

# PUBLIC LIBRARY OF STEUBENVILLE AND JEFFERSON COUNTY

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES POLICY

### PATRON CODE OF CONDUCT

The Public Library of Steubenville and Jefferson County encourages the use of its facilities for learning, enrichment and the legitimate use of the Library's resources and services. In order to preserve that opportunity, we ask patrons to be respectful of each other and behave in a manner that does not disrupt other patrons or staff.

Any behavior that disrupts the orderly use of the Library is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, any behavior that interferes with:

- The use of Library property, materials and services by other patrons;
- The ability of Library employees to conduct Library business;
- The safety of Library patrons and employees; and/or
- The Library's materials, facilities or property.

#### **Examples of prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to:**

- Leaving unsupervised or unattended children who are unable to care for themselves
- Making unreasonable noise including, but not limited to, loud talking, singing, other loud or disruptive noise, or noise from cell phone or audio/visual equipment usage
- Using profane, obscene or abusive language
- Making racial, ethnic, religious, gender or sexual orientation epithets
- Harassing patrons or staff, including without limitation deliberate or repeated language or behavior that is intimidating, hostile and/or offensive, or that adversely impacts staff work performance or patron use of the Library
- Intentionally damaging, destroying or stealing property belonging to the Library, another patron or staff
- Running or engaging in horseplay
- Lying down or sleeping, including giving the appearance of sleeping
- Littering
- Abusing or improperly using furniture, equipment or materials
- Soliciting and/or panhandling Library patrons or staff, including but not limited to soliciting money and/or donations, and/or selling or attempting to sell merchandise to Library patrons or staff
- Posting or distributing literature without permission
- Gambling
- Blocking entrance to and exit from any library building; monopolizing/obstructing space, seating tables or equipment to the exclusion of others
- Trespassing, violating an eviction, entering Library property when banned or remaining on Library property after having been restricted for directed to leave
- Fighting, challenging someone to fight, physical abuse or assault
- Engaging in or soliciting a sexual act or indecent exposure
- Improper dress, including bare feet, no shirt and uncovered swimsuits
- Vandalizing Library facilities or equipment

- Being under the influence, possessing alcohol or drugs, selling drugs or alcoholic beverages
- Bathing, shaving or washing clothes on the premises
- Bringing animals other than service animals to the Library
- Smoking, using tobacco or using electronic nicotine delivery systems or similar products, such as e-cigarettes, in the Library or within 50 feet of the public entrance
- Using roller blades, roller skates, skateboards, spiked shoes, cleats or other sports equipment in the Library or on Library property
- Entering unauthorized workspaces or work areas or other non-public areas
- Taking photographs and/or recording videos of Library staff or patrons without their permission
- Possessing weapons of any kind, either concealed or in plain view, in the Library, unless the person in possession of the weapon is a law enforcement officer
- Violating the Library's Internet and Electronic Resources policy or otherwise misusing computers
- Violating other Library policies and/or guidelines
- Violating federal, state and/or local laws
- Engaging in other acts disruptive to patrons and staff

In addition, patrons must comply with all federal, state and local laws. Suspected illegal activity will be reported to the police. Violations of law may result in a patron being expelled from the Library, arrested, prosecuted and/or other legal action, as appropriate.

The examples listed above are not a complete list of violations, but instead are intended to provide guidance. The Library Director and other library staff are authorized to determine what constitutes disruptive behavior.

### **STUDY ROOMS (Main Library & Schiappa Branch Library)**

The Library's quiet study rooms are limited to 2 patrons per room. Anyone under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent, guardian or a supervising adult age 21 or older.

### **EATING AND DRINKING IN THE LIBRARY**

The Library permits light snacks and beverages. For the purposes of this policy, beverages encompasses any non-alcoholic beverage, such as coffee, tea, soft drinks, juice or milk. In addition, a light refreshment is considered to be an edible item that may be served between meals. Examples – small bag of chips, doughnuts, sweet rolls or a piece of fruit.

Snacks and beverages should be enjoyed responsibly, remembering to recycle or discard wrappers, bottles and trash and to leave a clean area for other patrons when you leave. If a patron is disruptive while enjoying a snack or beverage, the Library staff will direct that the patron refrain from that snack or beverage inside the Library. Library patrons may also be asked to remove the item from the Library. The Library Director or Library staff are authorized to determine what constitutes a snack or beverage and to take appropriate disciplinary action if needed.

Eating is not permitted at any computer in the library. All beverages must have a no-spill lid.

### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

The Library is not responsible for lost or stolen items. It is recommended that patrons do not leave personal belongings unattended.

