

Patron Behavior Policy

Policy Statement

The Van Buren District Library (the “Library”) is open for specific and designated civic, educational and cultural uses, including reading, studying, writing, participating in scheduled Library programs, and using Library materials. In order to provide resources and services to all people who visit the Library facilities in an atmosphere of courtesy, respect, and excellent service, the Library Board has adopted this Patron Behavior Policy. The purpose of the Patron Behavior Policy (“Policy”) is to assist the Library in fulfilling its mission as a community resource enriching life, stimulating intellectual curiosity, fostering literacy, and encouraging an informed citizenry.

The following rules of conduct shall apply to all buildings and all branches – interior and exterior – and all grounds controlled and operated by the Library (“Library facilities”) and to all persons entering in or on the premises, unless otherwise specified.

Regulations

1. Rules for a Safe Environment

A. Violations of Law

Committing or attempting to commit an activity in violation of federal, state, or local law, ordinance or regulation (including but not limited to assault, indecent exposure, larceny, removing Library material from the property without authorization through the approved lending procedures, vandalism or copyright infringement) is prohibited.

B. Weapons

Carrying guns, pistols or other weapons, except as specifically permitted and exempt from local regulation by law, is prohibited.

C. Alcohol; Drugs

Possessing, selling, distributing, or consuming any alcoholic or intoxicating beverage, illegal drug, or drug paraphernalia is prohibited; provided that alcohol may be permitted at certain Library-sponsored events if specifically approved by the Library. Persons noticeably under the influence of any controlled substance or alcoholic or intoxicating liquor are not allowed on Library property.

D. Recreational Equipment and Personal Transport Devices

Use of skateboards, rollerblades, roller skates, or other wheeled form of recreational equipment is not allowed in the Library or on Library property. Library patrons must park bicycles or other recreational vehicles only in authorized areas. Wheelchairs, scooters, and other power driven mobility devices are permitted by those individuals with disabilities in accordance with Library rules, unless a particular type of device cannot be accommodated because of legitimate safety requirements.

Patron Behavior Policy

- E. No Blocking of Doors, Aisles, or Entrances
All doors, aisles and entrances must remain obstacle-free. This includes a prohibition of running power cords across aisles or other areas that are used for walking.
 - F. Animals
Animals are not permitted in the Library other than service animals as defined by law for those individuals with disabilities, those used in law enforcement or for Library events.
 - G. Incendiary Devices
The use of incendiary devices, such as candles, matches, and lighters, is prohibited inside the Library.
 - H. School Groups
School groups using the Library must have approval of the Library Director and must have a teacher and other appropriate staff present to ensure that the students use the Library in conformance with these rules.
2. Rules for Personal Behavior
- A. Personal Property
Personal property brought into the Library is subject to the following:
 - i. The Library staff may limit the number of parcels carried into the Library. The Library may also limit the size of items, for example, the Library prohibits large items such as suitcases, duffle bags or large plastic garbage bags. Items must be small enough to fit under a chair at the Library.
 - ii. The Library is not responsible for personal belongings left unattended and Library staff is not permitted to guard or watch personal belongings.
 - iii. The Library does not guarantee storage for personal property.
 - iv. Personal possessions must not be left unattended or take up seating or space if needed by others.
 - B. Food and Beverages
Food and beverages are only permitted in designated areas.
 - C. Unauthorized Use
Patrons must leave the Library promptly at closing time and may not be in the Library when it is not open to the public. Further, any patron whose privileges to use the Library have been denied may not enter the Library. Any patron whose privileges have been limited may not use the Library in any manner that conflicts with those limits placed on the patron by the Library Director, his or her designee, or the Library Board.
 - D. Engaging in Proper Library Activities
Patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of the Library while in the building or on Library property. Patrons not engaged in reading, studying, writing, participating in scheduled Library events, or

using Library materials shall be required to leave the building and shall not remain on Library property. This includes sleeping on Library furniture or floor.

E. Staff Areas

Patrons are not permitted to enter staff areas of the Library including offices, workrooms/work areas, storage spaces, or behind service desks. Any patron found in a Library staff area must exit the staff area immediately when asked to do so by a Library staff member.

