

Portage Public Library PUBLIC BEHAVIOR POLICY

- I Introduction
- II Specific Guidelines
- III General Guidelines for Handling Problem Patrons
- IV Unattended or Disruptive Children
- V Consequences of Policy Violation
- IV Appeal Process

I Introduction

- (A) Acceptable conduct includes respect and consideration of other patrons, staff and library property.
- (B) The term premises includes inside and outside areas of the public library property, including restrooms and meeting rooms.
- (C) Inappropriate behavior includes any activity that disturbs others, interferes with library operations, damages the building or its furnishings, or is considered rude, profane or pornographic. Committing or attempting to commit any activity that would constitute a violation of any federal, state or local criminal law or ordinance is prohibited.
- (D) This policy has been established for all patrons. If a patron is not responsive to the needs of other library users or disregards the policies protecting patrons, staff, and library property, the patron will be asked to leave the library.

II Specific Guidelines

- (A) The rights of individuals to use the library should not be abridged or denied. To guarantee these rights for all persons, no library patron shall engage in the following prohibited behaviors:
 1. Eating or drinking at computer workstations.
 2. The library is a tobacco-free zone. Smoking, e-cigarette use, vaping and chewing tobacco is prohibited throughout the facility and near its entryway.
 3. Willfully annoying another person or engaging in loud or boisterous behavior.
 4. Damaging or defacing public property. Patrons are expected to clean up after themselves.
 5. Leaving any of your property or possessions unattended.
 6. Uttering profane, obscene, or offensive language directed at another person.
 7. Being in a state of intoxication that causes a public disturbance. The library is a substance-free place. You cannot possess or be under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol.
 8. Entering or remaining in the library without a shirt or shoes.

- 9. Loitering on the premises under circumstances that warrant alarm for the safety or health of any person or property in the vicinity.
- 10. Remaining in the building after its regular closing hours.
- 11. Interfering with other library patrons' use of the facilities through extremely poor personal hygiene.
- (B) Bringing firearms as stipulated in Section 941.235 of the Wisconsin State Statutes, or other weapons or facsimiles thereof, on to the library Premises, except as allowed at a library-approved event, is prohibited.
- (C) No animals are allowed in the library unless they are service animals or part of a library program.
- (D) Only persons on library business will be allowed to solicit for the sale of goods and services in the library. Salespersons may meet with authorized library personnel only. Exceptions may be made for library-sponsored activities and organizations affiliated with the library.
- (E) Surveying of groups or individuals may only be done in conjunction with output measures or other similar surveys designed to quantify library use or satisfaction with library services, unless approved by the Library Director.
- (F) Canvassing—for example, soliciting signatures for a petition, nomination papers, and the like -- is not allowed on library property.
- (G) It is a charge of the library staff to see that the rights of individuals to use of the library are upheld. The staff is obligated to enforce these guidelines so that the facility can be used to the fullest by all persons. Questions regarding the interpretation of these guidelines will be referred to the Library Director or other staff member in charge.

III **General Guidelines for Handling Problem Patrons**

- (A) It is the patron's responsibility to maintain necessary and proper behavior standards in order to protect his/her individual rights and the rights and privileges of other patrons.
- (B) Occasionally, staff members may have to deal with patrons who violate the rights of others or who create a disturbance in the library. If a patron creates a public nuisance, that patron may be restricted from the library and from the use of library services. Library staff are authorized to contact the Portage Police Department if any patron refuses to leave, after being instructed to do so.
- (C) A brief written report of any incident involving theft, vandalism, illegal activity, or major disruptive behavior will be filed with the Director as soon as possible after its occurrence. (A sample copy of the "Incident Report" follows.)
- (D) The Library Director, acting on behalf of the Board of Trustees, may suspend the library privileges of any individual who willfully violates library regulations.
- (E) The person whose library privileges are suspended shall be advised in writing of the suspension and the reason(s) for such action. The offending person shall also be informed that the suspension may be appealed at the next regularly scheduled Library Board meeting.

IV **Unattended or Disruptive Children**

- (A) "Unattended" means that the parent or designated person is not in close proximity to the child. Library staff cannot be expected to assume responsibility for the care of unsupervised children in the library. Parents and/or legal guardians are responsible for their children's behavior while in the library.
- (B) Therefore, it is the policy of the Library that all children eight (8) years of age and under must be in the company of a parent/responsible person while in the library. Even if the young person is attending a program, it is required that the parent/responsible person remain in the library throughout the program.
- (C) Examples of disruptive behavior include running in the book stack aisles, unsupervised use of library equipment, pulling books from the shelves, encroachment into staff areas, etc.—any behavior that interferes with other people's use of the library or that may damage library property.
- (D) If it is determined that a child is lost or left unattended, a staff member shall bring the child to a Youth Services staff member (or library staff member in charge) who will attempt to identify and locate the parent/responsible person. If a parent/responsible person cannot be found, then the child will be remanded to the care of the Portage Police Department. See Child Safety Policy for more detail.

V Consequences of Policy Violations

- (A) In case of public behavior policy violations, library staff will make every effort to discuss the policy and explain acceptable library behavior with the patron(s) and/or parent or guardian before citing any infractions.
- (B) First infraction may result in a warning that loss of library privileges for up to 24 hours may result.
- (C) Second infraction may result in a loss of library privileges for up to 30 days.
- (D) Third infraction may result in a loss of library privileges for up to one year.
- (E) Any person who enters or remains on library premises after losing their library privileges may be reported to the Portage Police Department for removal.

VI Appeal Process

- (A) The person whose library privileges are suspended shall be advised in writing of the suspension and the reason(s) for such action. The offending person shall also be informed that the suspension may be appealed at the next regularly scheduled Library Board meeting.
- (B) The Library Director may reconsider a decision to suspend library privileges upon written or in-person request by the patron (or parent or guardian) if information submitted by the patron warrants such modification. The director will respond in writing to the individual with a notice to the library staff and Board of Trustees of the reconsideration request and decision.

Approved by the Portage Public Library Board of Trustees
 November 8, 2011
 Revised and approved January 8, 2013
 Revised and approved September 13, 2016
 Revised and approved April 9, 2019
 Revised and approved July 9, 2019
 Revised and approved June 11, 2024

