



Code of Conduct

Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County aims to assure high quality, professional service to all its patrons. The Library serves the community most effectively when everyone conforms to the following guidelines.

Definition of Problem Behavior

Problem behavior includes behavior within the Library or on Library premises that interferes with the use of the Library by other patrons, creates a risk of injury to other patrons or Library personnel, interferes with the work of Library personnel, or creates a risk of damage to Library property.

General Library Behavior Guidelines for Patrons

The Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County supports the rights of all individuals to:

- Use the library without discrimination
- Receive friendly, courteous and respectful service
- Have free and equal access to information
- Have a clean, comfortable and pleasant environment
- Use the library undisturbed without threat of harm to person or property, or interference with library use

The Library is for everyone's enjoyment. For the comfort and safety of patrons, volunteers, and staff, and the protection of Library property, the following actions are examples of conduct not allowed on Library property. These are not inclusive.

- Engaging in any activity in violation of Federal, State, local or other applicable law, or Library policy.
- Carrying firearms and dangerous weapons of any type (except by law enforcement officers).
- Being under the influence of alcohol/illegal drugs or selling, using, or possessing alcohol/illegal drugs.
- Verbally, visually or physically threatening or harassing other patrons, volunteers, or staff, including stalking, staring, lurking, offensive touching, obscene or offensive gesturing, and obscene acts such as sex acts & indecent exposure.
- Violence or threat of violence.
- Soliciting or conducting surveys not authorized by the Library.

- Use of library furniture, materials, equipment and facilities for anything but their intended purpose.
- Stealing, damaging, altering, or inappropriate use of Library property in Library facilities or on Library grounds, including print and non-print materials, computer hardware and software, printers, copiers, phones, and other equipment.
- Failure to abide by the Library's "Internet Procedures and Restrictions," including viewing, displaying, creating, sending or receiving text, graphics or images that are obscene, pornographic, offensive or create a hostile or intimidating environment, as determined by Library staff.
- Entering nonpublic areas, such as staff work areas and mechanical rooms, without permission of an authorized Library employee before, after or during Library operating hours, or camping on Library grounds.
- Fighting or challenging to fight, running, pushing, shoving, or throwing things.
- Gambling and group activities which are disruptive to the Library environment.
- Unreasonable noise, including loud talking, singing, boisterous activity, or using audible devices in non-designated areas in a manner that disturbs others.
- Persons who have unpleasant or foul odors on or about their body, clothes or possessions sufficiently noticeable to interfere with others' enjoyment of the Library shall be considered to be making a disturbance.
- Using restrooms for bathing, shampooing or doing laundry.
- Littering.
- Smoking, chewing, and other tobacco use in Library facilities.
- Entering the Library barefooted and/or without a shirt or being otherwise attired so as to be disruptive to the Library environment.
- Consuming food or beverages, except for beverages in closable, spill-resistant containers such as travel mugs, plastic bottles with screw-on or snap-shut tops, or cans which have a plastic snap-on lid, or as otherwise permitted by library staff in locations where use is authorized such as Library cafés, meeting rooms at which catering is allowed, and at authorized events. Food and beverages are not allowed in proximity to computer, photocopier and micrographic equipment.
- Bringing in garbage, articles with a foul odor, or articles which, alone or in their aggregate, impede the use of the library by other users.
- Using wheeled devices in Library buildings or in a manner that blocks entrances or exits, except in designated areas, including skateboards, roller skates, bicycles, scooters, and shopping carts (exceptions are wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers). Storing or carrying a wheeled device is permissible.

- Loitering on Library property is not allowed.
- Excessive displays of affection.
- Lying down or sleeping in the restrooms or on any floor, couch, table, or seat in the Library.
- Blocking aisles, stairways, entrances or exits by sitting or lying down on them.
- Bringing pets or animals into the Library other than certified service animals necessary for those with disabilities or part of a pre-authorized program. Unattended animals, inside or outside of the building, are not permitted.

Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers' responsibilities:

- Persons seventeen years old or younger are defined as 'children' for the purposes of this Policy.
- Parents or legal guardians, whether present in the library or not, are responsible for their children's behavior at all times.
- Parents or legal guardians are responsible for any damages to library property caused, in whole or in part, by their children, regardless of the children's age.
- Children under the age of seven years must be accompanied by a parent, a guardian, or a caregiver at all times.
- Parents, guardians or Caregivers are responsible or maintaining control over their children's behavior in the library at all times.
- Parents, guardians or Caregivers accompanying children under the age of seven must stay within a reasonable distance (within eyesight) of their children at all times
- 'Caregiver' means a person designated by a parent or guardian to accompany a child who demonstrates maturity and competence in caring for and controlling the children left in his or her care while in the library.

Neglect of Children:

- Neglecting to provide proper supervision of children, including leaving children unattended, is not allowed. Failure to pick up a child under age fourteen at closing will result in the police being called to take charge of the child. Children age fourteen and over deemed able by staff to care for themselves may be left unattended and will be permitted to leave the library even though alone.

Personal Possessions

Personal possessions should not be left at public service points for safekeeping. The Library is unable to guarantee the security of such items. Personal belongings left in the Library at closing time will be locked in the building until the Library is next open to the public.

Daily Closing

Patrons are responsible for knowing the closing time for that day.

Damages, Suspension, and Expulsion

Failure to comply with the behavior guidelines stated above will result in escalating responses ranging from recovery for damages and/or limitations on service, to revocation of Library privilege(s), eviction from the premises, or criminal prosecution depending on the severity and frequency of the violation and if there is a violation of local, state or federal law.

Those who intentionally damage or deface Library materials or property may be prosecuted. Parents can be liable for damage done by a child under the age of eighteen.

Enforcement and Appeal

Procedures for the implementation of this policy will be established by the Library Director, who shall implement enforcement of this policy.

The procedures shall provide:

1. Clear written communication to the user of the user's infraction and the consequences of the violation.
2. An opportunity for the user to respond.
3. An orderly record keeping procedure for all violations.

In the case where the violation by the user results in denial of library privileges and/or barring the user from all library premises for more than one day, the procedures shall provide:

1. An eviction notice in writing delivered to the user.
2. A clear explanation of the rule violated and the conduct violating the rule.
3. An informal expedited appeal procedure occurring before the eviction is effective.
4. A post-eviction appeal to be heard by the Executive Director or the person(s) designated by the Executive Director. The user shall be entitled to be heard at the appeal and to submit evidence, statements and written evidence.

The user may give testimony or bring other witnesses, cross-examine opposing witnesses, and make arguments. The user shall be provided with due process as provided by law in order to provide a fair hearing.

Note: The Library may summarily deny a non-compliant appeal or any appeal not received by the Library within 14 days of the Notice of Violation or Eviction.

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