



Patron Behavior Policy

Purpose:

The library is a place of information, knowledge, and learning. It is also one of the few public spaces and public goods in communities and in the country where one may come and be welcomed and be served, to find a space and to find a voice.

The Worth Public Library District is committed to serving everyone, especially those in the community who most need access to services and resources and for whom barriers may sometimes hinder full and equitable access. That includes those who are experiencing homelessness, those with health challenges, those with income challenges, and other vulnerable or marginalized members of the community.

Because the Library is for everyone, the Board of Trustees has established the following rules of behavior to ensure:

- All library patrons may use and enjoy the Library's services, materials, and facilities without unreasonable interference or disturbance from others;
- All library patrons enjoy safe and secure library facilities;
- The library's facilities, property, and materials are protected from theft and damage; and
- All library employees have a safe and secure workplace.

Code 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 (i.e. bicycles parked anywhere but the bike rack, skateboard left on the sidewalk), vandalism, unattended belongings, play or loitering in the parking lot, tampering with equipment, littering, lying prone on furniture or the floor, bringing wheeled recreational items (rollerskates, scooters, etc.))
- 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, offensive odors.)
- D. Patrons may not bring animals into the building, except for service animals or ones that are part of an

authorized library programs.

- E. The use of incendiary devices such as firecrackers, candles, matches, and lighters are prohibited.
- F. Covered, non-alcoholic drinks are allowed in public areas. Food is allowed at study tables and as part of library sponsored events. Food is not allowed around the computers.
- G. Possession or use of alcohol, cannabis, or illegal drugs is prohibited on Library property, except at library sponsored events for individuals age 21 and older, where alcohol may be permitted. For library-sponsored events where alcohol is served, the library reserves the right to announce "last call" 30 minutes before the end of the event, after which no new alcoholic drinks may be opened or poured. Persons exhibiting signs of intoxication by alcohol or other substances will be asked to leave the library.
- H. Smoking, vaping, and the use of tobacco products are only permitted outside the library building at a distance of 15 feet or more from any library entrance.
- I. Engaging in sexual conduct, sexual harassment, or lewd behavior is prohibited.
- J. Patrons are required to wear shoes and clothing that provides appropriate bodily coverage.
- K. Patrons are responsible for their personal belongings. Personal belongings may not obstruct walkways or interfere with use of shared spaces. Any personal belongings for which Library Staff are unable to locate the owner may be disposed of after a reasonable attempt has been made to find the owner. The Library is not responsible for any loss of users' personal belongings.
- L. Weapons such as explosives, firearms, knives, or look-alike weapons are prohibited.
- M. Adults aged 18 and older are only permitted in the children's area of the library if they are supervising a minor in their care or actively browsing a library collection house in that area. Exceptions may be made for youth who have recently turned 18 and are socializing with peers of a similar grade level in school.
- N. Commercial solicitation, fundraising, or panhandling in the Library or on its grounds is prohibited, with the exception of those cases expressly permitted by the Library Programming Policy.
- O. Organizations collecting goods for charitable purposes may place a receptacle in the Library for this purpose only with permission of the Library Director,
- P. Circulation of petitions, distributions of leaflets or related materials, and campaign activities are not permitted within the library building. Noncommercial speech activities such as these are permitted outside the library on library sidewalks at a distance of 15 feet or more from any library entrance, as long as they do not block or interfere with the passage of library patrons or vehicles and do not otherwise conflict with the Patron Behavior Policy.
- Q. Patrons are not allowed to enter any areas marked "Staff Only" without authorization from the Library Director or Person in Charge.
- R. Patrons are not allowed to use library telephones unless approved by staff or in the case of an emergency.
- S. No user may engage in any illegal acts or conducts in violation of federal, state, or local laws.

Enforcement of Behavior Policy

- A. Illinois law authorizes the Library: "To exclude from the use of the library any person who willfully violates the regulations 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 the library privileges of anyone whose unacceptable behavior is disruptive, dangerous, or becomes chronic in nature for up to 30 days, or until

the next regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meeting, if the Director will be referring the individual to the Board for consideration of a longer suspension of privileges (see Section F below.)

- E. The Person in Charge, designated by the Library Director, is authorized to issue a form letter signed by the Library Director suspending privileges of a minor who repeatedly violates these behavior policies until such time as the minor's parent or guardian has had a conference (in person or phone) with the Library Director.
- F. 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.

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 11 and vulnerable adults 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, due to mental or physical disabilities, cannot respond appropriately in an emergency situation or need help beyond assistance with typical library service.
- 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.
- F. Children aged 11 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.

Approved November 13, 2001

Revised

May 13, 2008, February 8, 2011, October 11, 2016, March 10, 2020, March 9, 2021, April 9, 2024

