

## **LIBRARY CONDUCT POLICY**

### **Purpose Statement:**

The Norwalk Easter Public Library Board and staff want to create a safe and welcoming environment to provide equitable access to information, materials, collections, equipment, and services for people of all ages and help ensure the safety and security of staff and patrons.

Patrons have the responsibility to use the library in a manner that does not interfere with the rights of other individuals to use library materials, resources, and services, which does not limit the ability of library staff to conduct library business, and which does not threaten the secure and comfortable environment of the library. Patrons have the right to use the library undisturbed and library employees have the right to work without undue interference.

Failure to comply with the Conduct Policy may result in the loss of library privileges up to and including being suspended, for one day or more, from the library. Suspension of more than one day must be authorized by the Library Director or designee. A suspension will include a written statement documenting behavior and noting the terms of the suspension.

The library enforces the following conduct guidelines to ensure the rights and safety of patrons, staff, and to protect its materials, equipment, building, and grounds. Library staff members should not hesitate to call for police, fire, or emergency personnel assistance if they feel there is an imminent danger to patrons, staff, or facilities.

### **Library Conduct Guidelines**

*Parents or caregivers are responsible for the conduct of accompanying children. Prohibited conduct includes any illegal activity and includes, but is not limited to, the following:*

- Engaging in any behavior or activity that endangers the health or safety of others.
- Violating library policies or engaging in illegal activities.
- Interfering with another person's use of the library or with library staff's performance of their duties.
- Willfully annoying, harassing, or threatening another person.

- Misusing, damaging, defacing, or stealing library property or the property of others.
- Consuming alcohol or controlled substances, being intoxicated or under the influence of an intoxicant or illegal substance, smoking, or using tobacco products including electronic cigarettes or “vaping”, except at a library-sponsored event when alcohol (beer and wine) is approved.
- Engaging in lewd or inappropriate behavior.
- Engaging in sexual activity of any kind, including inappropriate displays of romantic affection.
- Leaving children under the age of ten unsupervised.
- Entering non-public areas or entering or leaving the building through non-public entrances and exits, unless accompanied by a staff member or through prior authorization from a staff member.
- Using skateboards, rollerblades, sleds, or other sports equipment.
- Bringing animals into the building, except animals participating in a library program or service animals or service-animals-in-training as defined by Title II and Title III of The Americans with Disabilities Act and/or Iowa Code 216C.1A, unless authorized by the Director or designee.
- Consuming food or beverages in such a way that could damage the library building, materials, or furniture. Food and beverages are not permitted at or near library equipment.
- Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey taking, soliciting, posting notices, fundraising, or selling, unless authorized by the Director or designee.
- Entering the building without appropriate attire (i.e. shirt, shoes, etc.).
- Being in any state of inappropriate undress.
- Leaving unattended personal items in the building. The Library assumes no responsibility for lost, stolen, or unattended personal items. Items left unattended may be removed and taken to the front desk for security reasons.
- Using the library building, furniture, collection, or equipment in a manner that could cause harm to self, patrons, staff, or personal or public property.

- Behaving in a loud, boisterous, or disruptive manner (including loud conversations) that is not solely caused by a disability. Fighting or challenging to fight, running, pushing, shoving, or throwing items.
- Using a cell phone, pager, audio player, or other electronic device in a manner that disrupts library use or operations. Cell phone ringers should be set to silent or vibrate and device speakers muted or headphones used.
- Impeding access to the building or an area of the building or blocking book stack aisles for extended periods of time.
- Leaving animals, bicycles, or personal items in library entrances or walkways.
- Having offensive hygiene, odor, or scent that constitutes a nuisance to other people, including excessive use of perfume or cologne.
- Failing to exit the building at closing.
- Failing to follow directions from staff.
- Using library areas or equipment for other than their designated purpose.
- Using the library, including restrooms, for bathing, hair washing, or laundry.
- Sleeping, except for attended children.
- Loitering.

Additionally, patrons are responsible for compliance with copyright law.

