



# Patron Behavior Policy

The Marion County Public Library welcomes people of all ages and strives to provide a safe and appropriate environment for all library users. This policy was adopted to encourage an atmosphere of courtesy, respect, and excellent service.

The following rules of conduct shall apply to all persons entering the building and/or on the grounds controlled and operated by the library.

## **Rules for a safe environment**

Committing or attempting to commit an activity in violation of federal, state, or local law, ordinance or regulation is prohibited.

Possessing, selling, distributing, or consuming any alcoholic or intoxicating beverage, illegal drug, or drug paraphernalia is prohibited.

Persons appearing to be intoxicated are not allowed on library property.

Safety of patrons on library buildings and grounds:

- Using obscene or threatening language or gestures is prohibited
- Use of skateboards, rollerblades, roller skates, or other wheeled forms of recreational equipment are not allowed in the library or on library property
- Running, pushing, shoving or other unsafe physical behavior
- Library patrons must park bicycles or other vehicles only in designated areas
- 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
- No animals are permitted, except those assisting persons with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Smoking, using e-cigarettes or chewing tobacco is prohibited on library property
- Shirts and shoes must be worn at all times inside the library and on library property
- Use of candles, matches, lighters and other incendiary devices is prohibited inside the library

## **Rules for personal behavior**

The library may limit the number or size of parcels brought in. Personal possessions must not be left unattended or take up seating or space needed by others. The library is not responsible for personal belongings left unattended.

Food and uncovered beverages are prohibited inside the library except when offered in connection with a library-sponsored program. Food and uncovered beverages may be permitted in the meeting room if approved in advance.

Patrons must leave the library promptly at closing time and may not be in the library when it is not open to the public.

Panhandling or soliciting library staff or patrons for money, products, or services inside the library or on library property is prohibited.

Selling merchandise on library property without the director's prior permission is prohibited.

Distributing or posting printed materials/literature on library property is prohibited in vehicle parking areas and in all areas that would impede public access. No materials may be distributed in staff areas, restrooms, or in pedestrian or vehicle traffic areas. Material distribution is not allowed in the immediate vicinity of any public services/desk area or in the children's section.

Public restrooms must be kept neat and clean at all times. Library materials may not be taken into restrooms.

Staring, following, stalking, harassing, threatening, or other behavior or activity that interferes with library business or others' use of the library is prohibited. Loud and/or disruptive noises created by persons or electronic equipment is not allowed within the building.

#### **Use of library materials and property**

Patrons must not vandalize, damage, or improperly remove library materials, equipment, furniture, or buildings. Library materials may only be removed following established lending procedures.

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

Library phones and staff computers are for staff use only.

Patrons shall not be permitted in any areas designated as “staff only” unless permitted by the library director.

### **Children in the library**

Children are welcome and encouraged to use the library. All patrons, including children, are expected to comply with library policies. Parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for the behavior and supervision of their children while in the library or on library property. School groups using the library must have appropriate staff present to ensure that students use the library in conformance with these rules. More specific information on children in the library can be found in the library’s Unattended Child and Internet Use policies.

### **Use of the children’s and teen areas**

The children’s and teen areas are designated for those under 18 and their caregivers. All patrons may actively browse the collections or retrieve material, but only minors and the accompanying caregiver may remain in the area after completing such activity. Further, seating in the area is limited to minors and their accompanying caregivers.

Patrons who are not actively seeking children’s or teen materials may be asked to move to a different area.

### **Enforcement**

Library patrons observed violating this policy will be verbally asked to cease the behavior. 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.

The director or 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. If necessary, the police may be called to intervene.

The library reserves the right to respond as follows to any behavior that threatens the safety and security of patrons or staff, including but not limited to, verbal abuse, violence, threatening behavior, harassment, vandalism, drug sale or use, intoxication or theft:

- The police will be called immediately. 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 complete, the library director or designee may add additional time to the initial limitation or suspension period.
- Subsequent violations of the same rule will result in additional suspensions of increasing length.

Library staff shall complete an incident report for any significant violation of this policy the same day it occurs. A copy of the suspension of privileges letter should be attached, if applicable.

The patron whose privileges have been limited or suspended shall attend a meeting with the director or designee to review the library patron behavior policy before privileges may be reinstated.

Patrons may appeal a decision to limit or suspend privileges by sending a written appeal to the library board president within 10 business days of the date the privileges were limited or suspended. The patron is entitled to a hearing before the full board. The decision of the library board may be appealed to a court of competent jurisdiction.