

## Patron Behavior Policy

The library is intended to be a place where its users can study, do research, browse books, and use computers in a welcoming, respectful, and non-threatening environment.

All patrons are expected to display appropriate behavior when using any branch of the Pittsylvania County Public Library System. Patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of a public library while in the building. Patrons shall respect the rights of other patrons and shall not harass or annoy others through noisy or boisterous activities, by staring at another person with the intent to annoy that person, by following another person about the building with the intent to annoy that person, by playing audio equipment so that others can hear it, by singing or talking to others or in monologues, or by behaving in a manner which reasonably can be expected to disturb other persons or interfere with their right to use the library.

Inappropriate behavior can be defined as any behavior that is disruptive to library use. Patrons who, by their behavior, persist in harassing or annoying others and thereby disrupt their ability to concentrate on their work typically will be given one warning regarding the specific behavior, though staff may ask a patron who has engaged in any inappropriate behavior immediately to leave the building and grounds, depending on staff's judgment of the incident's severity. If a warning has been given, and there is a second occurrence, the offender will be required to leave the library for the remainder of the day. Upon a third occurrence the offender will be banned. The banning process is as follows:

- The Director shall issue a written ban letter to the individual. The letter shall indicate the reason for the ban and the time period of the ban. Letters will be copied to all branch managers and the police or sheriff's department. A written incident report will be kept on file.
- Any person who enters any of the PCPL system libraries while banned shall be reported to the police/sheriff and will be subject to arrest and prosecution for trespassing.
- A banned patron may appeal the decision of the Director by written request to the Pittsylvania County Public Library System Board of Trustees. The Library Board shall consider the appeal at the next scheduled meeting of the full board. At that meeting, the library staff involved, the Director, and the banned patron shall have an opportunity to provide relevant information for the Board of Trustees to consider. During the appeal period, the individual may not use any of the PCPL libraries.
- If the patron banned is under the age of eighteen, correspondence will be sent to the parent or legal guardian.
- The Board of Trustees shall mail a letter indicating their determination with regard to the banning to the Director and to the banned person.

Threats of any kind, including of violence, whether imminent or in the future, to library staff and/or patrons, are strictly prohibited. Behavior or acts which appear to be a danger to others are all strictly prohibited. These include assault, fighting, and other acts of violence, or the threat or

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attempt to commit such acts of violence. There shall be zero tolerance for any threats, confrontational behavior, or violent actions of any kind toward library staff or patrons and such actions shall be reported to the police or sheriff and will result in immediate banning.

Instances of irresponsible use of the library and grounds include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Any illegal activity including stealing, damaging, or altering any Library property.
- Acts of sexual misconduct or stalking; for example, indecent exposure; offensive touching; sexual harassment; obscene, abusive, or sexual language; stalking or staring; any conduct that alarms, annoys, or harasses another patron or staff.
- Disruptive, drunken, or threatening behavior that may jeopardize the personal safety of patrons, staff, or facilities.
- Consumption of alcohol, intoxicants, or tobacco, including e-cigarettes. Tobacco may be used outside the library buildings in designated smoking areas only.
- Unacceptable personal hygiene or offensive body odor. Patrons whose bodily hygiene is offensive so as to constitute a nuisance to other persons shall be required to leave the building.
- Conducting a for-profit business in the library.
- Bringing animals into the building except properly identified service animals or animals used in library programs approved in advance by the Director or the Branch Manager. In addition, animals may not be left unattended or tethered to library property for more than ten minutes and only in areas that do not obstruct public walkways and entrances.
- Soliciting money, donations, signatures, or other activities that request assistance from the public.
- Using library facilities for bathing, laundry, or personal grooming.
- Using skateboards, scooters, roller skates, or similar equipment on library property. Public entrances must not be blocked; bicycles must be parked in racks or away from the building.
- Habitually sleeping or sprawling on furniture or the floor in a manner that is disturbing to others. Library users who simply doze off for a short time will ordinarily be left alone.
- Possessing a weapon, except as permitted by law, or exhibiting any item in a threatening manner.
- Entering before or after open hours; using the library when banned.
- Entering staff areas without permission.
- Photographing other users of the library without their permission and the permission of the library staff.
- Gambling and group activities which are disruptive to the library environment.

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- Having open containers of food or beverages within the library without prior permission from the Director or Branch Manager. Consumption of food or beverages is permitted only in areas and at times designated by those authorities.
- Using audio devices without consideration for others. Cell phones should be turned off or put on “vibrate” mode, while in the library. Phone conversations must be conducted outside the library.

### **We expect our patrons to**

- Check out all library materials before removing them from the building.
- Use library parking areas, sidewalks, and lawns properly and safely. Vehicles parked improperly are subject to being towed at owner’s expense.
- Promptly leave the building at closing time or during an emergency.
- Attend to personal belongings. The library is not responsible for personal belongings left in or on library property.
- Adhere to all established library policies with specific attention to the Safe Child Policy and the Acceptable Internet Use Policy.
- Be properly attired; this includes shirts and shoes.

*Approved February 10, 2014*