

Acceptable Patron Behavior Policy

Purpose

The Bethlehem Area Public Library has established this Behavior Policy to ensure that library facilities are safe, welcoming and provide equitable access to materials and services for all library users. Appropriate personal library conduct includes activities such as reading, studying, properly using library materials and computers in a manner which does not interfere with others who are using the public library in this fashion.

Overview and Definitions

Appropriate behavior is expected of all users of the Bethlehem Area Public Library's facilities, as is associated with the normal use of a public library while in the building or on the grounds. Violations of the Behavior Policy will result in increasing levels of action, ranging from a staff issued warning, to asking the patron to leave the library for the remainder of the day, to the patron's temporary or permanent loss of all library privileges, to legal action including criminal prosecution. The level of action shall be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Behavior Rules

Use of the library materials and services should not disturb other patrons. Library materials and services are available for educational as well as entertainment uses, and patrons should keep in mind that these resources are in the library to be shared by all.

Inappropriate behavior is considered to be behavior which creates excessive noise levels or disturbances, interferes with other patrons' use of the library, and/or damages library property.

Inappropriate behavior would include, but not be limited to, the following conduct or behaviors.

- Loud, disruptive conversations, including shouting
- Use of personal electronic equipment at a volume that can be heard by others
- Use of profane and/or abusive language
- **Sleeping, napping or loitering**
- Engaging in any behavior that the reasonable library user would find to be disruptive, harassing, or threatening in nature to library users or staff, including stalking, prolonged staring at, or following

another with the intent to annoy, or intentionally behaving in a manner that could reasonably be expected to annoy or disturb other patrons

- Possessing, selling, distributing, consuming or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or controlled substance
- Committing or attempting to commit any activity that would constitute a violation of any federal, state or local ordinance
- Smoking or other use of tobacco anywhere, except in designated areas outside of the premises
- Leaving children under the age of 7 unattended on library premises
- Engaging in any sexual contact, activities, or conduct
- Selling, soliciting, surveying, distributing written materials, panhandling or canvassing for any political, charitable or religious purposes inside a library building, doorway or vestibule without prior authorization by the library director
- Eating, or drinking from containers without lids in non-designated areas
- Taking or making cell phone calls at a location other than in the library foyers or outside of the building
- Not wearing shoes or shirt within the library premises
- Entering or remaining upon library premises with a bodily hygiene so offensive that it constitutes a nuisance to others
- Bringing in more than two carryall bags. No bag may be brought into the library that exceeds the size of a standard backpack, briefcase or canvas tote bag. Belongings such as bedding, sleeping bags and changes of clothing may not be brought into the library or stored inside the library
- Interfering with the safe and free passage of the library staff or patrons on the premises including, but not limited to the placement of objects in hallways, aisles, flooring, or elsewhere, in a manner that impedes the free passage of such persons about the library. Unattended items may be removed from the library premises if they reasonably appear to be abandoned or have been left unattended for 30 minutes or more.
- Bringing any animal into the library except for service animals, animals for a scheduled library program or with special permission from a library director
- Improperly using library restrooms or facilities for purposes such as bathing, shaving, laundering or changing clothes
- Adults not accompanied by a child shall not use the children's restrooms
- Adults not accompanied by a child shall not loiter in the children's room if the adult is not actively reading, studying, and/or using library materials from the children's room

- Adults not accompanied by a teenager shall not sit or loiter in the teen area if the adult is not actively reading, studying, and/or using library materials from the teen area
- Violating the library's rules for acceptable use of the internet and public computers
- Possessing, selling, distributing, displaying, or using any dangerous weapon. A weapon shall include, but not be limited to, a knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and any other tool instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury
- Engaging in any physically intimidating or assault-like behavior, including making any threats of violence or unlawful activities.
- **The library has a policy of zero tolerance for threats or acts of violence. Any person engaging in such behaviors will be immediately ejected from the library**

Library Response to Violations of Behavior Policy

Any person who violates the behavior policy will be handled in a professional and courteous manner by staff, but the degree of the violation will determine the response.

Staff is instructed to call 9-1-1 immediately in response to any behavior that is deemed dangerous. Staff will call the police for any behavior that is in violation of federal, state or local ordinances. Staff will call the police if a person or group of persons is asked to leave the library and they refuse to leave and/or become difficult with the staff member.

For most other inappropriate behavior, one warning will be given. Continued violations will result in patron being asked to leave the library for the day. A serious violation or repeated violations, or a violation where the police are called, may result in longer exclusions from the library up to permanent banning from the library. An individual who is banned from the library may be criminally charged with trespassing if they return to library property during the term of the ban.

Any individual who is banned and whose library privileges have been revoked, may request to have the decision reviewed by the Board of Directors of the Library. The request must be made in writing and submitted to the Library Director and the President of the Board of Directors of the Bethlehem Area Public Library, 11 W. Church St., Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 18018, within 30 days of the alleged offense.

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