

BEHAVIOR POLICY FOR THE ALTOONA AREA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Introduction

The rules and guidelines set forth in this document represent the first edition of a Behavior Policy for the Altoona Area Public Library.

This document is intended to serve as the manual for behavior in the Public Library and when visiting the Blair County CareerLink. Since the Library is School District property, all students of the Altoona Area School District are subject to the policies, rules and penalties of the District in addition to those listed in this policy. It is recommended that the material from this document be disseminated as visibly as possible. Patrons should be aware in advance of the procedures that will be utilized to deal with specific behavior problems. Also, it is important that all library staff members be thoroughly familiar with the information contained in these rules and guidelines.

This document is not intended to contain all of the information needed for handling every discipline problem in the Public Library. However, for those situations not specifically mentioned, the material in this document should serve as a guide after which to pattern such situations.

In the event of any problematic behavior occurrence, staff should document the situation by completing an incident report. The report should be submitted to the department head and Executive Director immediately.

Authority

The Altoona Area Public Library Board of Trustees has the authority to make reasonable and necessary rules governing the behavior of patrons in its library. The rule-making power is not unlimited; it must operate within statutory and constitutional restraints. The Board of Trustees may not make rules which are arbitrary, capricious, or unreasonable. A rule is generally considered reasonable if it uses a rational means of accomplishing a legitimate purpose.

Library rules are assumed to be reasonable until they are rescinded or waived. Patrons should obey library rules while working through channels to help change those which they feel are not applicable.

The Behavior Policy for the Altoona Area Public Library will be published and posted on the premises. Copies of the policy will be available to each patron upon request.

APPLICABILITY

The Board of Trustees shall require each patron to adhere to the rules and guidelines set forth herein and to submit to such corrective measures as are appropriately imposed for the infraction of those rules and guidelines.

The Library property is part of the Altoona Area School District Campus and in general is meant to encompass the entire building, the lower parking lot across 5th Avenue, the 17th Street side parking lot, the ground upon which the library sits, and the sidewalks surrounding the building, including but not limited to 5th Avenue, 6th Avenue, and 17th Street sidewalks.

The rules and guidelines govern patron behavior:

1. during any time spent within the library premises
2. during any time spent on the property assigned to the library
3. during non-library related functions held on the library premises, including Blair County CareerLink services and programs
4. during library sponsored functions held outside of library premises

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Patrons and library officials share the responsibility of protecting the rights of all persons utilizing the library facility. It is with the intent of creating a mutual understanding between all parties that the behavior policy exists.

GENERAL DISCIPLINE SEQUENCE

Discipline problems occur for a variety of reasons and in varying degrees of frequency and severity. In general, offending patrons will be subject to corrective action up to and including exclusion from the library, cancellation of borrowing privileges, and the issuance of a no trespass letter prohibiting the offending patron's presence on library property at any time - enforceable through the school district police, local police, and court system.

After proper warning of offense, staff have the authority to ask the offending patron to leave the library. If the patron refuses to comply, staff should notify school district security for assistance.

PATRON BEHAVIOR POLICY

There are a multitude of acts which are not and cannot be precisely spelled out in written regulations. Conduct deemed inappropriate by library officials, nevertheless, will fall within the scope of patron misconduct and be subject to the disciplinary action deemed reasonable by library officials.

1. ATTIRE

A. For safety and health reasons footwear will be required for all patrons.

B. A shirt will be required for all patrons.

C. Public restrooms are not to be used for extensive personal hygiene or laundry.

D. Vulgar and/or offensive language on clothing: Patron will be asked to turn the shirt inside out, cover the language with another article of clothing, or offer masking tape to cover it.

E. Patrons found in violation of this policy would then be subject to the General Discipline Sequence as previously stated.

2. PHYSICAL INJURY OR DANGER TO OTHER PERSONS

A. A patron shall not intentionally cause, attempt to cause, or threaten to cause physical injury or intentionally behave in such a way as could reasonably cause physical injury to any person.

B. Patrons found in violation of this policy would then be subject to the General Discipline Sequence as previously stated.

3. DAMAGE OR THEFT OF LIBRARY PROPERTY

A. A patron shall not intentionally cause, attempt to cause, or assist to cause damage to library property or steal or attempt to steal library property.

1. The patron shall be required to provide restitution for damages and/or non-recovered stolen property, including the current replacement cost of said property and cost of labor incurred in the repair

and/or replacement of said property.

B. Offending patrons will be referred to the appropriate authorities for charges under the Pennsylvania Criminal Code as deemed necessary by library officials.

4. DAMAGE OR THEFT OF PRIVATE OR OTHER PUBLIC PROPERTY

A. Patrons shall not intentionally cause, attempt to cause, or assist in causing damage to private or other public property or steal, attempt to steal, or assist in the theft of private or other public property.

B. Patrons found in violation of this policy would then be subject to the General Discipline Sequence as previously stated.

