



MANISTEE COUNTY LIBRARY
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Patron Code of Conduct Policy

I. Introduction

The Manistee County Library System (the “Library”) is open for specific and designated civic, educational and cultural uses, including reading, studying, writing, participating in scheduled Library programs, and using Library materials. In order to provide resources and services to all people who visit the Library facilities in an atmosphere of courtesy, respect, and excellent service, the Library Board of Trustees has adopted this Patron Code of Conduct Policy (“Policy”). The purpose of the Patron Code of Conduct Policy is to assist the Library in fulfilling its mission as a community resource enriching life, stimulating intellectual curiosity, fostering literacy, and encouraging an informed citizenry.

The following rules of conduct shall apply to all buildings and all branches – interior and exterior – and all grounds controlled and operated by the Library (“Library facilities”) and to all persons entering in or on the premises, unless otherwise specified.

II. Rules for a Safe Environment

A. **Violations of Law.** Committing or attempting to commit an activity in violation of federal, state, or local law, ordinance or regulation (including but not limited to assault, larceny, vandalism, indecent exposure, copyright infringement or removing library material from the property without authorization through the approved lending procedures) is prohibited.

B. **Weapons.** Carrying guns, pistols or other weapons, except as specifically permitted and exempt from local regulation by law, is prohibited.

C. **Alcohol; Drug; Marijuana.** Possessing, selling, distributing, or consuming any alcoholic or intoxicating beverage, illegal drug, or marijuana is prohibited. Possessing drug paraphernalia is also prohibited; exceptions may be made for alcoholic beverages for certain Library-sponsored events with Library Board approval.

D. **Under the Influence.** Persons noticeably under the influence of any controlled substance or alcoholic or intoxicating liquor are not allowed on Library property.

E. **Recreational Equipment and Personal Transport Devices.** Use of skateboards, rollerblades, roller skates, or other wheeled form of recreational equipment is not allowed in the Library or on Library property. Bicycles, and other recreational vehicles must be parked in authorized areas only. Wheelchairs, scooters, and other power driven mobility devices are permitted by those individuals with disabilities in accordance with Library rules, unless a particular type of device cannot be accommodated because of legitimate safety requirements.

F. **No Blocking of Doors, Aisles or Entrances.** All doors, aisles and entrances must remain obstacle-free. Patrons are asked to avoid running power cords or laying any objects across aisles or other areas that are used for walking.

G. Animals. Animals are not permitted in the Library. Exceptions include service animals, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), those used in law enforcement, or those used for Library programming.

H. Incendiary Devices. The use of incendiary devices, such as candles, matches, and lighters, is prohibited inside the Library.

I. Staff Areas Only. Patrons shall not be permitted in areas designated as "staff only" unless otherwise permitted by the Library Director.

J. School Groups. School groups using the Library are encouraged to coordinate their visits ahead of time so staff may be ready to assist in creating the best possible experience for the group. School groups must have teachers and appropriate staff to ensure that student groups use the Library in accordance with the Library's policy.

III. Rules for Personal Behavior

A. Personal Property. Personal property brought into the Library is subject to the following:

1. The Library personnel may limit the number of parcels carried into the Library. The Library may also limit the size of items, for example, the Library prohibits large items such as suitcases, duffle bags or large plastic garbage bags. Items must be small enough to fit under a chair at the Library.
2. The Library is not responsible for personal belongings left unattended and the Library staff is not permitted to guard or watch personal belongings.
3. The Library does not guarantee storage for personal property.
4. Personal possessions must not be left unattended or take up seating or space if needed by others

B. Food and Beverages. To create a more pleasant environment for all library users, food is not allowed except as utilized for library programming. Beverages must be in a sealed container (travel mugs, twist top, etc.) Please report any spills as soon as possible to the Circulation Desk to minimize possible damage to surfaces or materials.

1. No beverage of any type is allowed in the computer labs, makerspaces, or near Library- owned computers and equipment.
2. Users not complying with these guidelines will be reminded of the policy and then asked to relocate if they are unwilling to comply.

C. Unauthorized Use. Patrons are asked to leave the Library promptly at closing time and may not be in the Library when it is not open to the public. Further, any patron whose privileges to use the Library have been denied may not enter the Library. Any patron whose privileges have been limited may not use the Library in any manner that conflicts with those limits placed on the patron by the Library Director, his or her designee, or the Library Board.

D. Engaging in Library Activities. Patrons are expected to be engaged in activities associated with the use of the Library while in the building or on Library property. Patrons not engaged in reading, studying, writing, participating in scheduled Library programs or using Library resources or materials shall be asked to leave Library property. This includes sleeping on Library furniture or floor.

