

PATRON RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy ensures that the Reading Public Library (Library) is an inclusive and welcoming space and that users have equitable access to all Library programs and services.

The Library provides impartial, high quality, and friendly service while acknowledging the diverse 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:

1. Receive friendly, inclusive, and respectful service.
2. Have free and equitable access to information.
3. Expect privacy and the confidentiality of information shared with the Library when using our website or other library services.
4. Have a clean, comfortable, and pleasant environment.
5. Use the Library without discrimination.
6. Use the Library undisturbed without threat of harm, invasion of property, or interference.

Patron Responsibilities

All patrons are subject to public health, safety, fire, and other regulations 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, hoverboards, rollerblades, scooters or similar equipment 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 as such 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 areas marked as “Staff Only” or other restricted areas;
- Leaving unattended children under the age of 10 (see the library’s “Responsibilities Regarding Minors 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 will refrain from disrespectful, dangerous, destructive, or illegal conduct, including but not limited to the following behaviors:

1. Verbally or physically harassing, threatening, or bullying any staff member or patron, or displaying unwanted attention toward another person.
2. Soliciting on Library property.
3. Carrying a weapon or a facsimile of a weapon.
4. Fighting, physical abuse, assault or perpetrating physical violence against another person.
5. Making violent or threatening statements to others.
6. Engaging in intimidating or harassing behaviors, including following or stalking other patrons or Library staff.
7. 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.
8. Damaging, destroying, stealing, or otherwise vandalizing Library property.
9. Shouting, pushing, hitting, throwing things, and other boisterous conduct.
10. Talking in the sections of the Library reserved for quiet study.
11. Other audible disruptions in quiet or reduced noise zones. This includes cell phone conversations, audio playback, and virtual meetings.

Many patrons use the Library as a place for quiet study or reading. Patrons will respect the rights of others and not engage in disruptive conversations or activities. The following noise zones and acceptable noise levels 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 regulates the time, place and manner of such activities.

Members of the public who are interested in using 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 is responsible for addressing disruptive behaviors. This includes clearly, courteously, and firmly communicating policy violations and consequences to patrons, and giving patrons a copy of this and any other relevant policies. At no time will any staff member touch a patron to enforce this policy or as disciplinary action. Additional enforcement actions include, but are not limited to:

- A verbal warning for general disruptive behaviors.
- Request to immediately leave the premises for more destructive or serious behaviors.
- Requesting police assistance if the situation escalates. The librarian in charge will warn individuals that the police have been called.
- A written warning from the Director or their designee that is handed or mailed to the individual.
- Issuance of a "No Trespass" order that prohibits access to library property for up to one (1) year depending on the severity of the violation. This order is filed with and enforced by the Reading Police. Permanent "No Trespass" orders may be issued in consultation with Public Safety and the Board of Library Trustees.
- Communications with parents/guardians when a minor receives a written warning or "No Trespass" order. "No Trespass" orders for minors may permit use of the library for school purposes when accompanied by a parent or guardian.

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 so all who use these public facilities receive respectful treatment.

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