

INDEPENDENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY

BEHAVIOR POLICY

Independence Public Library endeavors to provide a safe, quiet place for all who wish to read, study, research, write, select books to read, and consult with library staff. All who enter this Library are entitled to enjoy a library atmosphere - a calm, quiet space, free from distractions - and have an implicit obligation to contribute to the maintenance of that atmosphere. The Library Board of Trustees, in establishing this policy, endeavors to identify behaviors that are in opposition to the purposes for which the Library is provided.

1. Anyone who enters either the Independence Public Library is expected to pursue library-related activities quietly, with a minimum of disturbance to others.
2. Certain behaviors that may be appropriate outside the Library are not acceptable in the library setting. The behaviors and activities listed below have been determined through tradition and experience to be inappropriate and are prohibited.

GENERAL RULE

The Library offers a place for reading, study and research. Any behavior that, in the judgment of the librarian, disrupts or distracts other library users from using the Library or threatens the safety of library users and staff, is not allowed.

DRESS

Shoes and shirt must be worn.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS, including, but not limited to . . .

Noise-making, including such things as clicking, whistling, tapping, humming

Easily-overheard talking

Audible use of a device such as a Walkman, I-pod, or personal music player

Disruptive loud conversations lasting more than five minutes

Shouting

Panhandling or soliciting

Eating, drinking (including carrying of open food/beverage containers)

Game playing, card playing, craft making, etc.

Possession of animals (except dogs assisting the handicapped)

Smoking or chewing tobacco

Sleeping

Using cell phones inside the building to either receive or make calls

Being under the influence of alcohol/drugs

Misuse of restrooms

Hairdressing or grooming of another person

Crying baby or out-of-control toddler

Leaving unattended child seven years or under in the building

Interfering with another's use of library or of staff in performance of duties

Engaging in sexual activities

Blocking of doors, passageways, corridors, steps or railings

Running inside the building except in case of emergency

Violence or threat of violence

Verbal abuse or harassment of library staff or library patrons

Bringing roller blades, bicycles, scooters or skateboards inside the building

Using library computers to view sites inappropriate to a public library setting

Spitting

CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR, including but not limited to . . .

Bomb threat or telephone harassment

Child abuse

Assault and battery

Illegal possession of weapons

Refusal to leave the building

Sexual offenses

Vandalism

Theft from library patrons or library staff

Theft or destruction of library property

Concealment of library property

Intoxication

Drug paraphernalia

Public indecency

Loitering

Using library computers to view and/or download child pornography

STAFF ROLE

The librarians and support personnel are employed to serve the legitimate reference, information and pleasure reading needs of the public; they are not social workers, police or daycare providers. If a patron seems to be placing a staff member in the position of providing a non-library-related function, the staff member may bring the interaction to a prompt conclusion.

STAFF ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURE

The staff member shall approach the patron courteously, tell the patron the behavior is unacceptable, and ask the patron to refrain from the behavior. The staff member shall step back or walk away but continue to observe the behavior.

If the behavior continues, the staff member shall approach the patron a second time, reiterate the relevant policy, and warn that he/she may be asked to leave the library. Again, the staff member shall step back or walk away but continue to observe the behavior. This second warning is at the option of the staff member. Some behaviors may be so disruptive as to require only one warning before the police are called.

If the behavior persists, the staff member shall tell the person to leave. If the patron refuses to leave, the staff member will warn that he/she has no choice but to call the

police and will go to the phone to do so. The staff member shall meet the police officer at the door (or a second staff person shall be alerted to meet the police) to instruct the officer what is to be done.

Any adult library employee is empowered to enforce the behavior policy.

Anyone ejected under enforcement of this policy may not re-enter the Library that day and up to an additional two days. A suspension of longer than three days is covered under "Suspension Policy and Procedure".

CHILD POLICY

The Library welcomes children to use its facilities and services. However, the responsibility for the care, safety and behavior of children using the Library rests with the parent/guardian or caregiver and not with library staff members. Public libraries, by their nature, are subject to "stranger danger" and are not necessarily safe for unattended children.

Children seven years of age and under shall not be left unattended in the Library under any circumstances. They must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or caregiver. A caregiver must be at least twelve years of age. Parents/guardians, if delegating their responsibilities to a caregiver, must ensure the caregiver is a responsible person of suitable age.

A parent/guardian or caregiver must remain with the child during the entire time period in the Library, and must directly supervise the child.

Library staff members may contact the Kansas Social & Rehabilitation Services or other authorities, such as the Police Department, in the event a child seven years of age or under is left unattended in the Library, or the parent/guardian or caregiver fails to directly supervise the child; for example, by leaving the child alone in the Children's Room.

In the case of children over age seven, parents may be notified, at the determination of the Library Director or a senior staff member, if an unaccompanied minor's behavior in the Library is a problem.

Children are subject to the same rules of conduct as other patrons and are subject to the same consequences, including being asked to leave the Library.

KSRS, or other authorities, such as the Police Department, may be contacted in the event of a minor left unaccompanied in the Library for an extended period of time.

At library closing time, or in the event of an early closing due to inclement weather, etc., if unattended children are still in the building, the Police Department will be called to take custody of the children. Two staff members must stay with the child until he/she is in the custody of an appropriate caretaker.

SUSPENSION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Any patron ejected through the procedure explained in the Staff Enforcement Procedure section may be subject to a longer suspension for habitual or improper behavior.

Suspension from the Library means that the patron may not enter the Library for any reason or be present on outdoor library property. If the suspended patron enters the Library or is on the property outside the Library, the police will be called to remove the patron and the patron may be subject to criminal charges. In addition, other library privileges, such as the use of the Independence Public Library Card, will be suspended.

The Library Director may suspend a violator's library privileges, including the right to enter the Library, for a period of time greater than three days for repeat offenders or egregious behavior.

The offending patron must provide his/her name and address to the Library Director or the senior staff member on duty. Written notice will be sent to the patron or, in the case of a minor, to the patron's parents, with a date upon which the suspension will go into effect and a date upon which the suspension will end.

In the event of a suspension greater than three days, the patron may appeal the decision to the Library Board of Trustees' Behavior Policy Enforcement Committee.

The patron must provide written notice that he/she is requesting a suspension hearing. The written notice may be mailed or hand-delivered to the main desk and must be received before the effective date of the suspension. If written notice requesting a hearing is received, a suspension hearing before the Behavior Policy Enforcement Committee of the Library Board of Trustees will be convened as soon as practicable.

If written notice requesting a hearing is not received, or is received after the effective date of the suspension, the suspension will automatically go into effect upon the date stated in the notice from the Library.

POSTING OF BEHAVIOR POLICY

This policy shall be posted in the Library and on the library website and copies shall be available upon request.

Revised and adopted: May 18, 2005 by the Library Board of Trustees