



The Seattle Public Library

Received By
Councilmember Lisa Herbold

July 12, 2018

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Honorable Councilmember Lisa Herbold
Seattle City Council
PO Box 34025
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

Seattle City Council

Dear Councilmember Herbold,

I wanted to inform you that on June 27, The Seattle Public Library board of trustees unanimously approved a new policy called Library Restrooms. The policy changes the multiuser family/ADA restrooms designated for children's area patrons to single-occupant restrooms accessible to all patrons. The new policy also required a change to the Public Use of Children's Areas Policy to allow anyone into the children's areas if they need to use the restroom.

While Library patrons have been welcome to use the restroom based on the gender they identify with, we heard heartfelt and courageous comments from patrons who do not feel safe or comfortable doing so. It is why we recently installed a new single occupant restroom on Level 3 of the Central Library. And while Library restrooms were already compliant with local and state requirements, we developed the new Restroom Policy to ensure a safer restroom environment for transgender and gender-nonconforming patrons, as well as to improve restroom access for all patrons.

The new Restroom Policy was prompted in part by an incident last year involving an adult Library patron who was denied use of the Central Library's multiuser family/ADA restroom in the Children's Area. The patron, who said he was transgender, was directed to other restrooms in the building because he was not with a child or ADA assistant. Under the Library's previous Public Use of Children's Areas Policy, the family/ADA restroom was for use by children with caregivers, breastfeeding mothers and ADA patrons who required assistance.

At the time, the Library was in the process of adding a single-occupant public restroom at the Central Library, but it was not yet available. We have since completed construction and opened a single-occupant public restroom on the third floor of the Central Library.

The incident, however, brought attention to the issue of restroom safety for transgender and gender-nonconforming patrons. Representatives from the Library's Race and Social Justice Team recommended the Library develop a Restroom Policy to ensure all patrons have safe and convenient access to the public restroom of their choosing in all our libraries.

The new policy also reflects our renewed commitment to our ideals as a welcoming, inclusive, safe place for everyone, regardless of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identities or expressions, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, marital status or veteran status.

Thank you for your interest and support on this issue. Feel free to contact me if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Marcellus Turner
Executive Director and Chief Librarian

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*Thank you
for your
assistance on
Herbold's*