

Appropriate Library Use Policy

The St. Clair County Library System is supported by the people of St. Clair County, who expect each of our facilities to be clean, comfortable, and safe. The Library is responsible for establishing rules of conduct to protect the rights and safety of Library patrons, volunteers, and staff; and for preserving and protecting the Library's materials, equipment, facilities, and grounds. Patrons of the Library are governed by this policy, the Circulation Policy, the Electronic Resources/Internet Use Policy and all other applicable Library policies.

1. **Patrons shall respect the rights of others and shall not interfere with the use of the Library by other patrons.** Patrons shall not use abusive or obscene language, harass others in any manner that could be perceived as verbally or physically threatening (including staring, following, or stalking), come into harmful physical contact with another person or behave in a manner that may disturb others. Patrons may not photograph or video patrons or Library staff without notification and permission of the individual(s).
2. **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.
3. **Patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of a public library** while in the Library building. Patrons not engaged in reading, studying or using Library materials or facilities in a manner normally associated with a public library shall be required to leave the Library. Sleeping is not permitted in the Library building or on Library grounds.
4. **Library employees may not provide information regarding an employee's or patron's whereabouts.**
5. **Patrons shall not engage in any activity in which is a violation of federal, state, or local law, ordinance or regulation while in the Library building or on Library grounds.**
6. **Patrons shall not be permitted in any areas designated as "staff only" unless otherwise permitted by the Library Director or designee.**
7. **Patrons may only use cellular telephones for texting in the Library service areas.** Ringers must be turned off or set to vibrate upon entering the Library. Designated areas may be available for verbal conversation. Staff may use Library phones on behalf of the patron if transportation is needed or in case of accident or emergency.
8. **Computers and entertainment devices** (e.g. iPod, gaming systems, e-reader) **must be used with headphones or the sound turned off.** Sound that may be heard by adjacent patrons must be reduced.
9. **Patrons must wear proper attire while in the Library.** A shirt must be worn at all times. Swimming suits are not appropriate attire. Feet are to be properly covered with shoes or sandals.
10. **Patrons whose bodily health or hygiene constitutes a nuisance to other persons shall be required to leave the Library. This may include, but is not limited to, use of perfume or other artificial odor detectable at arm's length, lice or other parasites, open wounds or sores, wet or soiled clothing, violent illness or other offensive odors.**
11. **Restroom facilities are not to be used for the changing or washing of clothes or for personal hygiene (e.g. bathing, shaving, haircutting, etc.).**
12. **Pets or animals shall remain outside the Library, except as necessary for the physically disabled or as part of a Library-sponsored program.**

13. **The use of wheeled devices such as skate boards, roller blades, bicycles, wheeled shoes, scooters and shopping carts is not allowed in the Library building or on Library grounds. Wheelchairs, walkers and strollers are permissible but should at no time block or create an obstacle to getting in or out of the Library building.**
14. **The Library is a smoke-free and drug-free environment. Patrons shall not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while in the Library building or on Library grounds.**
15. **Any Library materials removed from the Library must be checked out on a valid library card in accordance with Library policies and procedures.** Library materials should not be taken into Library restrooms.
16. **Patrons shall not deface, destroy or mar Library materials, equipment, or property.** Littering inside the Library building or on Library grounds is prohibited. Using Library material, equipment or property in a manner inconsistent with its customary use (i.e., climbing on shelves, using tables or chairs as footstools, etc.) or in a manner likely to cause injury is prohibited.
17. **Patrons shall respect copyright laws** and software agreements in the use of Library equipment.
18. **To prevent the disruption to the operation of the Library, solicitation (including campaigning, petitioning, survey taking, or proselytizing) is strictly prohibited except for persons conducting business with the Library or the Friends of the Library.**
19. **Patrons should not leave personal items unattended in the Library building or on Library grounds.** The Library is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Personal items should not block aisles, create an obstacle to getting in and out of the Library building or take up seating space.
20. **As set forth in County Ordinance No. 01-70, carrying weapons of any type while in the Library building or on Library grounds is prohibited** except as the law permits.
21. **Patrons shall promptly leave the Library building at closing time or in an emergency.**
22. **The Library reserves the right to inspect all bags and articles.**
23. **To ensure the safety of patrons and employees and to protect the assets of the Library, the Library may utilize video surveillance of all Library property.**
24. **Covered drinks are permitted in the Library, however food is prohibited.**
25. **The Library building may be designated as a shelter during municipal emergencies. The Library cannot be held responsible for patrons who elect to leave the Library during weather or other municipal emergency.** Children will not be allowed to leave the Library except in the presence of a parent or guardian during weather or municipal emergencies.