Adult patrons in the children's or teen areas who are not retrieving children's or teen materials, nor are caregivers for a child or teen may be asked to relocate to other areas of the library.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

Patrons violating any of the above policies will have the violation called to their attention once. Should the behavior continue, they will be asked to leave the library facility and grounds (which includes the parking lot and green space in front of the library). Should they refuse to leave, library staff will contact the Director and the Norwalk Police Department and the patron(s) will be escorted from the premises. A refusal to leave after being asked to leave by staff will be grounds for suspension of library privileges. For minors, a suspension of privileges will be accompanied by an attempt—by phone, email, or mail—to notify a parent or guardian. At the

discretion of the Library Director, an attempt may be made to contact the student and/or their caregiver via Norwalk Community Schools.

### **MINOR VIOLATIONS**

Minor Violations are typically handled by library staff.

1st Offense = Warning/Leave building - suspension of library privileges for the current day

2nd Offense = 7-day suspension of library privileges

3rd Offense = 14-day suspension of library privileges

4th Offense = 30-day suspension of library privileges

### **Examples of Minor Violations:**

- Creating unreasonable noise or engaging in disorderly, loud, or boisterous behavior, using personal electronic equipment at a volume that disturbs others, or otherwise engaging in behavior that interferes with the rights of individuals to use library materials and services.
- Swearing or using foul or offensive language.
- Being in any state of inappropriate undress (examples: no shoes, no shirt, wearing a swimsuit without any additional covering).
- Bring animals into the library except for service animals or service-animals-in-training as defined by Title II and Title III of The Americans with Disabilities Act and/or Iowa Code 216C.1A.
- Refusing to follow reasonable directives or instructions from library staff.
- Disruptive behavior including but not limited to: running, pushing, throwing things, play fighting, using furniture in ways other than intended.
- Inappropriate displays of affection.
- Intentionally entering non-public or locked areas unless accompanied by a staff member or with prior authorization.

- Entering or remaining on library premises after having been notified by library staff not to do so or when library privileges have been suspended. (Suspension periods shown will be added to the current suspension where applicable.)

## **MAJOR VIOLATIONS**

Major violations are typically handled by the Director and, if warranted, local law enforcement. The consequences and length of suspension are at the discretion of the Director.

### **Examples of Major Violations:**

- Possessing, selling, distributing, or consuming any alcoholic beverage, controlled substance, or tobacco product on library grounds (including electronic cigarettes or vaping devices).
- Fighting with or physically assaulting staff or other patrons.
- Improper use or destruction of property including but not limited to:
  - \*Vandalism or destruction of library materials or facilities or the personal property of library patrons or staff
  - \*Maliciously altering, deleting, damaging, or destroying any computer, peripheral, network, computer program, or data.

## **APPEAL PROCEDURE**

Any patron whose library privileges are suspended for more than one day can appeal the suspension by:

Contacting the Library Director or designee, in writing (via email or letter). The Library Director or designee will consult with staff, review the Incident Report and related documentation, and any written information provided by the patron. The patron may also schedule an appointment with the Library Director or designee to discuss the decision to suspend library privileges. After reviewing information and/or meeting with the patron, the suspension period may be terminated or shortened, or the suspension may remain in place. The patron will be informed

of the Library Administration decision in the most expedient fashion—via telephone call, email, or mailed letter.

The patron may appeal the determination of the Library Administration to the Library Board of Trustees via a written notice of appeal within 10 days after receipt of the Library Administration determination. The notice of appeal shall be filed with both the Library Director and the Library Board of Trustees President. The Library Board of Trustees will hold a hearing to discuss the suspension at their next regularly scheduled meeting. A parent or guardian must accompany a minor (under the age of 18) to the hearing.

The Library Board of Trustees will hear the appeal and will vote to uphold or dismiss the suspension. The Library Director will notify the patron by letter of the decision of the Library Board of Trustees. The suspension will remain in effect until the Board's decision. The Library Board of Trustees' decision will be final.

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