

CONDUCT IN THE LIBRARY: POLICY & PROCEDURE

POLICY:

It is the policy of the James Kennedy Public Library to provide a safe, comfortable environment conducive to the use of the library materials and facilities.. The library is intended for the use of all members of the public. Patrons are expected to observe the rights of other patrons and staff members and use the library for its intended purposes.

Prohibited conduct is that which:

- Interferes with the rights of individuals to use library materials and services,
- Interferes with the ability of the library staff to conduct library business, or
- Threatens the secure and comfortable environment of the library or those using the library.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the public and the staff in determining whether a patron's conduct is prohibited and how such behavior should be handled. The staff determines when conduct is prohibited.

Prohibited conduct may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Willfully annoying, harassing, or threatening another person
- Any behavior that endangers or could endanger the safety or health of others
- Behaving in a disorderly, loud, or boisterous manner
- Theft, vandalism, or the deliberate destruction of library materials, property, or the personal property of other customers or staff members
- Maliciously accessing, altering, deleting, damaging, or destroying any computers, peripherals, computer system, network, computer program or data
- Smoking, chewing tobacco, or using snuff
- Use of any illegal drugs
- Eating or drinking in areas not designated for these activities
- Inappropriate dress; e.g. no shirt or shoes
- Leaving children who have not yet completed Kindergarten unattended in the library
- Use of skates, skateboards, inline skates, and similar products, or
- Violation of any municipal, state or federal law or code

Pursuant to Dyersville Resolution 04-11, firearms or dangerous weapons are prohibited on the grounds and in the building of the Library. All law enforcement officers will be exempt from this policy.

PROCEDURE:

1. Irate patrons.

All persons working in the public sector must be prepared to handle irate patrons. Responding appropriately to irate or upset patrons can be a difficult task. It is very important that library staff be relaxed and poised, not combative or fearful. It is the job of the library staff to try to satisfy the concerns of the patron, if at all possible. If it is not possible, the staff should inform the patron of the reasons for the library's inability to comply and provide him with a copy of the appropriate policy.

2. Behavioral problems.

Library patrons are expected to conduct themselves with respect for and courtesy to the library staff and other patrons. If patrons do behave in an inappropriate manner, the following procedures should be followed:

a) Patrons who are overly loud or rude, threaten, harass, or annoy patrons or staff, or otherwise hinder the use of the library by others will be warned and/or asked to leave by the librarian on duty. Normal procedure in dealing with such disruptive patrons includes one verbal warning and then asking the patron to leave the library premises. In general, suspension of library privileges is only for one day. Longer periods of suspension may be allotted for continued problems at the librarian's discretion. In cases where patrons are habitually loud or disruptive, the first warning may be waived and the patrons asked to leave upon the first violation.

b) Patrons who refuse to recognize the librarian's authority will be asked to leave immediately. Continued ignoring of the librarian's request will result in suspension of library privileges for two weeks or longer. At the librarian's discretion, the police may be called to remove a problem patron.

c) Patrons who display lewd or vulgar behavior will be asked to leave immediately. If they do not comply, library privileges may be suspended for a longer period, and the authorities may be called.

d) The parents of minor children may be contacted if inappropriate behavior continues. This will be done at the discretion of the library director.

3. Destructive Behavior.

Destructive patrons can be careless, thoughtless, or even dangerous. Care must be given in handling such patrons.

a) If a patron is damaging library property unwittingly, staff should inform the patron to stop the behavior.

b) Malicious destruction of library property, such as vandalism, destruction of books, magazines, pamphlets, equipment, etc., must be dealt with strictly. Patrons who destroy library property will be expected to pay for replacement or repair of the materials and may have their library privileges suspended at the discretion of the library director.

4. Children.

Minor children may create special circumstances. Handling them depends on the individual situation.

a) Noise, rudeness, etc.

Single or small groups of children creating a noise problem will be handled in the same manner as the general policy of behavioral problems states. That is, they will be warned and then asked to leave if behavior doesn't improve.

Programs sponsored by the Library may create special situations. Story times, presentations, movies, etc., presented for children in the library may create noise. Typically, we are able to contain the noise and distraction by keeping the programs in the meeting room or story time area. Some programs

and events, however, may spill out into other areas. If patrons comment or complain, staff should explain the situation, apologize, and recommend using the study rooms or coming at an alternate time.

b) Running and playing in the library is disruptive and dangerous. It will not be allowed.

c) Parents or guardians are responsible for their children's behavior. Library staff shall not assume liability for children's safety and behavior.

- Children who have not yet completed Kindergarten may not be left unattended in the library.
- The responsible adult or mature adolescent accompanying any child who has not yet completed Kindergarten must remain within sight of the child at all times. If the child is attending a library-sponsored story time, the responsible adult must remain in the building. Parents or guardians will be contacted if children who have not yet completed Kindergarten are left unattended in the library. If staff is unable to contact parents or guardians the police may be contacted to help locate them.
- Children of any age with special needs shall be supervised by a caregiver at all times. Special needs may be related to, but are not limited to, physical or mental abilities, disruptive behavior, emotional problems, lack of adequate attention span, and incomplete social skills.
- Parents or guardians may be contacted if children of any age are disturbing library patrons or staff. If staff is unable to contact parents or guardians the police may be contacted to help locate them.

d) Miscellaneous other situations may arise. The Library staff is expected to use responsible judgment in determining how such varied situations should best be handled.

5. Patrons are allowed to have food or drink in the library everywhere except near the computers and electronic equipment.

6. Use of the Loft: The loft in the children's area is intended to provide a special place for elementary school aged children. Older children are asked not to use this space unless they are there with a younger friend or sibling. Infants and preschool aged children are welcome to use the loft if they are accompanied by an adult or responsible teenager.

Any patrons who feel they have been unjustly treated, either by being suspended from library use, or for any other reason, may file an appeal in writing to the Board of Trustees. Appeals will be considered at the next regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees, provided they have been received seven days prior to the meeting.

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