

PATRON'S CODE OF CONDUCT

The United States Court of Appeals decision (Kreimer vs. Bureau of Police for the Town of Morristown, 1992) found that a library is a "limited public forum" created for the specific purpose of providing access to materials. Further, the library may draft rules of behavior that assure that the library is used for the general purposes for which it is intended. This Code of Conduct covers behavior at the main library and the bookmobile.

I. PURPOSE

The Pasquotank County Library offers library services to all residents of the community regardless of age, economic status, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation. The library staff is committed to providing a welcoming, comfortable, safe, and accessible environment to its patrons. The purpose of this policy is to establish regulations governing behavior on library property. The following rules and regulations, referred to as the Library's Code of Conduct, have been established for all library users – children, young adults, and adults.

II. POLICY

Library patrons and staff have a right to assume that their time spent in the library will be free from harassment; free from physical discomfort and danger; free from psychological and emotional stress. If a person exhibits behavior that violates the Code of Conduct, a library staff member has the authority to ban the patron from the library's property for a predetermined time. The library staff will document the inappropriate behavior in the patron's record and/or a shared secure file that the library director has established.

In order to maintain a safe environment the following behaviors are unacceptable:

1. **Potentially violent situation** - In the event that a patron's behavior constitutes an imminent serious threat such as:

- A Fighting
- B Using obscene or abusive language or gestures
- C Physical attack on library staff or other patrons
- D Possession of alcohol or illegal drugs
- E Intoxication or drugged person
- F Any weapon of any kind
- G Violations of Federal, State or local laws, ordinances or regulations

PROCEDURE/CONSEQUENCE

Staff will call law enforcement and in the presence of a police officer (deputy) the staff member will inform (verbally and in writing) the patron that he/she is banned from the library for six months. A physical attack on library staff or other patrons will result in being banned for one year and formal charges will be filed with local law enforcement. Staff will inform patron that if he/she returns during that time, second-degree trespassing charges will be pursued against them.

Staff will notify the Library Director immediately or as soon as feasible (not to exceed 24 hours) of the incident and the action taken.

2. **Unruly, annoying or inappropriate behavior** - such as:

- A Excessive running or horseplay
- B Loud or disruptive noises (while you are in the library, please put cell phones on vibrate)
- C Cell phones may not be used in the computer lab
- D Smoking
- E Sleeping in the library or at the library's entrance
- F Making unreasonable use of the restrooms, including laundering clothes and bathing
- G Eating and drinking is only permitted in the community meeting room
- H Defacing, destroying or stealing any library property or the property of others
- I Fraudulent use of other people's library card or number for any purpose, including reserving computers
- J Removing library material from premises without following established procedures
- K Inappropriate use of library computers
- L Not wearing shirts or shoes in the library
- M Bringing animals into the building other than certified service animals
- N Children under age nine (9) without appropriate supervision (See Unattended Children Policy)

PROCEDURE/CONSEQUENCE

The staff will give one warning to the offending person (parent, caregiver, or guardian) and determine identification (necessary, especially for minors.) After being warned, if behavior persists, then the violator will be informed verbally and in writing that he/she is banned for 24 hours; the second occurrence earns loss of library privileges for one week; the third occurrence merits one month; any further occurrence earns six months. If the violator is a minor, he/she will be offered the use of the staff phone or they can use the courtesy phone in the lobby to contact his/her parent or guardian.

Staff will notify the Library Director immediately or as soon as feasible (not to exceed 24 hours) of the incident and the action taken.

III. **APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to all library customers and/or persons on library property.

IV. **LEGAL REFERENCES**

G. S. 153A-266 and the criminal offenses defined by Federal Government, the State of North Carolina, the City of Elizabeth City, and Pasquotank County

V. **RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of the staff to understand this policy fully to ensure fair and equitable application. It is the responsibility of the Library Director to interpret, monitor, and recommend updates to this policy to the Library Board of Trustees.

Revised by the Library Board of Trustees, July 9, 2013