5. DISRUPTION

A. Patrons shall not by use of violence, force, noise, coercion, threat, harassment, intimidation, fear, passive resistance, obscene language, obscene gestures, or inappropriate displays of affection or any other conduct that serves no legitimate purpose to intentionally cause the material disruption or obstruction of any lawful mission, purpose, or function of the Altoona Area Public Library.

B. Neither shall any patron engage in such conduct with the deliberate intention of causing disruption and the disruption and obstruction is reasonably certain to result.

C. Patrons shall not engage in any activity that is disruptive or causes other patrons to be prevented from using the Library for legitimate purposes, including but not limited to sleeping, snoring, lying on the floor, and/or obstructing legitimate passageways.

D. Neither shall any patron engage in such conduct as to urge or encourage another to disruptive behavior with the deliberate intention of causing a disruption or obstruction, and that disruption is reasonably certain to result.

E. The unauthorized use of audio-visual devices in the library in such a way that they are audible to others is prohibited. These devices include but are not limited to:

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| 1. Radios | 7. CD players |
| 2. Tape players | 8. MP3 players |
| 3. Walkmans | 9. Tablets |
| 4. Bullhorns | 10. Video cameras & players |
| 5. Cell phones | 11. Gaming systems |
| 6. iPods | 12. Laptops |
| | 13. Bluetooth speakers |

F. Patrons found in violation of this policy would then be subject to the General Discipline Sequence as previously stated.

6. DRUG/ALCOHOL

A. Patrons under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs may have their mental processes altered thus impeding their own learning and also presenting social and behavioral problems within the library environment. For this reason, patrons should not come on the premises under the influence of alcohol or drugs unless under the direction of a licensed physician.

B. Patrons demonstrating symptoms of possible alcohol or drug use will be referred to the appropriate agency (the police department or hospital via ambulance, etc.).

C. Patrons shall not have in their possession any unauthorized drug-related paraphernalia, alcohol, or drugs at any time while on library property or in the premises. The category of alcohol would include but not be limited to any alcoholic beverages, any beverage to which alcohol has been included, and possession of a beverage manufactured by a recognized alcohol distributor, but marketed as 'non-alcoholic'.

7. INTIMIDATION OF OTHERS

A. No patron shall commit offenses of any kind with malicious intent toward any individual or group of individuals or their property (including but not limited to acts involving danger, coercion, threats, harassment, intimidation, fear, harm, or publicly recording any individual without consent.) or urge another to commit the same act while on the Public Library property.

B. Patrons found in violation of this policy would then be subject to the General Discipline Sequence as previously stated.

8. INSUBORDINATION

A. Patrons have an obligation to comply with reasonable requests from library officials. Requests may include but are not limited to: requests for patrons to remove their feet from chairs and tables, to refrain from leaning over railings, and to sit safely in the chairs provided. Refusal to comply or responsive behavior that results in disruption will not be tolerated.

B. Patrons found in violation of this policy would then be subject to the General Discipline Sequence as previously stated.

9. SKATEBOARDS

A. No patron shall, at any time, ride upon or utilize in any manner on library premises any skateboard.

B. No patron shall erect or place any type of ramp or trick device to be designated for use with any skateboard.

C. Patrons found in violation of this policy would then be subject to the General Discipline Sequence as previously stated.

10. TOBACCO

A. The use of any tobacco product is prohibited on Library property.

B. Tobacco products include, but are not limited to: cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff and e-cigarettes.

C. Patrons found in violation of this policy would then be subject to the General Discipline Sequence as previously stated.

11. UNAUTHORIZED CONSUMPTION

A. Patrons may not consume any edible item or beverage while utilizing the library facility, unless purchased at the library and in compliance with rules for that use.

B. Unauthorized items include, but are not limited to: candy, food, beverages, and snack items.

C. Patrons found in violation of this policy would then be subject to the General Discipline Sequence as previously stated.

12. UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS

A. Persons asked to leave the library premises will not be permitted on the library property for the period of time determined by the library officials or based on School District policy.

13. UNSUPERVISED JUVENILES

A. All parents or caregiver patrons are encouraged to closely supervise their juvenile children while utilizing the library facility.

B. Children 12 years of age and younger must be accompanied by an adult. If parents or caregivers are unavailable or unreachable, proper authorities are to be notified by staff.

14. WEAPONS AND DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS

A. A patron shall not knowingly possess, handle, or transmit any object that can reasonably be considered as a weapon.

B. Patrons found in violation of this policy would then be subject to the General Discipline Sequence as previously stated.

15. SOLICITING

A. Soliciting patrons and staff for donations or for the purpose of obtaining signatures on petitions is not allowed in the library and/or on library property.

16. PUBLIC HEALTH

- A. All individuals must abide by public health orders or recommendations that are made by the Pa Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control. Examples include, but are not limited to wearing a mask, social distancing, and hand sanitizing.
- B. Patrons found in violation of this policy would then be subject to the General Discipline Sequence as previously stated.

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