### **CHILD SAFETY POLICY**

Library staff members cannot supervise children in the Library. Parents or adult caregivers are responsible for the behavior of all children they bring to the Library. Children under the age of 6 may not be left unattended by an adult in any part of the Library. Children between the ages of 6 and 9 must be attended by a responsible caregiver of at least 12 years of age.

If children under the age of 6 are found without an adult, the staff will attempt to locate the parent or adult caregiver. Children between the ages of 6 and 9 who are found without a caregiver 12 years of age or older, will also be reunited with the adult or caregiver, if possible. If the parent or caregiver cannot be located within the building or at home within one hour, or if the building is closing, the Children's Services Division will be contacted to take custody of the child or children.

## **OUTREACH SERVICES**

Library patron receiving outreach services are subject to this Code of Conduct and enforcement of this Code of Conduct. In addition, if any situation arises in which a Library outreach employee feels that a particular environment or situation is unsafe, then the Library may immediately discontinue that outreach service. (Individuals will have the opportunity to request a review of this decision with the Director of the Library or his/her designee, see Appeals Process below.)

## **EMERGENCIES**

In the event of an emergency, patrons shall comply with instructions from Library personnel. It is illegal to carry weapons of any kind, either concealed or in plain view, in the buildings unless the person in possession of the weapon is a law enforcement officer.

## **VIOLATIONS**

The Board of Trustees authorizes the Director and other Library staff to enforce this Patron Code of Conduct consistent with this policy. The rules of public behavior will be prominently posted in the Library and will be made available electronically and patrons who violate this Code of Conduct will be given notice of their violation. A violation may result in a patron's expulsion from the Library, restriction from the Library, suspension of Library privileges and/or arrest and criminal prosecution or other legal action, as appropriate. When necessary the Library will work with law enforcement authorities to prosecute actions for criminal behavior against the Library, its patrons and staff. Although the Library reserves the right to require anyone violating the Code of Conduct to leave Library property, the Library generally will follow these steps when a violation occurs:

- 1) Library staff will verbally bring to an individual's attention any act or omission that violates this Patron Code of Conduct or related Library policies and ask the individual to change his or her behavior to conform to the rules.
- 2) If such change is not evident or forthcoming, Library staff will direct the individual violating this Patron Code of Conduct or related Library policies to leave Library property (which includes both the building and the premises). In some situations, a violation may result in an individual being directed to leave Library property (Step 2) without the patron being given a verbal warning under Step 1, including, for example, in situations when a patron's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption (for example, when engaging in a physical fight, etc.), or based on the severity or frequency of the violation. (Individuals will have the opportunity to request a review of this decision with the Director of the Library or his/her designee, see Appeal Process below.)

- 3) Failure to leave Library property (which includes both the building and the premises) when directed may result in intervention by the police and a possible charge of criminal trespass per Section 2911.21 of the Ohio Revised Code.
- 4) Individuals who violate this Code of Conduct may be restricted from the Library for varying periods of time, depending on the severity of frequency of the violation. If restricted for more than one day, the Library will give written notice of the violation and restriction, either in person at the time of the violation or by mail if possible. With respect to juveniles, any such notice of restriction will be sent to the juvenile's parent or guardian. Individuals who have been so restricted will be required to meet and discuss the violation with the Director before being readmitted, with juveniles being required to bring a parent or guardian to any such conference.

The Director or other Library staff may, in their discretion, call the police for assistance as needed. The Library reserves the right to enforce this Code of Conduct consistent with safety, health, legal and other relevant considerations, and the Library will comply with all applicable laws.

In addition, patrons must comply with all federal, state and local laws. Suspected illegal activity will be reported to the police. Violations of law may result in a patron being expelled from the Library, arrested, prosecuted and/or other legal action, as appropriate.

#### **APPEAL PROCESS**

A patron who has been expelled or restricted from the Library, or whose Library privileges have been suspended, will have the right to a review of this decision by a Panel of three, consisting of the Library Director and his/her designees. To schedule a review, a patron should contact the Director at (740) 282-9782 (x105) or in writing at 407 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Steubenville, OH 43952 within five weekdays from the date of the notice of restriction or other action and request a meeting to discuss the restriction or other action. Juveniles who have requested a review are required to bring a parent or guardian to the meeting with the Panel. Pending the review/appeal process, a restriction or other Library action will remain in effect.

After this review, a patron may appeal the decision of the Panel to the Board of Trustees. To appeal this decision, a patron must submit, within five weekdays from the date of the decision, a written statement explaining why the decision of the Panel should be overturned, with any supporting documentation or evidence to be considered. This appeal must be submitted via mail to the Board of Trustees at 407 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Steubenville, OH 43952. The Board of Trustees will promptly schedule and resolve the appeal.