

Library Code of Conduct

This policy establishes guidelines and expectations regarding standards of conduct among the patrons of the Hurt/Battelle Memorial Library while in the Library and its immediate premises in order to ensure the highest standard of health and safety for all who use the Library.

General Rules

The following behaviors are prohibited on Library property:

Any behavior that is prohibited by law, including but not limited to:

- Sexual misconduct or harassment (e.g. unwanted physical contact, leering, sexual innuendoes, sexual propositions, acts of physical aggression)
- Tobacco use on Library premises
- Using the internet for unlawful purposes (e.g. all forms of pornography)
- Theft or vandalism of Library property or items belonging to staff and/or other Library users
- Unapproved entry in non-public areas of the Library (e.g. trespassing)
- Being under the influence, possessing alcohol or drugs, selling or using drugs or alcoholic beverages
- Unlawful possession of weapons
- Brandishing of weapons, using weapons to threaten or intimidate others; or using weapons in an unsafe manner that could reasonably result in personal injury or property damage

Any activity that unreasonably interferes with others' use and enjoyment of the Library, including but not limited to:

- Harassing, threatening, or intimidating patrons or staff
- Loud or disruptive behavior which disturbs Library activities
- Recording video or audio in a manner that disrupts library services or the ability of patrons to use the library
- Disregard for bodily hygiene, or any scent so offensive as to constitute a nuisance to others
- Improper dress, including lack of shoes, tops, and bottoms, while in Library
- Monopolizing/obstructing space or interfering with the free passage of staff or patrons in or on Library premises
- Solicitation or other commercial activities inside the Library or on Library grounds unless it is associated with a Library or Friends of the Library-approved event
- Use of electronic devices in a manner that is disruptive to others (e.g. mobile phones)
- Sleeping, bathing, shaving, or washing clothes on the premises
- Insufficient supervision of children
- Using Library materials, equipment, fixtures, furniture, buildings, or grounds in any manner that is inconsistent with normal Library uses, can damage Library property or the property of others is likely to cause personal injury to one's self or others
- Disobeying the direction of a Library staff member and/or remaining on Library property when requested to leave

Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated as it may interfere with the legitimate Library business of other users or staff and may serve as grounds for removal from the Library. The Library reserves the right to evict from Library premises and refuse further admission to any individuals, and/or groups who infringe upon the rights of Library staff or patrons in their proper use of Library facilities.

Patrons who are behaving inappropriately or disruptively will be warned that the behavior must stop. If the behavior is not immediately corrected, the person will be told to leave the premises. For serious violations, patrons may be asked to leave immediately. Anyone who does not leave after being told to do so, will be considered a trespasser and will be treated accordingly. This may include asking the West Jefferson Police Department to intervene, if necessary. Habitual abusers of Library rules may be banned from the premises for a period determined by the Director. A minor (anyone under 18 years of age) who creates chronic problems may be required to bring a responsible adult, who will remain with him or her in the Library.

Solicitation

- The Library is considered a limited public forum and therefore provides access and use of designated Library spaces to the general public. However, that access and use are limited to Library purposes and approved activities.
- Restrictions and prohibitions to petitioners/solicitors apply to all paid and volunteer canvassers for candidates, partisan or non-partisan, and petitions to get issues on the ballot or those simply seeking support for a cause or issue. This policy is content-neutral and applies to all regardless of the candidate, issue, or cause.
- Petitioners/solicitors may offer literature to individuals but are prohibited from placing leaflets on vehicles in Library parking lots.
- Patron comfort and safety requires petitioners/solicitors to remain a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from Library entrances and exits to ensure safe ingress and egress into the library for patrons, deliveries, or emergency vehicles.
- Petitioners/solicitors may not block doorways, prevent patrons from getting in or out of cars, use abusive language or behave in any way which is harassing or intimidating.
- Petitioners/solicitors must stay clear of traffic lanes and vehicular entrances.

Unattended Minors

The Library wishes to provide a safe environment for visitors of all ages; however, Library facilities are open to the public, which can present risks to children. Parents, caregivers, and group leaders need to be aware that staff cannot be responsible for the safety and security of unattended children. “Unattended” is understood to mean that:

- A child is out of view of the parent or caregiver and/or not actively engaged with the parent or caregiver.
- A child is alone at the Library without appropriate supervision.
- A child is dropped off at the Library without appropriate supervision.

Children under the age of 10 must be accompanied at all times by a parent or caregiver. Parents and caregivers must exercise their own judgment regarding whether to leave their children over the age of 9 unattended in the Library. The Library cannot monitor children who enter and leave the Library. Children who are disruptive may be asked to leave the Library. Parents and caregivers should only leave unattended children at the Library if they are capable of coming and going by themselves.

Children who become disruptive, have a security or safety issue, or endanger themselves or others anywhere on Library property will be asked to correct their behavior. If the behavior continues, the child will be asked to leave the Library as indicated by the eviction policy above.

Parents and caregivers are responsible for arranging transportation to and from the Library for unattended children. Transportation for these children should arrive prior to the closing time. If a child’s transportation has not arrived before closing time, the Library may call the police if the child expresses concern or if the Library staff member believes there is reason for concern.

If a child has been left at the Library at closing time, staff will attempt to contact the parent or caregiver. At least two staff members shall remain with the child. If the parent or caregiver cannot be reached within 15 minutes of closing the police will be called. If the police pick up a child after closing time, staff should place a note on the Library’s main doors indicating that the police have been called to assist with an unattended child. The note should not mention the name of the child but should include the date, time, the child’s age, and sex. Under no circumstances will staff take the child away from the Library.



Video Surveillance

In order to deter crime and to aid in protecting the safety of individuals and the property of the Library, the Library uses video surveillance equipment. Video surveillance is limited to areas that do not violate the reasonable expectation of privacy; such as areas of public usage, staff work areas, parking lots, and grounds. Targeted video surveillance is prohibited if such observation is based on the characteristics and classifications that would be considered discriminatory under the law (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, etc.).

The Director, Coordinators, support staff, and authorized contractors are the only persons authorized to access the video surveillance system.

The Director will review all requests received by the Library to release recordings obtained through video surveillance. Video recordings and photos obtained through video surveillance will be released in accordance with applicable laws. Under exigent circumstances or in response to a search warrant or court order, recordings and photographs may be released to the police. Exigent circumstance is defined as an emergency situation requiring swift action to prevent imminent danger to life or serious damage to property or to forestall the imminent escape of a suspect, or destruction of evidence. No release of video recordings or images will occur without prior authorization by the Director or his/her designee.

Requests for recordings and photographs which show identifiable persons, identifiable Library materials in the possession of a patron, or identifiable requests or other readable communication from a patron to a Library employee shall be evaluated prior to any release outside the Library, under the Library's confidentiality policies or state laws.

The recorded video will be saved no longer than the memory of the system allows and will then be automatically erased unless retained as part of a criminal investigation or court proceedings (criminal or civil), or other bona fide use as approved by the Director.

Video footage or images retained as part of a criminal investigation or court proceedings will be stored in a secure location by the information technology personnel.