

Rules of Behavior on Library Premises Policy Westbrook Public Library

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that patrons of the Westbrook Public Library have access to and use of Library facilities and grounds in a quiet, orderly, and safe atmosphere, along with being undisturbed by the disruptive actions and behavior of others.

This policy is also intended to protect the rights and safety of Library staff members and patrons, to preserve and protect the Library's materials and facilities, to ensure the orderly management of the Public Library, and to ensure that Library facilities and materials are available for the use for which the facilities and materials are intended. Failure to comply with the rules in this policy may result in the loss of Library use privileges.

Grounds for Loss of Library Privilege:

Staff has the authority and responsibility to enforce this policy as they see fit to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all patrons.

Whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that an individual has committed any of the acts listed below, he or she will be warned to cease the behavior, and may be told to leave the Library building and property for the remainder of the day.

The severity of the violation, and/or any past or subsequent violations, may result in additional restrictions of Library privileges beyond having them rescinded for a day. Any further restriction shall be determined by the Director and/or the Library Board of Trustees, and is documented in the Five Levels of Restriction listed on page 4 of this policy. In the most severe cases, the determination process should be done in coordination with the City of Westbrook.

Reasons for asking patrons to cease their behavior, or in some cases leave the premises for the day, shall include but are not limited to, the following:

- Willfully disregarding the instruction and/or requests of Library staff.
- Entering the Library while closed without the express permission of Library Staff.
- Physical abuse of grounds, furniture, material, or equipment. Also using the grounds, furniture, materials, or equipment in a manner inconsistent with its proper and intended use.
- Physical abuse of other patrons or staff.
- Theft, vandalism, and mutilation of Library property.
- Public intoxication, or consumption of alcohol on the premises.

- Smoking, consumption, or any other use of tobacco on the premises, including vaping and e-cigarettes.
- Illegal Activities
- Using a computer or device to view pornographic images/videos or viewing images/videos of an inappropriate sexual nature.
- Public masturbation or other acts of a sexual nature.
- Engaging in disorderly conduct, harassment, or behavior that causes or creates an unsafe environment or an interference with the quiet, peaceful or orderly use and management of the Library by patrons and employees. This includes intimidation by words (verbal abuse, profanity, hate language, and name-calling), gestures, body language or any type of menacing or bullying behavior.
- Excessive loudness or extreme outbursts, making noise, loud talking or shouting, excessively loud use of audio equipment, engaging in boisterous behavior, running, throwing things, pushing, shoving, all in a manner that causes or creates interference with the orderly use and management of the Library by patrons and employees.
- Cell phone ringers or other audible signals must be turned off or set to vibrate when entering the building. Loud conversations must be moved outside the Library.
- Interfering with obstructing or blocking open spaces on all Library property. This includes restricting passage with bicycles, skateboards, backpacks or anything that creates obstacles or takes up seating or table space.
- Failing to safeguard personal belongings. The Library is not responsible for lost or stolen property and library premises shall not be used for storage of personal belongings.
- Soliciting, petitioning, or distributing written materials, or canvassing for business, political, charitable, or religious purposes without prior approval from Library staff.
- Bringing any type of weapon or firearm into the Library, unless otherwise permitted by law.
- Making use of the restrooms for purpose for which the restrooms were not intended, including but not limited to, bathing, shaving, washing hair, or washing clothing.

- Improper attire: Adults are required to always wear shirts and shoes in the library. Kids coming to or from the pool may be an exception. Skates must be carried in the Library.
- Interfering with other's use of the Library facilities because of poor personal hygiene or offensive body odor.
- Not actively supervising children under the age of six (6) years who are in their charge/care.

If patrons are asked to leave the library, an incident report form shall be made by, or given to, the Library Director. Library staff are required to complete an incident report form at the conclusion of an incident.

Staff should never use physical force or abusive words in patron confrontations. On a per incident basis, local law enforcement may be called if patrons are abusive or unresponsive to the rules and restrictions prescribed by this policy or by staff. If Library staff has fear of - or feels threatened by - a Library patron, they are directed to call the local police or sheriff's department and leave the building.

The Five Levels of Restriction

Based upon the circumstances of the incident(s), the Library Director and/or the Board of Trustees may elect to impose any of the following restrictions upon the offender at the time of the incident or after it has occurred:

1. Offender restricted from using a part of the facility/equipment/service for the remainder of current day, with restrictions provided to the offender both verbally and in writing if and when possible;
2. Offender directed to leave the library for one (1) week, both verbally and in writing if and when possible;
3. Offender escorted out of library by local law enforcement with no admission for one (1) month, both verbally and in writing if and when possible;
4. Offender escorted out of library by local law enforcement and banned for a certain amount of time determined by Director, Board of Trustees, City Manager, and City Attorney;
5. Offender removed by local law enforcement with no further admittance to Library until further action is decided by Director, Board of Trustees, City Manager, City Attorney, and/or police. Options may include a permanent ban from Library.

Violation of any of these restrictions by entering the Library premises or loitering on the grounds will result in Staff immediately contacting law enforcement to remove the offender from the property.

The decision to restrict Library privileges to a patron will be based on a number of factors, including but not limited to: severity of the violation, number of warnings, and other violations documented about the patron.

Any patron whose privileges have been restricted may appeal the decision in writing to the Library Board of Trustees within 5 days of the occurrence. Any such letter must be received by the Library in that time frame.

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