

General Code of Conduct (Public Behavior)

The Mary L. Cook Public Board of Trustees is responsible for determining the rules for public behavior in the library that are necessary to:

- Protect the rights of individuals to use library property, materials, and services.
- Protect the rights of library employees and volunteers to conduct library business without interference.
- Ensure the use of the facilities, materials, and services by the greatest number of individuals.
- Preserve those materials and facilities from harm.
- Ensure the safety of library patrons, employees, and volunteers.

The rules for public behavior are listed below. Any individual who repeatedly violates the library rules and regulations shall be denied the privilege of access to the library by the Board of Trustees, on recommendation of the library director. In case of emergency, the director may take immediate action and inform the board as soon as possible afterward. Any individual whose privileges have been denied may have the decision reviewed by the board. The board authorizes the library director to bring to the attention of law enforcement authorities the identity of and circumstances involving those individuals who violate these rules.

Library employees are authorized to bring to an individual's attention any act or omission which violates these rules and detracts from the decorum of the library. Such an individual will be asked to change the problem behavior to conform to the rules. If such change is not evident or forthcoming, that individual will be asked to leave the library property. Failure to leave if asked will result in the police being called. A violation of section 2911.21 of the Ohio Revised Code (Criminal Trespass) will be considered if the individual does not leave of his/her own accord.

Any misconduct that hinders the use of library materials or services, that disturbs the use of the library by other patrons or library staff, or endangers the safety of the patron in question or other patrons or library staff, is prohibited. Such misconduct might include but is not limited to:

- Illegal activities.
- Loud or boisterous behavior.
- Conversation that is disturbing to other individuals or employees.
- Profanity or other abusive language toward other library patrons or toward employees.
- Abusing library furniture, equipment, or materials.
- Running in the library.
- Harassing others, either verbally or through actions. Harassment may include but is not limited to initiating unwanted conversations; impeding

access to the building; or other actions another individual reasonably perceives to be hostile, threatening or offensive.

- Fighting on library property.
- Using tobacco in any form while on library property.
- Possession, sale, or use of alcoholic beverages, illegal substances, or weapons on library property.
- Eating and/or drinking in non-designated areas.
- Buying, selling, or soliciting for personal or commercial gain.
- Using radios, tape players, or other personal listening equipment at a level that can be heard by other individuals.
- Skateboarding anywhere on library property.
- Bringing animals other than guide dogs and the like into the library.
- Not wearing a shirt or shoes.
- Using the emergency exits at times other than during an emergency.

The library does not permit weapons of any kind, either concealed or in plain view, on its property or in its buildings, unless the owner of the weapon is a law enforcement officer.

The library reserves the right to limit the number of individuals who may gather together where ingress and egress are blocked.

The library reserves the right to inspect all bags, purses, briefcases, packs, personal listening equipment and overcoats for library materials.

The above rules are based on powers granted to a public library board of trustees under the Ohio Revised Code, Section 3375.40(H). They will be posted prominently at the entrance to the library building.

Eviction and Suspension of Library Privileges

A patron who has violated the Library's Patron Conduct Policy may be evicted from the library and refused further admission to the library for a set time. The Library recognizes the patron's right to contest the eviction and present his or her side of the story. The patron may request to speak to the director or his or her designee in order to hear the reasons for eviction and to present any counter-arguments. If possible, such a discussion may take place prior to the patron's eviction or denial of service. However, the Library reserves the right to take immediate action if necessary to answer an ongoing threat to the operation of the library, or a continuing danger to the health or safety of patrons or staff; in these circumstances, the patron may schedule a discussion at a later date.

The director, or his or her designee, may, when possible, send written confirmation stating the period during which the patron may not enter library property. This letter may also include the reasons for the patron's barring and any conditions under which the patron will be re-admitted to the library.

Notices regarding the barring of a minor patron from the library will be sent to the minor patron's parent or legal guardian.

Reinstatement of Library Privileges

A patron who has been evicted from the library and permanently refused admission may request both a re-evaluation of the banning and the reinstatement of his or her library privileges. Requests must be submitted in writing to the director and should include a statement demonstrating that the patron understands why the conduct that resulted in the loss of privileges is unacceptable in the library or on library grounds, and a statement from the patron that he or she understands the Library's Code of Conduct.

The director may consider any of several factors when deciding to reinstate library privileges including: the details of the incident that led to the suspension; the length of time since the initial eviction and suspension; the patron's completion of any requirements imposed by the court as a result of the incident; and any other information provided by the patron that suggests that he or she is unlikely to engage in the conduct that led to the suspensions of privileges.

The director will make decisions about reinstatement of privileges in all cases except those based upon threats or physical harm to another person or possession of a weapon within the library or on its grounds. Decisions of the director may be appealed to the board. Decisions to reinstate privileges of customers banned for possession of a weapon or because of threats or physical harm to another person will be made by the board.

Unattended Minors

The library welcomes and encourages patrons of all ages to visit the library and take advantage of the programs, services and resources that it offers. Responsibility for the safety and behavior of minors always rests with the parent, guardian, or assigned adult caregiver, and not with library staff. Staff cannot act *in loco parentis*, nor can library staff supervise unattended youth.

It is important for staff to take note of disruptions caused by children who are apparently unaccompanied. Children displaying inappropriate or destructive behavior will be informed of the rules. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child may be asked to leave the library. If a child is unaccompanied by an adult or appropriate-aged caregiver, and, in the judgement of the staff, is too young to travel the streets alone, the staff will attempt to contact a parent, guardian, or assigned caregiver. Security staff and police officers may be asked to intervene if the situation warrants.

Unattended Minors at Closing Time

No stranded child shall be ejected from the library at closing time. If the child's parent or guardian or assigned caregiver is to arrive within 10 minutes after

closing, two library staff members will stay with the child in the entryway of the Library. After that time, staff will call the police and ask them to assume responsibility for the unattended child.