

York County Library

Patron Behavior Policy

Approved by Board of Trustees on January 12, 2009.
Revised by Board of Trustees on July 20, 2009.

The York County Library Board of Trustees has adopted a Patron Behavior Policy in order to:

- Ensure the safety of library patrons, employees, and volunteers.
- Protect the rights of individuals to use library property, materials, and services.
- Protect the rights of library employees and volunteers to conduct library business without interference.
- Ensure the use of facilities, materials, and services by the greatest number of individuals.
- Preserve those materials and facilities from harm.

These rules exist for the comfort and protection of all. They will be courteously but firmly enforced by Library staff. Any Library staff member has the authority to enforce this policy, and all other Library patron policies. If a Library security guard is on duty, violations of this behavior policy may be referred to him or her. Violations of this policy or any other Library policies may result in loss of Library privileges, including notification to appropriate local law enforcement agencies of illegal activity subject to prosecution by local, state, and federal authorities.

Loss of Library privileges will be based on a progressive scale as follows:

- The first violation of Library policies will result in loss of privileges for one month.
- The second violation of Library policies will result in the loss of privileges for six months.
- The third violation of Library policies will result in the loss of privileges for one year.
- The fourth violation of Library policies will result in the loss of privileges on an indefinite basis.

Appeals to regain privileges must be made to the Library Director. Final appeals will be decided by the York County Library Board of Trustees. Restoration of privileges may be made on a probationary basis subject to future incidents.

RULES FOR PATRON BEHAVIOR

1. Appropriate apparel, which includes but is not limited to a shirt and footwear, is to be worn in the library. Personal cleanliness is expected. Patrons whose body odor proves to be offensive to others may be asked to leave based on the progressive scale stated above.
2. Carrying concealed weapons on library property is not allowed except by law enforcement officers.

3. As a courtesy to others, we ask that cell phones and pagers be turned to silent (vibrate) and that telephone conversations on cell phones be held outside the building.
4. Library pay phones have a ten-minute time limit on their use, and they cannot receive incoming calls. Patrons may be allowed in emergencies (for example, to call a parent for a ride home) to use one of the library business phones for a local call. Patrons must first get approval from a library staff member, and all calls should be brief.
5. Disrupting or hindering Library staff and others from using the library is not permitted. This may include, but is not limited to: loud outbursts of speech or laughter; boisterous behavior; cursing; using personal listening equipment at a level that can be heard by others; running; shouting; roughhousing; or obstructing aisles, doorways, or stairs.
6. Loitering at entrances, in lobbies, walkways, restrooms, the parking lot, or other non-study areas is not allowed.
7. The library reserves the right to limit the number of individuals who may sit together in a study area.
8. Conduct that endangers, threatens, or harasses another patron or staff member is not allowed. Physical altercations, including assaults or violent acts, will not be tolerated. Harassment may include, but is not limited to: persistent staring; initiating unwanted conversations; impeding access to the building; stalking or following with the intent to annoy; or other actions another individual reasonably perceives to be hostile.
9. Patrons are not allowed in non-public areas of the library unless conducting official library business, as part of a library tour, or accompanied by a member of the library staff.
10. Theft, vandalism, and mutilation of library property are criminal offenses and violators may be prosecuted.
11. Chronic or prolonged sleeping that disturbs other patrons or staff is not permitted.
12. Eating and drinking is not permitted, except as allowed by the Library for library programs and special events.
13. Smoking in library buildings, drinking or bringing alcoholic beverages into the library or on the grounds, and using or bringing an illegal substance into the library or on the grounds is not permitted.
14. Animals are not permitted in the library unless they are used to aid persons under the provisions of the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or are part of a library-sponsored program.
15. Solicitation or any kind and distributing any pamphlet or similar item, or posting any notice except in accordance with library policy, is not allowed. Materials are not to be stuffed into Library books and other materials. Leaflets are not to be placed on cars in the library parking lot.
16. The library is not responsible for personal belongings left unattended.
17. Bicycles and similar equipment may not be brought into any enclosed area of the building, or placed in walkways where they impede traffic. Patrons are encouraged to use bicycle racks available for public use. Skateboarding and/or rollerblading are not permitted on library property.
18. Parents, not library staff, are responsible for the behavior of their children using the library, including supervision of computer use by minors. Parents will be notified if their children are left unattended and require supervision. If parents or caregivers are unavailable, proper authorities will be notified.

19. Patrons must leave any enclosed area of the building by closing time. The library has the right to call the police concerning unattended children after closing time.

20. Copying, displaying, and/or distributing copyrighted works may infringe upon the owner's copyright, protected under law (Title 17 US Code). Any use of computer printing, photocopying, or reproductions which infringe upon the use of copyrighted works is subject to civil remedies and criminal penalties provided by federal law.

21. Additional policies governing patron behavior related to specific library functions and uses may be detailed in other policies, including but not limited to: Meeting Room Policy, Computer Use Policy, Unattended Children Policy.

22. Per an opinion issued by South Carolina Attorney General Henry McMaster on February 17, 2009, libraries, as public property, are not subject to "no trespass" orders by local law enforcement (see attached correspondence).