

# **Portage Public Library PUBLIC BEHAVIOR POLICY**

- I Introduction
- II Specific Guidelines
- III General Guidelines for Handling Problem Patrons
- IV Unattended Children
- V Disruptive Children

## **I Introduction**

- (A) Under the provisions of Chapter 43 of the Wisconsin State Statutes, specifically section 43.52(1), the Portage Public Library Board of Trustees may enact regulations that serve to insure the safety of all library staff and patrons, protect the usefulness of the materials collection, and maintain order in the library.
- (B) The Board of Trustees is committed to providing an atmosphere where people of all ages may come to read, browse, do research, or study. This policy does not prohibit quiet conversation between patrons and/or staff members or conversations required to carry on library programs or business. It is designed to preserve a reasonably quiet atmosphere where library patrons may use library services and materials without disturbance.
- (C) Inappropriate behavior includes any activity that disturbs others, interferes with library operations, damages the building or its furnishings, as well as rudeness, profanity, or any other behavior generally considered unacceptable in a public place.
- (D) This policy has been established for all patrons. If a patron is not responsive to the needs of other library users or disregards the policies protecting patrons, staff, and library property, the patron will be asked to leave the library.

## **II Specific Guidelines**

- (A) The rights of individuals to use the library should not be abridged or denied. To guarantee these rights for all persons, no library patron shall engage in the following prohibited behaviors:
  1. Eat in the library, except as provided for in the library's Meeting Room Use policy. Beverages are acceptable, provided they have a tight-fitting lid or cap.
  2. The library is a tobacco-free zone. Smoking, e-cigarette use, and chewing tobacco is prohibited throughout the facility and near its entryway.
  3. Willfully annoy another person.
  4. Damage or deface public property.
  5. Engage in loud or boisterous behavior.
  6. Utter profane, obscene, or offensive language directed at another person.
  7. Be in a state of intoxication that causes a public disturbance.

8. Enter or remain in the library without a shirt or shoes.
  9. Loiter on the premises under circumstances that warrant alarm for the safety or health of any person or property in the vicinity.
  10. Remain in the building after its regular closing hours.
  11. Interfere with other library patrons' use of the facilities through extremely poor personal hygiene.
  12. Sleep in the library for an extended period of time (more than 15 minutes).
- (B) Bringing firearms as stipulated in Section 941.235 of the Wisconsin State Statutes, or other weapons or facsimiles thereof, on to the library Premises, except as allowed at a library-approved event, is prohibited.
  - (C) Bringing alcohol or illegal drugs/paraphernalia on to the library Premises is prohibited. Alcohol may be allowed at library-approved events, with Library Director or Library Board approval.
  - (D) No pets or other animals are allowed in the library unless they are service dogs or part of a library program.
  - (E) Only persons on library business will be allowed to solicit for the sale of goods and services in the library. Salespersons may meet with authorized library personnel only. Exceptions may be made for library-sponsored activities and organizations affiliated with the library.
  - (F) Surveying of groups or individuals may only be done in conjunction with output measures or other similar surveys designed to quantify library use or satisfaction with library services.
  - (G) Canvassing -- for example, soliciting signatures for a petition, nomination papers, and the like -- is not allowed on library property.
  - (H) It is a charge of the library staff to see that the rights of individuals to use of the library are upheld. The staff is obligated to enforce these guidelines so that the facility can be used to the fullest by all persons. Questions regarding the interpretation of these guidelines will be referred to the Library Director or other staff member in charge.

### III **General Guidelines for Handling Problem Patrons**

- (A) It is the patron's responsibility to maintain necessary and proper behavior standards in order to protect his/her individual rights and the rights and privileges of other patrons.
- (B) Occasionally, staff members may have to deal with patrons who violate the rights of others or who create a disturbance in the library. If a patron creates a public nuisance, that patron may be restricted from the library and from the use of library services. Those who are unwilling to leave or do not leave within a reasonable amount of time, after being instructed to do so by staff, will be subject to the law.
- (C) A brief written report of any incident involving theft, vandalism, illegal activity, or major disruptive behavior will be filed with the Director as soon as possible after its occurrence. (A sample copy of the "Incident Report" follows.)
- (D) The Library Director, acting on behalf of the Board of Trustees, may suspend the library privileges of any individual who willfully violates library regulations when the severity or continued reoccurrence warrants

such action. [WI Stat. 43.52(2).] The Library Director will inform the Library Board of any such action taken.

- (E) The person whose library privileges are suspended shall be advised in writing of the suspension and the reason(s) for such action. The offending person shall also be informed that the suspension may be appealed at the next regularly scheduled Library Board meeting.

#### **IV Unattended Children**

- (A) One of the primary missions of the Library is to provide a variety of services for children of all ages. The library encourages visits by young children, and it is our desire to make these visits both memorable and enjoyable for the child.
- (B) "Unattended" means that the parent or designated person is not in close proximity to the child. Library staff cannot be expected to assume responsibility for the care of unsupervised children in the library. Parents and/or legal guardians are responsible for their children's behavior while in the library.
- (C) Therefore, it is the policy of the Library that all children eight (8) years of age and under must be in the company of a parent/responsible person while in the library. Even if the young person is attending a program, it is required that the parent/responsible person remain in the library throughout the program.
- (D) If it is determined that a child is lost or left unattended, a staff member shall bring the child to a Youth Services staff member (or library staff member in charge) who will attempt to identify and locate the parent/responsible person. If a parent/responsible person cannot be found, then the child will be remanded to the care of the Portage Police Department. See Child Safety Policy for more detail.

#### **V Disruptive Children**

- (A) Children of all ages are encouraged to use the library for homework, pleasure reading, and attending programs. The staff realizes that the library will be noisier at busy times and that children by nature can cause more commotion.
- (B) Examples of disruptive behavior include running in the book stack aisles, unsupervised use of library equipment, pulling books from the shelves, encroachment into staff areas, etc. -- any behavior that interferes with other people's use of the library or that may damage library property.
- (C) Whether they are with their parents or not, children who are continually disruptive will be dealt with directly. The child will be given a warning that he/she must settle down or will be asked to leave the library. If after a second warning the child continues to be disruptive, he/she will be asked to leave the library. If the child needs to contact a parent, he/she may do so and then wait in the lobby until the parent arrives.

*This policy replaces any previous policy regarding public behavior.*

Approved by the Portage Public Library Board of Trustees  
November 8, 2011  
Revised and approved January 8, 2013, September 13, 2016, February 13, 2018