F. Considerate Use

The following behavior is prohibited in the Library or on Library property:

- i. Spitting;
- ii. Running, pushing, shoving, fighting, throwing items, provoking a fight or other unsafe physical behavior;
- iii. Climbing on furniture;
- iv. Using obscene or threatening language or gestures;
- v. Engaging in sexual behavior that:
 1. Is a violation of the law;
 2. Which can reasonably be expected to disturb Library users or staff while such staff or patrons are in the Library or on Library property; or
 3. That interferes with the Library patrons' use of the Library or the ability of the staff person to do his or her job.

G. Panhandling or Soliciting

Panhandling or soliciting Library staff or patrons for money, products, or services inside the Library or on Library property is prohibited. Sales of products or services that are incidental to Library activities may be permitted if approved in advance by the Library Director.

H. Interference with Staff

Patrons may not interfere with the staff's performance of duties in the Library or on Library property. This includes engaging in conversation or behavior that monopolizes or forces the attention of staff for an inappropriate period of time, inappropriate personal comments, sexual advances, or physical and/or verbal harassment.

I. Campaigning, Petitioning, Interviewing, and Similar Activities

As a limited public forum, the Library reserves the right to regulate the time, place, and manner for campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing and soliciting on Library grounds as follows:

- i. Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing and soliciting are prohibited inside the Library building.

- ii. Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing and soliciting outside the Library building but on Library property are subject to the following requirements:
 - 1. Persons or groups are requested to sign in at the Checkout Desk or Circulation Desk in advance.
 - 2. Use of the Library property does not indicate the Library's opposition or endorsement of the candidate or issue that is the subject of the petition, interview, campaign or discussion.
 - 3. Permitted areas for campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing and soliciting outside of the Library building shall be limited to the areas 25 feet from all entrances.
 - 4. No person shall block ingress or egress from the Library building.
 - 5. Permitted times will be limited to the operating hours of the Library.
 - 6. Campaign material, literature or petitions may not be brought into the Library, posted at the Library or left on Library property.

J. Sales

Selling merchandise on Library property without prior permission from the Library Director is prohibited.

K. Distributions; Postings

Distributing or posting printed materials/literature on Library property not in accordance with Library policy is prohibited.

L. Restrooms

Misuse of restrooms, including laundering, sleeping, shaving, hair cutting or trimming, bathing, and sexual activity is prohibited. Unless a parent or guardian is assisting a child or a patron is assisting a person with a disability, there shall only be one person to a stall. Library materials may not be taken into restrooms.

M. Harassment

Staring, photographing, video recording, audio recording, following, stalking, harassing, arguing with, threatening, talking, or behaving in a manner:

- i. Which can reasonably be expected to disturb Library users or staff while such staff or patrons are in the Library or on Library property;
- ii. That interferes with the Library patrons' use of the Library or the ability of the staff person to do his or her job is prohibited;

Patron Behavior Policy

- iii. Would create or may result in a hostile work environment for Library staff; and/or;
 - iv. That violates Michigan law.
- N. Loud Noise
Producing or allowing any loud, unreasonable, or disturbing noises that interfere with other patrons' use of the Library or which can be reasonably expected to disturb other persons or have the intent of annoying other persons, including yelling, cheering, talking (with others or in monologues), or noises from electronic, entertainment, and communication devices, such as cell phones, tablets, headphones, and radio, is prohibited. Patrons may use headphones or earbuds but at a volume that cannot be heard by other Library patrons or staff.
- O. Odor
Offensive odor, including but not limited to body odor due to poor personal hygiene, overpowering perfume or cologne, or odors from for items brought into the Library, that causes a nuisance is prohibited. (For example, if the patron's odor interferes with staff or other patrons' use of the Library, the patron violates this Policy).
- P. Phones
Phones shall be placed on silent or vibrate mode upon entering the Library. Phones may not be used in any loud, unreasonable, or disturbing manner that interferes with other patrons' use of the Library or which can be reasonably expected to disturb other persons. Phone calls that are not short in duration must be conducted outside of the Library buildings or in the Library's lobby.
- Q. Library Policies
Patrons must adhere to all Library Policies.
- R. Identification
Patrons must provide identification to Library staff when requested.
- S. Tables or Structures on Library Property
No person may use or set up a table, stand, sign or similar structure on Library property. This does not apply to Library-sponsored or co-sponsored events.
- T. Smoking, Tobacco, or Marijuana Use
Smoking, using e-cigarettes, vaping, electronic nicotine delivery systems or chewing tobacco is prohibited on Library property. Using, smoking or possessing marijuana on Library property is also prohibited.
- U. Shirts and Shoes
Shirts and shoes are required for health reasons and must be worn at all times inside the Library and on Library property.
- V. Photography
All patrons must seek permission from the Library Director or designee

Patron Behavior Policy

before taking photos or filming at the Library, unless attending a meeting that is open to the public under the Open Meetings Act. Official identification must be shown. Unattended children may not have their pictures taken.

