

4.1 Patron Behavior/Code of Conduct

The purpose of this policy is to promote the safety of Library patrons, employees, and volunteers and to guarantee that the Library is able to carry out its mission of excellent service in an atmosphere that is safe, pleasant and conducive to comfortable Library use for all patrons.

Patrons shall engage in activities associated with the use of a public library. They shall respect the rights of other patrons and staff members.

PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING:

Harassing fellow Library patrons, staff, or volunteers through disruptive or offensive behavior, such as swearing; using abusive, threatening, or offensive language; throwing things; running; fighting; harassing or annoying others through noisy or boisterous activities; staring at or following another person about the building; playing audio equipment; disruptive telephone conversations; singing or talking loudly; or any behavior that obstructs, threatens, or harasses patrons, staff, or volunteers. Disruptive or offensive behavior is determined at the discretion of library staff.

1. Consumption of food or uncovered beverages, unless in designated areas for Library-approved events and programs. Covered, non-alcoholic beverages are allowed, except in public computer areas.
2. The consumption or possession of alcohol, cannabis, or illegal drugs on Library property. Alcohol consumption may be permissible during certain library-sanctioned events. Persons exhibiting signs of intoxication or substance abuse will be asked to leave.
3. Smoking or using any tobacco products inside or within 15 feet of any public entrance. "Smoking" shall mean inhaling of, exhaling of, burning of, or carrying of any lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe, e-cigarette, vaporizer, marijuana, or other plant in any manner or in any form.
4. Engaging in any illegal activity while in the library building or on library grounds.
5. Disturbing library staff or patrons with disruptive, prolonged or habitual sleeping.
6. Interfering with the use of the Library by other patrons, or interfering with library employees' performance of their duties.
7. Using furniture or floors in an inappropriate or unsafe manner.
8. Panhandling, soliciting, selling, or distributing any goods or services in the Library or on its grounds.
9. Defacing or damaging library materials, furnishings, machines, walls or other Library property.
10. Public indecency. Patrons are required to dress appropriately and shoes are to be worn at all times. The wearing of masks or similar facial concealments is not allowed except for Library sponsored programs and for religious, medical, or other legally protected reasons.
11. Heavily-fragranced patrons and patrons whose bodily hygiene is offensive so as to constitute a nuisance to other patrons may be required to leave the building.
12. Only authorized service animals and program animals are allowed in the building.
13. Personal belongings must be attended at all times. Responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged items rests with the owner.
14. Lewd acts, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, and inappropriate public displays of affection.
15. Carrying or displaying simulated or real weapons on library property. Firearms are prohibited on Library property unless they are in the possession of a sworn law enforcement officer. Signage is posted at entryways pursuant to 430 ILCS 66/65.

The materials, services and seating of the Youth Services department are reserved for the use of children under the age of 18, their parents or caregivers, or customers using the Youth Services' collections or seeking assistance from library staff. All other patrons are asked to use the adult areas of the library.

A patron who engages in any activity which materially disrupts the use of library facilities, collections, or services by patrons or materially disrupts the ability of the staff to perform its duties shall cease such activity upon request by library personnel. In such instances involving minors, identification will be requested and the incident may be reported to the parent or guardian. If, following a request, the patron fails or refuses to comply or responds to the request in an abusive fashion, he or she will be required to leave the library building and grounds immediately for the remainder of that calendar day. If he or she fails to leave, the police will be summoned. Serious or continued violations may result in a suspension of privileges and barring the patron from use of library premises for up to thirty (30) days by the Director or the Person-in-Charge.

In the event a patron barred from the use of the Library attempts entry to the Library during any such period of exclusion, the police will be summoned and informed of the prior action. Library employees may contact the Oak Forest Police Department if deemed advisable, and documentation must be provided by the supervisor. The supervisor must write a full account of the incident.

Any patron who violates these or other rules and regulations may, on the recommendation of the Director and with the approval of the Library Board of Trustees, be denied the privilege of access to the library for an extended period longer than thirty (30) days.

A patron whose privileges have been denied may request in writing that the decision be reviewed by the Board of Trustees at the next monthly Board meeting.