

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. Patrons are expected to respect the rights of others who require a quiet environment in which to study, compute, research and write.

Problem behavior can be defined as any behavior that is disruptive to library use. Users who, by their behavior, persist in harassing or annoying others and thereby disrupt their ability to concentrate on their work will be given one warning regarding the specific behavior. Upon 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 lose library privileges and must successfully petition the Director to regain access. Petition is to be by letter to the Director of the Pittsylvania County Public Library system.

Threats of violence, whether imminent or in the future, to library staff and/or patrons, are strictly prohibited. Threats of any kind, 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 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.

GENERAL BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

- Patrons may not engage in any activity in violation of federal, state, local, or other applicable law or library policy.
- Acts of sexual misconduct or stalking are not tolerated; this includes indecent exposure; offensive touching; sexual harassment; displaying pornography; stalking or staring; and any conduct that alarms, annoys, or harasses another patron or staff member.
- Patrons may not demonstrate disruptive, drunken, or threatening behavior that may jeopardize the personal safety of patrons, staff, or facilities.
- Shirts and shoes must be worn in the library. Offensive body odor or personal hygiene, as well as being attired so as to be disruptive to the library environment will not be tolerated.
- Possession of a weapon, except as permitted by law, or exhibiting any item in a threatening manner is not permitted.
- Animals, other than service animals, are not permitted in library buildings except for programs approved by the Director or 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.
- Audio devices must be used with 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.
- Physical displays of affection are inappropriate behavior for the library.
- The abuse of library equipment violates the law and will not be tolerated.
- Those who steal, damage or deface library materials or property will be prosecuted. Parents can be liable for damage done by a child under the age of eighteen.
- Creating a disturbance by making noise, talking loudly, or engaging in other disruptive conduct is not allowed.

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- Food is not allowed in the library, except at designated times or in designated rooms.
- Interfering with another person's right to use the library or with the library staff's performance of their duties is not allowed.
- In order to maintain clean and attractive library facilities and furniture, it is forbidden to sit on tables, place feet on furniture, lie on floors, or to deface walls. Only one person may sit in each chair.
- Patrons may not conduct a for-profit business in the library.
- Loitering on library property is not allowed. In general, a person will be termed "loitering" when they prevent others from enjoying the library.
- Personal possessions should not be left at public service points for safekeeping. The library is unable to guarantee the security of such items. Patrons should not leave personal items unattended.
- Misusing the rest rooms is not allowed. This includes using the rest rooms for bathing, shampooing, doing laundry, or changing clothes.
- Running is not allowed in the library building.
- Patrons may not bring skateboards, scooters, roller skates, or similar equipment into the library, nor may they be used on library property. Public entrances must not be blocked; bicycles must be parked away from the building.
- Habitual sleepers, noisy sleepers and those who are sprawled on furniture or the floor in a manner that is disturbing to other persons will not be tolerated. Library users who simply doze off for a short time will ordinarily be left alone.
- Parents are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their children. Children under the age of eight should not be left unattended in any part of the building. (See safe child policy).
- Soliciting patrons and staff for donations or for the purpose of obtaining signatures on petitions, or conducting surveys not authorized by the library is not allowed on library property.
- Patrons are not allowed to enter areas posted "Staff Only" without permission.
- Threatening behavior, including, but not limited to, violence, threats of violence, and possession of weapons is not allowed
- Verbally or physically threatening or harassing other patrons, volunteers, or staff, including stalking, staring, lurking, offensive touching, and obscene acts such as sex acts and indecent exposure is not allowed.
- Smoking and the use of tobacco products is prohibited in the library. This includes the use of e-cigarettes. Controlled substances and alcohol may not be used or consumed in the library or on library property.
- All bags and other articles are subject to inspection by library personnel. The library reserves the right to limit the size and number of items brought into the library.
- Patron library privileges may be limited at the discretion of the library director.

Approved June, 2010; approved with amendment January 2014.

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