3. Rules for the Use and Preservation of Library Materials

A. Care of Library Property

Patrons must not deface, vandalize, damage or improperly use or improperly remove Library materials, equipment, furniture, or buildings. Patron shall not load or install any programs or software on Library computers. Patrons shall be responsible to reimburse the Library for costs incurred by the Library for violating this provision. Patrons shall not cause damage by returning books containing bedbugs or bringing bedbugs into the Library.

B. Internet Use

Patrons must abide by established time limitations and all other provisions of the Library Internet Use Policy.

C. Equipment

Library staff computers are for staff use only.

D. Authorized Lending

Library materials may only be removed from the premises with authorization through established lending procedures.

E. Use of Tables and Computers

Only two (2) people may be seated at any Library computer workstation. The number of people seated at a table shall be limited to the number of individuals appropriate to the size of the table and no additional people may stand around any one (1) table.

4. Disciplinary Process for Library Facilities

The Library Director or the Director's designee may restrict access to Library facilities with immediate dismissal of the patron from the premises, by suspending the patron's access to Library facilities for a set period of time, or by denying access to specific services and/or programs pursuant to this Policy. When necessary, the local police may be called to intervene.

A. Incident Reports

Library staff shall record in writing in the form of an Incident Report any violation of this Policy that resulted in a verbal warning or a suspension of Library privileges. By the end of the day on which the incident occurred, an Incident Report shall be written and forwarded to the Library Director for logging and review. The report should include physical descriptions in addition to the name of the patron. A copy of the suspension of privileges letter should be attached, if applicable.

B. Violation of the Policy; Suspension of Library Privileges

Unless otherwise provided in this Policy, (see Section C below), the Library shall handle violations as follows:

Patron Behavior Policy

- i. Initial Violation
Library patrons observed violating this Policy will be asked to cease the violation with a verbal request. If the patron does not comply with the request, he or she will be asked to leave the building for the day. If he or she refuses, the police may be called.
 - ii. Subsequent Violations
The Library Director or the Library Director's authorized designee may further limit or suspend the patron's Library privileges if infractions continue. Such limitation or revocation shall be in writing specifying the nature of the violation. Subsequent violations of the same rule shall result in additional suspensions of increasing length.
- C. Violations that Affect Safety and Security
Violations involving verbal abuse, violence, threatening behaviors, sexual harassment, vandalism, drug sale or use or attempted drug sale or use, intoxication, theft or attempted theft, physical harassment, sexual misconduct or any behavior that threatens the safety and security of staff and/or patrons shall be handled as follows:
 - i. Initial Violation
The police will be called immediately. If the conduct constitutes a violation of local, state, or federal law, arrest or criminal prosecution may ensue. Violations of this nature will result in an immediate minimum two-week suspension of Library privileges in order to give the Library sufficient time to investigate the incident. After the investigation is completed, the Library Director or his/her designee may add additional time to the initial limitation or suspension period.
 - ii. Subsequent Violations
The police will be called immediately. If the conduct constitutes a violation of local, state, or federal law, arrest or criminal prosecution may ensue. The Library Director or the Library Director's authorized designee, may further limit or suspend the patron's Library privileges in escalating responses, which will be documented in writing. Subsequent violations of the same rule will result in additional suspensions of increasing length.
- D. Reinstatement
The patron whose privileges have been limited or suspended shall attend a meeting with the Library Director or the Library Director's designee to review the Library Patron Behavior Policy before their privileges may be reinstated. The Library Director may impose conditions for the reinstatement.
- E. Right of Appeal
Patrons may appeal:
 - i. A decision to limit or suspend privileges or;

- ii. The conditions placed on reinstatement by sending a written appeal to the Library Board within ten (10) business days of the date of the decision. The appeal should be sent to the Chair of the Library Board. The decision of the Library Board is final.

Approved: March 22, 2005. Amended: September 24, 2019
Van Buren District Library Board of Trustees