

Rules of Conduct

The Somerset County Library System is for all members of the community. We are committed to providing excellent services and resources to our patrons and ensuring that everyone who uses the library has a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable experience.

These Rules of Conduct guide staff in creating and enforcing an environment that encourages all patrons to use library facilities in an appropriate and respectful manner. This policy supports staff members' actions when a person's behavior or activities are unreasonably interfering with others' enjoyment of the library.

The following behaviors and activities are not allowed:

- Behavior that is prohibited by law.
- Behavior that is unsafe.
- Activity that unreasonably interferes with others' use of the library, including solicitation, talking loudly, rowdiness in library, using cell phones, using electronic devices without headphones or at excessive volume, and using obscene or abusive language.
- Loitering. Loitering is defined as the act of entering and remaining in any area of the library property with no apparent purpose and without the apparent intent to use the library facilities or resources.
- Leaving children under the age of eight unattended.
- Eating and drinking.
- Bodily hygiene so offensive as to unreasonably interfere with others' use and enjoyment of the library.
- Not wearing shirts or shoes. Swimsuits are prohibited. Hoods must be lowered upon entering the library.
- Bringing animals, other than service animals, into the building.
- Failing to follow rules pertaining to use of materials, computer, equipment and building.

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.

Staff may ask patrons to leave if adults or children exhibit symptoms of flu or other contagious illness.

It is the intent of the Somerset County Library System that enforcement of these rules will be conducted in a fair and reasonable manner. Library staff and/or local law enforcement officers have the right to intervene to stop prohibited activities and behaviors. Failure to comply with the library's established rules and policies could result in removal from the premises and expulsion from the Library for a period of one day to one year, or in arrest or

prosecution. Violations could also result in the restriction or termination of some or all library privileges, including the use of library computers and other equipment.

Consequences for Violating Rules

- Library staff has the authority to enforce Rules of Conduct and will follow the Behavioral Management Matrix in resolving incidents.
- Depending on the nature and frequency of the behavior, consequences may include loss of library privileges for a specified period of time.
- Staff may request patrons to show their library cards and other documents (driver's licenses, school ID, e.g.) for purposes of identification.

Safe Child Policy

Children under the age of 8 must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or parent-provided reliable caregiver, at least 13 years old, to protect the child at ALL times while on library property. The library cannot assume responsibility for the safety of young children.

Children ages 8 through 10 must have a parent, guardian, or parent-provided reliable caregiver, at least 13 years old, present on library property. All patrons will be expected to display appropriate behavior, conducive to maintaining a safe and peaceful atmosphere while in the building.

Parents and caregivers, not library staff, are responsible for the actions and safety of children visiting the library.

Approved April 12, 2017; Amended August 14, 2019

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Behavior Management Matrix

Offense	Examples of Behaviors	Staff Response - 1st Offense	2nd Offense	Repeat Offences
Prohibited Behavior A. Emergency Incident	Threat of physical violence to patrons or staff Accessing illegal material on the internet (i.e.: child pornography) Other violations of law.	Call Police. Obtain Police Report. File Incident Report. Ban for one year.	Call Police. Obtain Police Report. File Incident Report. Extend ban as determined by Director.	Call Police. Obtain Police Report. File Incident Report. Extend ban as determined by Director.
Prohibited Behavior B. Serious Incident	Harassment of library patrons or staff. Unsafe and hazardous behavior.	Call Police. Obtain Police Report. File Incident Report. Ban patron 90 days.	Call Police. Obtain Police Report. File Incident Report. Ban for one year.	Call Police. Obtain Police Report. File Incident Report. Extend ban as determined by Director.
Disruptive Behavior	Violations of this policy that are not prohibited by law and do not create an immediate threat or unsafe condition, e.g., cell phone use, eating or drinking, loitering.	Give oral warning citing policy.	Ask patron to leave the building for the day. Provide copy of policy. File Incident Report.	Ban patron for 30 days. File Incident Report. Subsequent violations, ban determined by Director.

Unattended Children	<p>Parent or guardian who is not staying with a child under the age of 8</p> <p>Child under age of 10 who is left alone at the library by parent or guardian</p>	<p>Give oral warning.</p> <p>Explain policy to the parent.</p>	<p>Parent and child must leave the library for the day.</p> <p>Provide copy of policy.</p> <p>File Incident Report.</p>	<p>Ban patron 30 days.</p> <p>File Incident Report.</p> <p>Subsequent violations, ban determined by Director.</p>
Violation of Acceptable Use Policy for the Internet	Violations of Somerset County Computer & Internet Use Policy.	<p>Give oral warning.</p> <p>Provide copy & explain policy.</p> <p>Patron computer session is terminated.</p>	<p>Patron barred from computer & Internet use.</p> <p>File Incident Report.</p> <p>Director may reinstate internet access before fulfillment of 30 days.</p>	<p>Patron barred from computer & Internet use for a minimum of 90 days.</p> <p>File Incident Report.</p> <p>Subsequent violations, access determined by Director.</p>

Incident reports will be filed in all situations in which a patron is compelled to leave the facility.

PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIONS AND SAFETY OF CHILDREN VISITING THE LIBRARY - NOT LIBRARY STAFF.