

## **CRISIS COMMUNICATION POLICY**

### **I. Purpose.**

The Dorr Township Library (the “Library”) serves the entire community faithfully. Occasionally, for that reason, the Library may be the subject of potentially service-disrupting public and media attention. The Crisis Communication Policy (the “Policy”) below has been instituted for the purpose of preserving the Library’s ability to serve the community effectively should a public relations crisis occur following a challenge to Library materials, programming, marketing, services, or words or actions incidental to Library materials, programming, marketing, or services.

### **II. Categories of Crisis Level.**

- A. Single Complaint, No Follow-Through. Single patron (or single family) registers complaint unofficially about one or more items but declines to fill out a Reconsideration Form.
- B. Single Complaint, No Follow-Through. Single patron (or single family) registers complaint about one or more items and fills out a Reconsideration Form.
- C. Single Agitated Complaint. Single patron (or single family) registers complaint and is visibly upset or reports emotional distress, with or without a Reconsideration Form.
- D. Single Problem Complaint. Single patron (or single family) registers complaint and violates the Patron Behavior Policy by, for example, threatening or directing profanity toward staff.
- E. Group, Organization, or Public Complaint. One or more patrons, possibly with others from outside the Community, claim to register the complaint on behalf of a group or organization, *or* a complaint is made directly to the public through the media or some other means in an attempt to pressure the Library into a certain action.

### **III. Criteria for Determining Level of Crisis.**

- A. Number Making a Complaint. One patron or members of a single patron family registering the complaint on their own behalf tends to create less of a Crisis than more than one joining together, at which point Community Concern might be an issue (see below).
- B. Willingness to Follow Protocol. If the patron is willing to comply with the Library’s Reconsideration of Materials Policy and fill out the Request for Reconsideration Form, it is probably a Level B Crisis. If they are not willing but let the matter drop, it is probably a Level A. If they are visibly or reportedly

agitated by the necessity of filling out the Reconsideration Form, it is likely higher.

- C. Demeanor and Emotional State. The more agitated and upset the patron appears to be or reports being, the higher the Crisis Level.
- D. Compliance with Patron Behavior Policy. Patrons unable to control their language and/or actions and be civil with staff might indicate a higher Crisis Level.
- E. Representation. One or more patrons acting on behalf of or as part of an organization may tend to lead to more media attention, which increases the Crisis Level.
- F. Presence of Supporting Materials. Flyers, lists, and other documents, especially those making accusations of criminal or immoral behavior, may indicate the influence of outside organizations.
- G. Public Statements. Higher-Level Crises may involve organizations and community members associated with them making public statements about the Library in the media. This would tend to drive up the Crisis Level.
- H. Community Concern. Ultimately, the more the Community discusses the issue, the greater the impact it has on the Library. The greater the Community's concern, the greater the Library's concern should be.

#### IV. Schedule of Crisis Interventions.

The following actions are meant to be cumulative, meaning that actions taken at Crisis Level E should be inclusive of all scheduled actions A through E. Use as appropriate (*e.g.*, obviously, if a Form is not submitted, do not place said Form on the Director's desk. If a patron is upset, whether or not a Reconsideration Form is submitted, offer to have the Director call and discuss the issue. If an agitated patron is requested to leave the building and *does* leave, do not call the police.

Cat.	Pri.	Action to take	Staff Responsible
A	1	Offer Collection Development Policy and Reconsideration Request form	Available Staff
A	2	Notify Director immediately via phone call or text	Available Staff
A	3	Record all the relevant facts you can recall in Incident Report	Affected Staff
B	1	Place completed Reconsideration Request on Director's desk	Available Staff
B	2	Put Issue on the next Board Agenda	Director

B	3	Research reasons for acquisition	Director
B	4	Examine and evaluate material	Director
B	5	Issue response to Reconsideration Request within 75 days	Director
C	1	Call Patron to discuss	Director
C	2	Hold emergency staff meeting within 5 days	All Staff
D	1	Ask patron to stop offending or threatening behavior	Affected Staff
D	2	Ask patron to leave	Available Staff
D	3	Call police and request assistance with belligerent patron	Available Staff
D	4	Review generic message about materials challenges	All Staff
D	5	Go through questions on MLA Crisis Communications document during emergency staff meeting	All Staff
E	1	Issue posts on social media using agreed upon messaging (Initial response within 8 hours, updated responses immediately upon relevant events)	Lexi, Director, or Asst. Director
E	2	Call a special Library Board meeting to discuss response	Director
E	3	Hold emergency staff meeting within 12 hours (in person or virtual with whomever can attend)	All Staff
E	4	Issue press release within 24 hours	Director
E	5	Address the issue at the next Township Board meeting	Director

Approved by the Dorr Township Library Board of Trustees September 19, 2022.