

<p style="text-align: center;">MIDLOTHIAN PUBLIC LIBRARY PATRON BEHAVIOR POLICY</p>
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I. PURPOSE

The Midlothian Public Library strives to provide a warm, welcoming, and safe environment conducive to lifelong learning and discovery for people of all ages. The Board sets forth this policy for the purpose of ensuring such an environment, in which:

- A. All library patrons have a fair and equitable opportunity to use library materials and services in a safe and pleasant environment, without unreasonable interference or disturbance from others.
- B. Library staff have a safe and secure workplace protected from disruptive, hostile, or unlawful behavior.
- C. Library facilities, property, and materials are secured from damage or theft.

II. RULES OF CONDUCT

Any behavior which unreasonably infringes on the safe and pleasant use of the library by others, interferes with library operations and the ability of staff to do their work, or endangers library property is prohibited. These specific behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- A. No conduct is permitted that endangers the health and safety of library users or employees. (Examples include threatening or harassing behavior, derogatory insults, fighting, unattended children and vulnerable adults.)
- B. No conduct is permitted that may cause damage or block access to library facilities, property, or materials. (Examples include obstructing walkways, vandalism, unattended belongings, parking lot disruptions, tampering with equipment, littering, loitering.)
- C. No conduct is permitted that may reasonably be expected to create a disturbance or interfere with the safe use and enjoyment of the library by others. (Examples include yelling, profanity, excessive noise, running, rowdy or aggressive behavior.)
- D. Patrons may not bring animals into the building, except for service animals or ones that are part of an authorized library program.
- E. Covered, non-alcoholic drinks are allowed in public areas. Food is authorized in the café area only, or for library sponsored events.
- F. Use of alcohol is not permitted, except for library sponsored events.
- G. Smoking, vaping, tobacco products, or illegal drugs are not permitted.
- H. Engaging in sexual conduct, sexual harassment, or lewd behavior is prohibited.
- I. Weapons such as explosives, firearms, knives, or look-alike weapons are prohibited.

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J. No user may engage in any illegal acts or conduct in violation of federal, state, or local laws.

III. ENFORCEMENT OF BEHAVIOR POLICIES

- A. Illinois law authorizes the Library: "To exclude from use of the library any person who willfully violates an ordinance or regulation prescribed by the board." [75 ILCS 16/30-55.55]
- B. Any behavior that violates these policies may result in suspension of library privileges, exclusion from the library, cost recovery charges, and prosecution.
- C. Library staff are authorized to correct misbehavior, inspect bags, impose time or space limits, ask disruptive patrons to leave the library, issue a 24 hour ban, request ID, or call the police at their discretion.
- D. The Library Director is authorized to limit or suspend, for up to 30 days, the library privileges of anyone whose unacceptable behavior is disruptive, dangerous, or becomes chronic in nature.
- E. With Board approval, library privileges may be denied for longer than 30 days. The patron may appeal the decision in writing to the Board within one month of the exclusion date. The Board shall respond with a final decision in writing.

IV. UNATTENDED CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

- A. Children and vulnerable adults may be at risk when they are left unattended. They could be approached by a stranger, become frightened or ill, become stranded during an unexpected closing, be asked to leave because of a behavior violation, or encounter a safety hazard or emergency situation.
- B. Children under the age of 8 and vulnerable adults who are unable or unwilling to care for themselves may not be left alone in the library and must have adequate supervision from a responsible caregiver.
- C. A vulnerable adult is an adult who is unable to reasonably care for themselves in an independent manner. This may include adults who are mentally or physically challenged, or who cannot respond appropriately in an emergency situation, or need help beyond assistance with typical library services.
- D. A responsible caregiver is an adult or mature adolescent, 14 years or older, who assumes full responsibility for the safety and behavior of those in their care.
- E. The library is a busy public facility, and staff members do not function *in loco parentis* (in place of parents) or as substitute caregivers. They are not responsible for duties such as safety monitoring, behavior oversight, bathroom assistance, care of illness, or providing caregiving attention that prevents them from their work duties.

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- F. Children age 8 and over and vulnerable adults who can understand and follow the Rules of Conduct and who can care for themselves without assistance, are allowed to be in the library unattended. They should have contact information for someone who can assist them in an emergency, and respect the rights and safety of others.

- G. Parents or caregivers must pick up their children or vulnerable adults prior to closing time. When the library is closing, in case of illness, or if the safety or behavior of an unattended child or vulnerable adult is in doubt, staff are authorized to call the police if they are unable to reach a caregiver.

- H. Violations of this policy are grounds for suspension of library privileges.

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