

North Madison County Public Library System
Patron Behavior Policy

Policy Statement

The purpose of all the library facilities of the North Madison County Public Library System is to provide materials, programs, and services in a welcoming environment that is safe, enjoyable, and conducive to comfortable library use. All individuals who make use of the library are expected to comply with the following standards of behavior which will assist the library to meet the above purpose.

Guidelines: Behaviors with Progressive Consequences

Instances of irresponsible use of the library and its facilities with examples:

1. Producing excessive noise or behaving in a disruptive manner creating a nuisance or threatening the personal safety of patrons and/or staff. Examples are:
 - a. Loud talking, singing, playing a musical instrument or other electronic device in quiet areas of the library.
 - b. Skateboarding, rollerblading, running, or groups gathering around a single computer.
2. Any violations of the Public Access Computer Policy that are not illegal.
3. Consuming alcohol, or tobacco products, including electronic vapor cigarettes, in any inside public area, including restrooms. As of July 1, 2012, Indiana State Law (IC 7.1-5-12) prohibits smoking within 8 feet of any public entrance to a public place or place of employment. Eating except in designated areas. Non-alcoholic beverages in containers designed to prevent spills are permitted in all areas of the library except at computer workstations.
4. Excessive sleeping and camping are prohibited. For purposes of this policy, “camping” includes:
 - sleeping for an extended period (not including incidental napping), lying down and sleeping on a couch, bench, floor or other surface, with or without one’s belongings.
 - Excessive use of seating or space that interferes with services the library offers.
 - Using the bathrooms for bathing, showering or for more than casual grooming
 - Use of bedrolls, blankets, and other such covering; storing personal belongings; carrying on cooking activities; and other similar behavior that amounts to using the seating or space as a temporary shelter or living quarters. Whether a given use constitutes “camping” will be determined based on the facts and circumstances of specific situations.
5. Soliciting donations of money or anything of value; selling materials or services. (Examples: Panhandling, etc.) Patrons are expected to have an appropriate form of payment for library charges and other purchases. Soliciting to use an employee’s personal debit/credit card to purchase items is not allowed.
6. Shirts, pants, and shoes are required for health and safety reasons and must be worn at all times inside the library and on library property.
7. During an epidemic or pandemic not following health safety protocols such as wearing a mask.

The behaviors identified above are considered to be unacceptable patron conduct and will result in appropriate discretionary responses from library staff according to the following progressive criteria:

1. Ask patron to cease behavior.
2. Repeat request to cease behavior and communicate that this correction is a warning of expulsion, if behavior continues.
3. Ask patron to leave facility or call security/police if patron refuses to comply. The staff member involved will document the occurrence and any action on the Incident Report form. The patron will not be allowed in the library for one full business day beginning the day after the incident.
4. If there is a second offense, the patron will not be allowed in the library for one week starting with the business day after the incident. The staff member will document any action on the Incident Report form and report it to their direct supervisor. If the patron is under 18 years of age, the parent/guardian will be contacted by phone or mail by the Department/Branch Manager. For patrons over the age of 18 a letter will be sent to the last known address with a copy of this policy and a date of return.
5. If there is a third offense, the patron will not be allowed in the library for six months starting with the business day after the incident. The staff member will document any action on the Incident Report form and report it to their direct supervisor. If the patron is under 18 years of age, the director will contact the parent/guardian by phone, if possible, to discuss the issue and a letter will be sent to the last known address with a copy of this policy and a return date. The parent/guardian will need to accompany their child after the six months ban to reinstate privileges. If the patron is over 18, a letter will be sent to the last known address with a copy of this policy and a date of return.

Zero Tolerance Behaviors

Criminal behavior will result in immediate expulsion from the library and is considered a zero tolerance behavior. The Library Director will be informed immediately and will send a letter to the offending patron detailing the length of the expulsion if the patron's name and address are known. If the offender is under the age of 18, the letter will be sent to the parent or guardian. Upon request the Library Director will meet with the offender and parent or guardian, if the offender is under the age of 18, to discuss the consequences of the behavior. The offender may contact the Library Director via work e-mail or phone call to appeal the expulsion. If legal action is required, the patron will be banned until legal action is complete.

Any patron banned from the library six months or more may appeal to the NMCPLS Library Board of Trustees for a potential reduction in time away from the library. The appeal will be scheduled for the next public meeting of the NMCPLS Library Board of Trustees.

Adopted 12/08/2008

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