- E. Considerate Use. The following behavior is prohibited in the Library and in the Library building:
1. Sleeping or snoring;
 2. Running, pushing, shoving, fighting, throwing items, provoking a fight or other unsafe physical behavior;
 3. Misuse of or climbing on Library furniture;
 4. Using obscene or threatening language or gestures;
 5. Spitting.
 6. Engaging in sexual behavior (1) that is a violation of the law, (2) which can reasonably be expected to disturb Library users or staff while such staff or patrons are in the Library or on Library property; or (3) that interferes with the Library patrons' use of the Library or the ability of the staff person to do his or her job.
- F. Panhandling or Soliciting. Panhandling or soliciting Library staff or patrons for money, products, or services inside the Library or on Library property is prohibited. Sales of products or services that are incidental to Library programming may be permitted only if approved in advance by the Library Director.
- G. Interference with Staff. Patrons may not interfere with the staff's performance of duties in the Library or on Library property. This includes engaging in conversation or behavior that monopolizes or forces the excessive attention of staff for an inappropriate period of time, inappropriate personal comments, sexual advances, or physical and/or verbal harassment.
- I. Distributions; Postings. Distributing or posting printed materials/literature on Library property not in accordance with Library policy is prohibited.
- J. Restrooms. Misuse of restrooms, including laundering, shaving, hair cutting or trimming, bathing, and sexual activity is prohibited. Patrons are asked to leave Library materials outside of the restrooms.
- K. Harassment. Staring, photographing, video recording, audio recording, following, stalking, harassing, arguing with, threatening, talking or behaving in a manner (1) which can reasonably be expected to disturb Library users or staff while such staff or patrons are in the Library or on Library property; (2) that interferes with Library patrons' use of the Library or the ability of the staff person to do his or her job is prohibited; (3) would create or may result in the hostile work environment for Library staff; and/or (4) that violates Michigan law.
- L. Loud Noise. Producing or allowing any loud, unreasonable, or disturbing noises that interfere with other patrons' use of the Library or which can be reasonably expected to disturb other persons or have the intent of annoying other persons, including yelling, cheering, talking (with others or in monologues) or noises from electronic, entertainment, and communication devices, such as cell phones, tablets, headphones, and radio, is prohibited. It is expected that the children's area may not be as quiet as other areas of the Library as adults are encouraged to read aloud to children in the Youth Area, provided that they are reading in a voice that would not reasonably disturb others. Patrons may use headphones or earbuds but at a volume that cannot be heard by other Library patrons or staff.
- M. Odor. Offensive odor, including but not limited to body odor due to poor personal hygiene, overpowering perfume or cologne, or odors from items brought into the Library that causes a nuisance is prohibited. (For example, if the patron's odor interferes with staff or other patrons' use of the Library, the patron violates this Policy.)
- N. Phones. Phone calls are prohibited in the Library, except in the lobby. Those patrons desiring to use phones to place or receive calls must use the phones outside of the Library buildings or in the Library's lobby. Phones shall be placed on silent or vibrate mode upon entering the Library.

- O. Library Policies. Patrons must adhere to all Library policies.
- P. Identification. Patrons must provide identification to Library staff when requested.
- Q. Tables or Structures on Library Property. No person may use or set up a table, stand, sign, or similar structure on Library property. This does not apply to Library-sponsored or co-sponsored events.
- R. Smoking and Tobacco. Smoking, using e-cigarettes, vaping, electronic nicotine delivery systems or chewing tobacco is prohibited on Library property.
- S. Shirts and Shoes. Shirts and shoes are required for health reasons and must be worn at all times inside the Library and on Library property.
- T. Photography. All patrons must seek permission from the Library Director or designee before taking photos or filming at the Library, unless attending a meeting that is open to the public under the Open Meetings Act. Official identification must be shown. Unattended children may not have their pictures taken.
- U. Campaigning, Petitioning, Interviewing and Similar Activities. As a limited public forum, the Library reserves the right to regulate the time, place, and manner for campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing and soliciting on Library grounds as follows:
 - 1. Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing and soliciting are prohibited inside the Library building.
 - 2. Campaigning petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing and soliciting outside the Library building but on Library property are subject to the following requirements:
 - a. Persons or groups are requested to sign in at the Checkout Desk in advance.
 - b. Use of Library property does not indicate the Library's opposition or endorsement of the candidate or issue that is the subject of the petition, interview, campaign or discussion
 - c. Permitted area for campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing and soliciting outside of the Library building shall be limited to the areas 25 feet from all entrances.
 - d. No person shall block ingress or egress from the Library building.
 - e. Permitted times will be limited to the operating hours of the Library.
 - f. Campaign materials, literature, or petitions may not be brought into the Library, posted at the Library or left on Library property.
- V. Sales. Selling merchandise on Library property without prior permission from the Library Director is prohibited.

IV. Rules for the Use and Preservation of Library Materials and Property

- A. Care of Library Property. Patrons must not deface, vandalize, damage or improperly remove Library materials, equipment, furniture, or buildings. Patrons shall not load or install any programs or software on Library computers. Patrons shall not cause damage by returning books containing bedbugs or bringing bedbugs into the library. Patrons shall be responsible to reimburse the Library for costs incurred by the Library for violating this provision.
- B. Internet Use. Patrons must abide by established time limitations and all other provisions of the Library Internet Use Policy.

C. Equipment. Library phones and staff computers are for staff use only.

V. Children in the Library

A. Children are welcome and encouraged to use the Library at all times. The Library desires to make each visit an important one for the child. A "Child" means a minor under the age of 18.

