

# **Racine Public Library Patron Behavior Policy**

## **Introduction**

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 Racine Public Library 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. This may include those who are part of vulnerable or marginalized groups within the community, such as people experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities and health challenges, and people experiencing poverty.

Because the Library is for everyone, the Racine Public Library Board of Trustees has adopted this Patron Behavior Policy to ensure:

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

## **Library Use Guidelines**

The Executive Director, in collaboration with any other staff they designate, shall be responsible for developing and implementing the Patron Behavior Policy, including by guiding library employees in how to uphold the policy. These procedures shall be consistent with the principles outlined in this policy. This policy outlines the behavior we expect those interacting with the library's services to follow. This includes those who enter the library building; those who visit the Bookmobile, Techmobile, library outreach booths or tables, and library drop boxes; and those who interact with the library through other means, such as via phone calls or through a "contact us" form."

1. Activities that violate any federal, state, or local criminal statute or ordinance are prohibited. Committing or attempting to commit any activity that would constitute a crime or a violation of City or County ordinances is prohibited.
2. Inappropriate behavior in the library includes (but is not limited to):
  - Harassing behaviors such as malicious comments, prolonged staring, making sexual remarks or advances, following others, displaying sexually explicit materials or explicit sites online, inappropriate touching, requesting sex, or payments for sex, and other types of repetitive, unwanted interactions with others.
  - Making excessive noise, such as talking, singing, or playing music or other audio loud enough to distract others nearby, separate from an authorized library

program.

- Subjecting others to offensive odors such as strong body odor, overpowering perfume or cologne, odors from tobacco, marijuana, or vaping smoke. The community member may be referred to the social worker in this case.
- Due to confidentiality and protections of patron privacy, filming and photography conducted by community members of patrons' and employees' computer screens, staff/patron reference interactions and other sensitive or personal information.
- Filming in public restrooms as well as any part of the library which is not open to the public, such as staff offices or the employee break room.
- Threatening or violent behaviors such as swearing, threatening physical contact, using abusive language or images, fighting, displaying a weapon, or brandishing a toy, tool, or other object as if it were a weapon.
- Stealing, damaging, or altering any library property or that of library staff or patrons. The following are examples, but not limited to:
  - o Moving furniture in a way that blocks aisles; using tables, chairs, or heating units as footstools; or sitting on stairways.
  - o Leaving the building with items that have not been checked out.

Defacing or vandalizing, such as writing on library property or in library materials, along with dismantling anything owned by the library ● Dangerous behaviors such as running, skateboarding, or rollerblading in the building or on library property, blocking passageways or stairways. ● Wearing clothing that can reasonably be deemed obscene. Not wearing shoes or shirts within the Library. The community member may be referred to the social worker in this case.

- Smoking, vaping, drinking, or being visibly under the influence of drugs or alcohol, on library property
- Using any kind of tobacco product in the library, including rolling cigarettes. ● Entering the library with any animal other than a service animal (except where specifically authorized by staff).
- Selling, soliciting, surveying, distributing written materials, or canvassing for any political, charitable, or religious purposes inside a Library building, doorway, or vestibule without prior authorization of the Executive Director or designee.
- Using Library restrooms or facilities in a way that does not keep it reasonably clean and hygienic. The following are examples, but not limited to:
  - o Eating and drinking while using Library computers or in spaces designated as free from food. Eating and drinking is acceptable in certain areas as indicated.
  - o Bathing or shaving in the bathroom
  - o Leaving debris or residue on surfaces when done using them ●

Entering non-public work areas unescorted by staff.

- Leaving personal belongings in the Library while not in the building. The Library is not responsible for any loss of users' personal belongings. Personal belongings may not obstruct walkways or interfere with the use of shared spaces.
- Sleeping that limits access to library entrances and exits, resources, and staff or cause a significant disturbance to others. Laying on the library floor or furniture is not allowed. Propping feet on library furniture is not allowed.

- Violations of other library policies listed at [RacineLibrary.info/policies](http://RacineLibrary.info/policies)
- Refusing to follow the directions of the Library Staff. Any behavior or actions not listed above will be left to the discretion of the Library Director and the Safety Committee for review and action.

