First Amendment principles, the Library directs staff to comply with the following Media Contact Guidelines:

Staff should not initiate contact with the media on matters related to the Library without prior authorization and approval of the Director and/or Marketing Manager. All contacts by the media should be referred to the Director and/or Marketing Manager.

If a staff member fails to comply with this policy, the Director and Marketing Manager will determine whether the staff member, in commenting to the media, was acting as a private citizen and whether the employee's speech involved a matter of "public concern." In so doing, the Director and Marketing Manager will weigh the particular facts, including whether the employee's comment impairs harmony among coworkers, whether the speech has a detrimental impact on working relationships for which personal loyalty and confidence are necessary, and whether the speech in question interferes with the normal operations of the Library.

In addition to formal news media, various social networking venues and online community bulletin boards constitute a broadcast opportunity that the Library considers subject to these guidelines. Staff may not make personal attacks or derogatory statements concerning co-workers, patrons, or Trustees on social networks. When appropriate, disciplinary action with respect to employee media contacts that are not a matter of “public concern” or that the First Amendment does not otherwise protect may be taken.

The First Amendment’s freedom of expression clause protects employee comments on issues and matters involving the Library that can be fairly characterized as relating to the political, social or other concerns of the community. Therefore, the Library will not take action against an employee whose comments to the media involve a matter of “public concern.”

In general, matters regarding political elections, pending legislation, corruption, discrimination, health, and safety are of “public concern,” while matters of the Library’s internal employment policy that do not touch on “public concern” are not normally subject to First Amendment protection.

Adopted: 04/20/04

Revised: 03/19/13, 03/17/15, 03/21/17, 03/21/23