SAFE CHILD POLICY

Library staff cannot monitor the whereabouts or behavior of children. Ultimately, the behavior and welfare of children in the Library are the responsibility of the parent, guardian or caregiver of the child.

1. Supervision of children:
 - a. Preschool children should be in sight of and supervised by a parent, guardian or responsible caregiver (12 years or older) at all times. Parents or caregivers of preschool children are expected to remain in the Library while children are attending Library programs.
 - b. Older children able to maintain proper Library behavior may use the Library unattended; otherwise they should be adequately supervised by a parent, guardian or responsible caregiver. If the adult feels it is unsafe for the child to leave the building without adult supervision, the child should not be in the Library unattended.
 - c. Individuals of any age with mental, physical or emotional concerns which require supervision shall be accompanied by a parent, guardian or responsible caregiver at all times.

2. Staff may, as needed:
 - a. Notify parents, guardians or caregivers whose children need additional supervision;
 - b. Contact authorities such as the police or Child Protective Services (Department of Human Resources) either to assist with the enforcement of discipline in the Library or to ensure the safety of an unattended child.
3. Staff will make a reasonable effort to ensure that minor children (under 16 years of age) have a way home at closing time.
 - a. Thirty minutes and again at 15 minutes before closing, staff will check with young patrons as to their transportation home. Staff shall also inform the minor patrons that the local police or Child Protective Services will be contacted if they have not been picked up by 15 minutes after closing.
 - b. At least 2 staff members will remain with minor children left at closing until such time as the minor children are picked up or placed in the custody of Child Protective Services or law enforcement.

Treatment of Policy Violations

Any person not abiding by these or other rules and regulations adopted by the Library Board may be denied the privilege of access to the Library or its resources, by the Library Director or designee. Library employees will contact law enforcement authorities if illegal activities are observed or reported or as otherwise deemed advisable. The Library will seek compensation for any damages it incurs as the result of a patron's violation of these rules, whether by commencing legal action or otherwise. Based on the nature of the offense, warnings and other preliminary steps may be bypassed. Library staff is responsible for the determination of severity of offense.

Enforcement Actions

- **One warning for first infraction of any minor offense.** Patron receives copy of Appropriate Library Use Policy.
- **Second infraction results in removal from the Library premises for the day.** Parent may be contacted if necessary.
- **Third and subsequent infractions will be referred to administration and result in suspension from all Library premises for not less than 7 days.** Library card privileges will be revoked for this period. Parents of minors will be contacted.
- **Indefinite suspensions may result from recurring, frequent or serious infractions.**
- **Police contact – Based on the severity of the offense the police may be contacted immediately.**

Trespassing

Any person who enters or remains on Library premises after having been notified not to do so, and any person who enters or remains on the Library premises during the period in which he or she had been suspended from Library service and prohibited from the premises, will be deemed a trespasser and legal action will be taken. Law enforcement will be immediately notified.

Appeals

Any patron subjected to specific enforcement of this policy may file a written appeal to the Director. The Director will review any appeal made and provide a written response affirming, overturning or modifying the enforcement action. Patrons objecting to the Director's decision may make a written appeal to the Library Board. The Library Board will review any appeal made to them at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting and provide a written response affirming, overturning or modifying the enforcement action.

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