### **Staff Response to Inappropriate Behavior & Procedures for Enforcement**

Unacceptable behavior may result in suspension of access to library services, including entering library buildings and vehicles, checking out library materials, support time with library staff, and use of library facilities such as restrooms and computer terminals. Suspended patrons still have access to digital resources like Libby and Comics Plus, among others, which do not require them to enter the library.

The length of the suspension will be based on the severity and/or frequency of the behavior. Library staff are authorized to contact law enforcement for severe misbehavior or when an individual refuses to leave library property when directed to do so. Illegal conduct may result in the suspension of Library privileges for a period of time up to and including a one-year renewable suspension.

The Library staff is authorized to use security footage of those who violate this policy, and to request their identification.

Library staff will give a patron a verbal warning, and/or ask to leave the library building for the day when inappropriate behavior occurs. Depending on the frequency and/or severity of the behavior, a suspension may be issued.

### **Patron Suspension Procedures**

#### **Appeals Process**

Community members have the right, ~~within one week after receipt of a notice of suspended privileges,~~ to **appeal their Notice of Suspension. state their position in writing.**

1. Submit your position **by filling out the Appeals Form** in writing **provided to you,** following the directions on the Notice of Suspension Letter.
2. Written requests to have the suspension reduced should be directed to the **Safety Committee** or Executive Director of the Library by mail, email, or in person delivery to library staff.
3. **The Safety Committee will review the Appeals Form within 30 days of receipt and provide considerations to the Library Board. The Library Board has the final authority to reverse or shorten a library suspension.**
  - **Considerations may include but are not limited to: Incident report documentation, staff statements, documentation from other professional organizations, and more.**

Prior to the end of a community member's suspension period, the community member may be required to meet with the Library's social worker to create a return plan and to discuss how best the Library may support them to prevent the incident from repeating itself. After this meeting, community members whose suspensions are not renewed are welcome to

return, as long as they follow library policy.

## **Addendum Concerning the Behavior and Supervision of Minors and Children's Areas of the Library**

### **Philosophy Behind the Addendum Concerning the Behavior and Supervision of Minors and Children's Areas of the Library**

The Racine Public Library welcomes children of all ages. Parents/caregivers are responsible for their child's safety and behavior while in the Library whether the parent/caregiver is present or not. Young children need constant supervision which the library cannot provide. It is for the safety of each child that the Racine Public Library Board of Trustees has adopted this policy concerning the behavior and supervision of minors the Library.

### **Safe Child Policy**

Any child aged seven or younger must be directly supervised at all times by a responsible adult or caregiver of at least 12 years old. A person under the age of twelve will not be considered a responsible caregiver; this includes siblings. The caregiver is responsible for the child's behavior while in the building.

Children aged eight or over may remain in the Library unattended, provided they follow all Library rules as listed in the Patron Behavior Policy, unless special circumstances, defined in the **Safe Child Procedures**, exist.

Children attending a family program must be supervised by a caregiver. Children participating in a class visit must be supervised by the accompanying teacher and the teacher must remain with the students at all times.

### **Safe Child Procedures**

All children are subject to the Patron Behavior Policy. Library staff or security will intervene when a child is violating Library rules and take whatever action is considered appropriate, including, but not limited to, notifying the child's caregiver, summoning the police, or restricting Library privileges and/or access to the Library.

#### *Child left unattended*

If a child under the age of eight is left unattended by a responsible caregiver over the age of twelve and a caregiver cannot be located, an appropriate staff member will be called. This includes staff on the Leadership Team, supervisors and/or members of the Safety Committee.

If a caregiver is not found in the building, law enforcement officials will be contacted and the child will stay with Library staff until law enforcement officials arrive.

#### *Child left unattended at closing*

At closing, if a child who is age fifteen or younger is left unattended in the Library and a caregiver cannot be reached or does not arrive within 15 minutes, law enforcement officials may be contacted. The Person in Charge will wait with the child until law enforcement officials arrive.

*Special Circumstances*

If a child becomes ill or injured and a caregiver cannot be contacted, law enforcement officials or, if appropriate, a rescue squad may be called.

This policy supersedes the Racine Public Library's previous policies on patron behavior.

Approved by: RPL Board of Trustees

Approved Date: \_\_February 21, 2025\_\_

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