

Acushnet Public Library
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Tutors

Purpose

In its role as an educational center, the Acushnet Public Library welcomes use by tutors.

Policy

1. Tutors may use the study rooms if they or their students have an Acushnet Public Library card or a card registered in the SAILS network.
2. Tutors must abide by the Study Room Policy (adopted by the Library Board of Trustees, 6/9/15) when using these rooms.
3. The Library does not sponsor, recommend or assume liability or responsibility for the work and/or activities of tutors who use the Library.
4. All arrangements must be made between the tutor, student and/or parents.
 - a) No messages may be conveyed through Library staff.
 - b) Library telephone may not be used to make or cancel appointments.

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees, 6/9/15

From the Massachusetts Library System website in regards to a tutoring policy inquiry that went out to libraries:

Summary of Tutoring Policies Inquiry

(compiled by Ann Wirtanen, Director Winchester Public Library)

Overwhelmingly, libraries acknowledged their role as an “educational center” and see tutoring relating to their mission as a partner in life-long learning. Judging from the large number of libraries with carefully scripted policies concerning tutoring, it is clear that tutoring at a public library is an issue with advocates on both sides.

The Basic Problem

Libraries typically allow use of meeting space by non-profit organizations. Clearly tutors are getting paid for their service. This is the common complaint. However, we have successfully attracted the home-based business owner into our facilities. We provide WiFi, internet access, quiet work areas, wireless printing, scanning and sometimes faxing. Business owners are clearly making money at what they do. We also don't police internet users who may be selling an item on eBay. Many libraries acknowledged this quandary and choose to allow tutoring even though a payment is clearly being rendered for a service.

It is also difficult to identify tutors from simply kind and generous interested parents helping students free of charge. Most ESL and basic literacy tutors are volunteers and are not paid. Students on probation often receive school-funded tutoring but cannot meet at the school.

Common Policies:

- Tutors are responsible for the behavior of the student being tutored.
- Tutors and students must bring their own supplies.
- No messages may be conveyed through library staff.
- Library telephone may not be used to make or cancel appointments. Library staff will not relay messages to tutors or students.
- Parent/tutor conferences should not take place in a public area.
- Food is not permitted.
- Drinks must be in covered containers.

Fees

Libraries charging tutors for use of meeting space are very few. One library charges \$5 per session. Another charges \$75 for 3 hours of use of the meeting room and imposes this fee on tutors as well.

Space

This is the largest variable in the discussion. Some libraries have private study rooms and some have large meeting rooms equipped with numerous tables. Depending on available space, some libraries restrict tutors to certain areas. Some limit the time tutors can use a certain space. Some allow reservations for private study rooms one month in advance, yet others limit reservations to one day in advance – depending on whether they want to encourage use by tutors or discourage use by tutors.

Recommendations

- Policies need to be enforceable. **Limiting the number of hours tutors may use the facility per week is not easily and readily enforceable.**
- Re-think your space. A storytime room can be equipped with portable, lightweight tables and chairs that may provide an alternate tutoring area.
- Meeting rooms with tables and chairs should be available to tutors as a Homework Center. The area needs to be clearly marked so troublesome students can be prohibited from the area.
- Review policies for quiet study rooms. Reservations accepted one-month in advance encourage tutors to use the space. This may be desirable. If not, limit reservations to the day or only one day prior.
- Do not have signs on tables indicating “Tutor Free Area”. There would be nothing preventing students from noisily working on a project together. If the purpose is to keep the area quiet then designate the area “Quiet Zone” or “Quiet Study Only”.