

Somerset Public Library

Behavior Policy



March 19, 2019

The Somerset Public Library exists to serve as a center of informal learning, individual growth and recreation for the citizens of Somerset. The Library expects to make a contribution to the learning process and to aid individuals in the lifelong process of growth and appreciation and understanding of themselves, their neighbors, and the world around them. In addition, the library makes its building available as a setting for appropriate events according to the needs and interests of the community.

Policy Statement

The Somerset Public Library is designed to serve as an environment for learning, recreation and personal growth for its community. To fulfill this mission, rules have been established regarding proper behavior necessary to maintain this environment. This policy protects the rights and safety of those using the library and library staff. It also preserves and protects library materials, equipment and facilities.

Behavior Violations

The following types of behavior are prohibited in the library:

- Any behavior that endangers the safety or health of others
- Violation of any local, state or federal laws
- Vandalism or deliberate destruction of library materials, equipment or facilities
- Theft of library materials or equipment, and personal belongings of other patrons or staff
- Use of abusive or intimidating language or gestures to patrons and staff
- Behavior that is willfully annoying, harassing, or threatening to another person
- Soliciting of any kind, asking for signatures on petitions, conducting surveys, etc.
- Creating a disturbance by making noise, talking loudly, playing music, etc. which could reasonably be expected to disturb others
- Use of skateboards, scooters, roller blades, etc. on library property
- Inappropriate dress such as wearing no shoes, no shirt or wet clothing
- Loitering on the premises after closing
- Smoking, use of alcohol or illegal substances
- Eating or drinking where not allowed (see separate Food and Drink policy)
- Poor hygiene that constitutes a nuisance
- Gambling
- Rearranging furniture or inappropriate use of furniture
- Bringing animals into the library other than those intended for use by people with disabilities
- Using the restrooms for bathing, grooming or laundry
- Littering
- Leaving personal items unattended
- Blocking aisles, exits or entrances
- Running, pushing, shoving or throwing objects
- Entering areas designated as “staff only” without permission

- Other kinds of behavior deemed inappropriate in the opinion of the Library Director or designated staff members.

Procedures

- In the case of a minor disruption, the library patron will receive a verbal warning. The staff will explain rules and may offer alternative forms of behavior. If the behavior continues, the patron may be asked to leave the library for the remainder of the day.
- In the case of any misconduct that, in judgment of a staff member is extreme, the library patron will be ordered to leave the library immediately for a stated period of suspension and the police may be called.

In Addition

- Parents/Caregivers are responsible for the behavior and supervision of any child they bring to the library
- Children age 10 and older may be left unattended (at the discretion of their parent or legal guardian) for the period of time needed to complete homework or special projects.
- Children under age 10 must be within view of their parent/guardian/caregiver at all times
- The Children's Area is reserved for use by children, their caregivers, and adults interested in children's materials. Adults not accompanying children may not loiter in the Children's Area
- The Teen Area is reserved for use by teens (ages 12 to 17), their caregivers, and adults interested in teen materials. Adults not accompanying a teen may not loiter in the Teen Area
- Unattended items (such as bags, backpacks or laptops) may be regarded as suspicious and removed.
- Bicycles ridden to the library should be placed in the bicycle rack and locked. They may not be brought into the building or left on the sidewalks leading to the building.
- Items left behind will be placed in lost and found for at least thirty days, at which point they may be discarded or donated to an appropriate organization.
- There is a separate policy for computer and internet use
- The library is not responsible for any lost or stolen personal items
- In the case of a medical emergency, the Town of Somerset emergency personnel will be requested and attempts will be made to notify parents, guardians, or caregivers

Safety of Children

The staff of the Somerset Public Library is concerned about the safety and the wellbeing of all of our patrons. However, with this in mind, the library is a public building available to anyone. Due to the many responsibilities of the staff, monitoring each child's behavior and location is not possible. The staff does not and will not take over parental responsibilities for children when they come into the library. It should not be assumed that young children are safe when left unattended in the library. The staff has no way to know if children are leaving the building with parents or strangers. If a problem arises with children of any age, or if the library is closing and we are unable to locate a parent, guardian or caregiver, the police will be called.

Special Needs Exception

The Somerset Public Library recognizes that there may be special circumstances regarding behavior of a disabled or special needs patron. If a complaint of disturbance is brought to staff attention, staff is not allowed to disclose if a disability or diagnosis is or is not the cause of disturbance. The staff will act accordingly to assess the situation and take any necessary actions needed to ensure that the situation is resolved promptly. The Somerset Public Library encourages designated guardians/counselors/caregivers to disclose to the library staff if there is a "special need diagnosis" in order to be covered under the Special Needs Exception rule. Designated guardians/counselors/caregivers have the right to not disclose if there is a special needs diagnosis; however, staff is required to implement the Adult Behavior guidelines (see above) when no diagnosis is communicated.

Governance

The Library Board of Trustees is responsible for determining the rules of behavior necessary to protect the rights of individuals to use library materials and services, to protect the rights of library employees to conduct library business without interference, and to preserve library materials and facilities. This policy may be amended at any time at the discretion of the Library Board of Trustees.

TRUSTEE APPROVAL DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE
2/27/1992	Original policy approved by Board of Trustees
6/17/2008	Revision approved by Board of Trustees
5/15/2012	Revision approved by Board of Trustees
3/19/2019	Revision approved by Board of Trustees