B. Rules and Regulations Regarding Children.

1. All patrons, including children, are expected to comply with the Library's policies. Parents, guardians or responsible caregivers shall review and be fully aware of all Library policies governing children, particularly the Internet Use Policy.
2. Parents, guardians and caregivers are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their children regardless of age while in the Library or on Library property.
3. Library staff will not be expected to supervise or monitor children's behavior.
4. Children under the age of 8 must be attended by a parent, guardian or responsible caregiver. The parent, guardian or responsible caregiver shall remain in the Library at all times. If a child under the age of 8 is attending a Library-sponsored program on the premises, the parent, a guardian, or responsible caregiver is to remain on the premises for the duration of the program.
5. Children ages 3 and under must be within the visual contact of a parent, guardian or responsible caregiver at all times, including during programs and visits to the restroom. Children ages 3 and under may not be left in the Youth Services Department alone.

C. Library staff will attempt to contact a parent, legal guardian, custodian or caregiver when:

1. The health or safety of an unattended child is in doubt.
2. A child is frightened while alone at the Library.
3. The behavior of an unattended child violates Library policy.
4. The unattended child has not been met by a parent, legal guardian, custodian or responsible caregiver at closing time. A child is considered unattended at closing time if the child is under the age of 8 or the child needs assistance procuring transportation.

D. If a parent, legal guardian, custodian or caregiver cannot be reached by closing time or fails to arrive within fifteen minutes after being contacted, Library staff will contact law enforcement officials to take charge of the situation involving the unattended child. Library employees are not permitted to transport an unattended child or vulnerable adult under any circumstances.

E. Use of Children's Room. The Children's Room is for children under 12 and their caregivers. All patrons may actively browse the collection or retrieve a book, but only children and the accompanying caregiver may remain in the Children's Room after completing such activity. Further, seating in the Children's Room is limited to children and their accompanying caregivers.

F. Adults in the Children's Room. The Children's Room is for children and their caregivers. Library patrons without a child should not use the Children's Room for reading or study. Patrons who are not actively seeking children's materials and who linger in the Children's Room will be asked to leave. This is for the safety of all children.

VI. Disciplinary Process

Disciplinary process for Library Facilities Violations of this policy shall be processed according to the following. The Library Director or the Director's designee may restrict access to Library facilities with immediate dismissal of the patron from the premises, by suspending the patron's access to Library facilities for a set period of time, or by denying access to specific services and/or programs pursuant to this Policy. If necessary, the local police may be called to intervene.

A. Incident Reports. Library staff shall record in writing in the form of an Incident Report any violation of this Policy that resulted in a verbal warning or a suspension of Library privileges. By the end of the day on which the incident occurred, an Incident Report shall be written and emailed or delivered to the Library Director for logging and review. The report should include physical descriptions in addition to the name of the patron. A copy of the suspension of privileges letter should be attached, if applicable.

B. Violation of the Policy – Suspension of Privileges. Unless otherwise provided in this Policy, (see Section C below), the Library shall handle violations as follows:

1. Initial Violation: Library patrons observed violating this Policy will be asked to cease the violation with a verbal request. If the patron does not comply with the request, he or she will be asked to leave the building for the day. If he or she refuses, the police may be called.

2. Subsequent Violations: The Library Director or the Library Director's authorized designee may further limit or suspend the patron's Library privileges if infractions continue. Such limitation or revocation shall be in writing specifying the nature of the violation. Subsequent violations of the same rule shall result in additional suspensions of increasing length.

C. Violations that Affect Safety and Security. Violations involving verbal abuse, violence, threatening behaviors, sexual harassment, vandalism, drug sale or use or attempted drug sale or use, intoxication, theft or attempted theft, physical harassment, sexual misconduct or any behavior that threatens the safety and security of staff and/or patrons shall be handled as follows:

1. Initial Violation: The police will be called immediately. If the conduct constitutes a violation of local, state or federal law, arrest or criminal prosecution may ensue. Violations of this nature will result in an immediate minimum two-week suspension of Library privileges in order to give the Library sufficient time to investigate the incident. After the investigation is completed, the Library Director or his/her designee may add additional time to the initial limitation or suspension period.

2. Subsequent Violations: The police will be called immediately. If the conduct constitutes a violation of local, state, or federal law, arrest or criminal prosecution may ensue. The Library Director or the Library Director's authorized designee, may further limit or suspend the patron's Library privileges in escalating responses, which will be documented in writing. Subsequent violations of the same rule will result in additional suspensions of increasing length.

D. Reinstatement. The patron whose privileges have been limited or suspended shall attend a meeting with the Director or the Director's designee to review the Library Patron Behavior Policy before their privileges may be reinstated. The Library Director may impose conditions for the reinstatement.

VII. Right of Appeal

Patrons may appeal (1) a decision to limit or suspend privileges or (2) the conditions placed upon reinstatement by sending a written appeal to the Library Board within 10 business days of the date the privileges were suspended or limited. The appeal should be sent to the President of the Library Board. The decision of the Library Board is final.

Manistee County Library Board Approved June 4, 2019

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