



# WESTCHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY

## Library Code of Conduct Policy

The Library serves all patrons/visitors in an equal manner, and is open to everyone. To meet the goal of offering the best possible service to Library visitors, and to maintain a safe, clean, and welcoming environment, WPL has established the following standards for visitors in and on Library property.

### Unacceptable Behavior

Unacceptable behavior includes behavior within the Library or on Library premises that interferes with the use of the Library by other patrons, creates a threat or risk of violence or harm or injury to other patrons or Library personnel, interferes with the work of Library personnel, or creates a risk of damage to Library property.

Unacceptable behavior on Library premises includes, but is not limited to:

- Use or display of profanity, violence, abusive or threatening language or gestures that create reasonable fear of physical harm, injury, or endangerment
- Smoking, vaping, use of e-cigarettes or any Electronic Nicotine Delivery System, or use of other nicotine or tobacco products; use of all such products is prohibited within 15' of Library entrances
- Unreasonable noise levels including shouting, loud talking, fighting, or disruptive conversation
- Playing music or other media at levels that are disruptive to patrons or Library personnel
- Damaging, defacing, or theft of any Library property or materials, or of the personal property of other patrons
- Being a nuisance to other patrons or Library staff
- Food except that which is served during an approved event. Covered drinks are allowed to be brought into the Library and consumed, as long as the cover remains in place while inside the Library. All drinks must not be shared, and are for individual use only.
- Failure to evacuate in an emergency or during a drill
- Non-emergency activation of alarms
- Running, throwing objects, horseplay, and other boisterous behavior
- Leaving personal items unattended; such items may be discarded at the discretion of Library personnel to preserve a safe environment
- Solicitation, gambling, panhandling, or campaigning
- Loitering
- Sleeping
- Using restrooms for bathing, laundering clothes, or other loitering of any kind

- Use of, possession of, or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Skating, skateboarding, bicycling, using a hover board, or any other recreational vehicle
- Blocking aisles or any other passages in such a way as to prohibit free flow of pedestrians, strollers, or wheelchairs
- Using Library furniture, building facilities, or collections in a manner other than their intended purposes, or in ways which may cause excessive or unreasonable wear, e.g. lying down, putting feet on chairs/walls, sitting more than one person to a single chair, etc.
- Bringing animals into the Library except those that are service animals, or those that are authorized as part of a Library-sponsored program. Service animals may not be left unattended and must remain in the care of their handlers at all times.
- Tying or otherwise tethering animals to any area on Library premises (animals may not be left unattended on Library premises at any time; all animals outside the Library must be accompanied by a rightful owner at all times)
- Failure to wear appropriate attire including shirt and shoes
- Sexual harassment or any other type of harassment, including following other patrons, staring unnecessarily, intimidation, or name-calling
- Viewing sexually explicit images on Library or personal computers or electronic devices
- Sexual misconduct, public lewdness, excessive displays of affection, or publicly inappropriate physical contact
- Being in an unauthorized or personnel-only area
- Misusing Library spaces designated for particular patrons. Such spaces vary by branch, and include, but are not limited to: Children's Rooms, Teen Rooms, Study Rooms, and Meeting Rooms. In addition, certain areas and study rooms are designated for patrons working individually and quietly, and other uses of these spaces are not permitted.
- Leaving children unsupervised
- Personal hygiene, to include bodily odor or perfumes, that constitutes a disturbance to other patrons or that interferes with the work of Library personnel

Behavior expectations on Library premises as pertains to firearms:

- The Library shall follow current Indiana Code regarding licensing and carrying of firearms by the public;
- the Library supports Indiana Code and Indiana laws indicating that pointing a firearm is illegal;
- and pursuant to IC 35-47-11.1-4(6) the Library prohibits the intentional display of firearms during public meetings.

## **Enforcement**

Library employees may at any time request that patrons show library cards for purposes of identification.

The Library reserves the right to require anyone who engages in unacceptable behavior to leave the premises, the right to restrict privileges for a specified period of time, and the right to ban the individual from the library for a specified period of time or permanently. Unlawful activities will be immediately reported to the police.

### **Procedures for Addressing Minor Violations**

Library staff will use their best judgement to determine what constitutes a Minor Violation. Under these circumstances, Library staff will:

- 1) Engage by calmly approaching the individual;
- 2) Initiate an oral warning, in a civil and courteous manner;
- 3) For recordkeeping purposes, staff will attempt to determine the patron's identity and current address; the disgruntled patron may or may not provide personal information (i.e., name, address)
- 4) Staff will clearly inform the patron of observed unacceptable behavior, and the expected compliance
- 5) If the patron fails to comply and the behavior continues after the oral warning, staff should request the assistance of an additional staff member, including a departmental manager or Manager on Duty if they are not already present. Collected staff will then follow the same procedure as before, offering a second verbal warning.
- 6) Upon the third violation, the patron is removed for the remainder of the business day; and:
  - a) In efforts to follow through, the Person-In-Charge will be accompanied by the initial responding staff members when approaching the patron;
  - b) Staff will inform the patron of the decision that terminates library privileges; and
  - c) Patron will receive an explanation for removal based on the behavior, with the understanding that they may return to the facility on the next business day
- 7) Upon resolving the incident, staff involved during dismissal are required to complete an Incident Report form

### **Incidents that Require Immediate Attention**

Some incidents regarding patron behavior are deemed more serious and require immediate attention, and will result in immediate removal with no prior warning.

Examples of such behavior includes, but are not limited to:

- a) Aggression, hostility, or violence;
- b) Threats or any other endangering behavior that imperil others;
- c) Pilfering, stealing, or theft
- d) Illegal activity executed on Library property
- e) Multiple, repeated minor offenses

The Person In-Charge and an additional staff member will address the unacceptable behavior with the patron, informing them of what their unacceptable behavior is, and that they are asked to immediately leave the library premises. Any scheduled patron activity during the period of suspension is cancelled (i.e., Computer or Room Reservation, Program Registration);

### **Terms of Dismissal and Readmission**

Repeated action and/or a sequence of events relative to unacceptable behavior may result in the following outcome:

First Violation - Patron Dismissed from the premises until the next business day

Second Violation - Continued Inappropriate Behavior / 7-Day Dismissal

Third Violation - Excessive Misconduct / 30-Day Dismissal / Re-Admission based on results of Director Meeting

Fourth Violation - Habitual Behavior / 60-Day Dismissal / Re-Admission based on results of Trustees Meeting

### **Extreme Incidents and the No Trespass Order**

In some instances, problem behavior may be considered so extreme that it justifies immediate contact with the local Police Department; and:

1) The patron, in the accompaniment of the Library Person-In-Charge and a police officer, is issued a No Trespass Order

a) Library privileges are immediately suspended (e.g., Material Check-Out, Computer Use, Meeting and Study Room Use)

2) The patron may not return to the property unless the Board votes to lift the No Trespass Order

3) Following the event, the involved staff or those witnessing the incident are required to complete an Incident Report regarding the violation. Corresponding documents are to be forwarded to and maintained by the Director

4) Repeat offenders that continue violating procedures or those who refuse to leave the premises are subject to the following:

a) Arrest and charging with Criminal Trespass; and

b) Prosecution to the fullest extent per Indiana criminal trespass law

Adopted by the WPL Board of Trustees 04/11/2024

Revised 08/14/2025