

Patron Rights and Responsibilities

The purpose of this policy is to establish the rights and responsibilities of all people who use and work at the Reading Public Library, and to ensure a comfortable, safe environment with full and equal access to all Library programs and services.

Everyone who uses our facilities or seeks our assistance should receive impartial, high quality, and friendly service. The Library supports the needs and contributions of all people regardless of any distinguishing characteristics that all too often divide people in society whether explicitly protected by law or not.

Patron Rights

The Reading Public Library supports the rights of all individuals to:

- Receive friendly, courteous, and respectful service;
- Have free and equal access to information;
- Expect privacy and the confidentiality of the information that is shared with the Library when using our web site or other library services;
- Have a clean, comfortable, and pleasant environment;
- Use the Library without discrimination;
- Use the Library undisturbed without threat of harm, invasion of property, or interference.

Patron Responsibilities

The patron has the responsibility to follow all public health, safety and fire regulations, and other policies designed for the public good, which include refraining from:

- Smoking, vaping, chewing tobacco, or ingesting hallucinogenic substances inside or within 50 feet outside of the building.
- Blocking sidewalks, entries, and passageways.
- Running or roughhousing in the building.
- Having bare feet in the building.
- Using skateboards, hover boards, rollerblades, scooters or similar inside the building.
- Defacing or improperly removing Library materials, furnishings, or equipment.
- Eating or drinking in the History Room or any location determined and clearly marked by the staff for programming or Library service purposes.
- Littering: patrons must dispose of trash, wrappers, and empty containers in trash and recycling bins.
- Entering staff only or other restricted areas.
- Leaving unaccompanied children under the age of 9. (*see Reading Public Library Safe Child Policy*).
- Bringing in animals or pets except for properly leashed and trained service animals.

General Library Use

To ensure individuals' right to use the Library free of disruption, Library patrons and staff will refrain from disrespectful, dangerous, destructive or illegal conduct, including but not limited to the following behaviors:

- Verbally or physically harassing, threatening, or bullying any staff member or patron, or displaying unwanted attention toward another person;
- Soliciting on Library property;
- Carrying a weapon or a facsimile of a weapon;
- Fighting, physical abuse, assault or perpetrating physical violence against another person;
- Making violent or threatening statements to others;
- Engaging in intimidating or harassing behaviors, including following or stalking other patrons or Library staff;
- Refusing to follow reasonable direction from Library staff, including but not limited to leaving the Library during normal closing procedures or following a suspension of Library privileges;
- Damaging, destroying, stealing, or otherwise vandalizing Library property;
- Using audible functions on equipment (such as cell phones, computers, and hand-held electronics) is prohibited except in designated areas clearly marked by the staff. All cell phone conversations should be in low tones and kept brief;
- Shouting, pushing, hitting, throwing things, and other boisterous conduct is prohibited;
- Talking in the sections of the Library reserved for quiet study.

Many patrons use the Library as a place for quiet study or reading. Patrons and staff should respect the rights of others and not engage in loud conversations or noisy activities. The following noise zones have been established.

Each zone has an acceptable noise level:

- Children's Room - Normal Conversational Tones
- First Floor Reading Room – Reduced Noise (quiet talking permitted)
- First Floor Quiet Study Room - Silent
- First Floor General & Teen Room - Normal Conversational Tones
- Ground Floor Meeting Rooms and Lobby – Normal Conversational Tones
- Ground Floor General – Reduced Noise (quiet talking permitted)

Free Speech and Expressive Conduct Activities

The Library supports open expression and free speech by the public, including through spoken communication, distribution of literature and other forms of free expression. The Library does not regulate the content of such expressive activities. However, in order to preserve Library facilities for their intended purpose, to allow for the orderly operation of these facilities and to preserve public safety, the Library does regulate the time, place and manner of such activities.

Members of the public who are interested in utilizing Library facilities for expressive activity shall notify the librarian in charge prior to engaging in such activity to ascertain the availability of space and shall comply with the following guidelines.

Use of Library Facilities for Expressive Activities.

- External Facilities Spaces. For public safety purposes, expressive activities are prohibited in the Library parking lot and driveways. The sidewalks and lawn surrounding the Library are generally available for expressive activities, provided that the limitations and prohibitions set forth below are followed.
- Internal Facilities Spaces. Designated areas within the Library, including the meeting rooms, lobby and vestibule, may be available for expressive activities. Interior spaces are limited, but may be made available, provided that they provide adequate area for the proposed activity and the limitations and prohibitions set forth below are followed.
- Limitations and Prohibitions.
 - Use will occur only during the Library’s normal operating hours.
 - Use of Library facilities shall not impede or interfere with the passage of patrons or the normal operations of the Library.
 - Users will not disrupt or interfere with any individual’s use of the Library.
 - The Library may specify the time and location of such activities as necessary to ensure equal access to other users.
 - Users will not force or coerce any individual to take materials or sign petitions.
 - The Library reserves the right to close any facility space due to safety considerations.
 - The Library reserves the right to give scheduling priority to the use of any facility space for Library-sponsored activities.
 - Users shall not engage in any political fundraising.
 - Users shall not engage in any illegal activity.

Posting of Materials on Library Bulletin Boards.

The Reading Public Library is committed to disseminating information that is of general interest to the community and provides spaces for the public posting of flyers, notices, and posters. Please refer to the Library’s “Policy on Distribution, Posting, and Collection of Materials” for further guidance.

Enforcement of Policy

The librarian in charge has the responsibility to speak to disruptive patrons and/or direct such patrons to leave the Library or take other appropriate measures.

- People engaging in disruptive behaviors will be given one warning before being told to leave the Library.
- People engaging in destructive or serious behavior will be told to leave immediately.

- If directives to leave the building are not heeded, or if the situation is or is becoming in any way uncontrollable, the librarian in charge will call the police. Individuals will be warned that the police will be called.
- If behavior continues or occurs again within 6 months of the first incident, the patron will be issued a written warning and may be subject to a “No Trespass” order and suspension of Library privileges for up to one (1) year depending on the severity of the violation.
- Under no circumstances will Library personnel touch the patron as part of a disciplinary action.
- At all times, Library staff will be courteous, tactful, and firm. Reasons for appropriate action will be clearly stated to the patron.

All Staff Responsibilities:

- Weigh the degree of disruptive conduct with the onsite conditions at the time.
- Exercise their best judgment in determining conduct that is in violation of this or any other Library policy, determining the best course of action.
- Explain and distribute this policy to patrons.
- Request that patrons conduct themselves in a way that is necessary to maintain a welcoming public Library environment.
- Seek assistance from Library supervisors or public safety officials to resolve ongoing or escalating patron conduct issues.
- Fill out the appropriate disruptive behavior forms and distribute to administration. Disruptive behavior forms are located at each service desk.

The Reading Public Library is for everyone’s enjoyment. We appreciate your cooperation with all Library policies in order to ensure the Library is a pleasant place to visit and all who use these public facilities receive respectful treatment.

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