

Jefferson Public Library  
Jefferson, IA

## **CONDUCT POLICY**

### **I. General**

The library provides a safe, comfortable environment conducive to the use of Library materials and facilities. The Library is intended for the use of all members of the public. Patrons are expected to observe the rights of other patrons and staff members and to use the library for its intended purposes. Prohibited conduct will not be allowed in the Library or at library-sponsored events held at other locations.

Library patrons are expected to be engaged in the productive use of the Library's resources. This includes reading, studying, researching, attending programs, and utilizing Library materials. Patrons have the right to use the Library undisturbed and Library employees have the right to work without undue interference. Any person who fails to comply with the following rules may lose Library privileges.

### **II. Definition**

Prohibited conduct is that which: interferes with the rights of individuals to use library materials and services; interferes with the ability of Library staff to conduct library business; or threatens the secure and comfortable environment of the library or those using the library.

Prohibited conduct may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Willfully annoying, harassing, or threatening another person.  
(Harassment is defined as any action taken or situation created intentionally to produce psychological or physical discomfort, embarrassment, or ridicule. Harassment is characterized by requests for sexual contact, unwelcome physical advances, or conduct (verbal or physical) of a nature that is intimidating, demeaning, hostile, offensive, or potentially dangerous to self or others.)
- Any behavior that endangers or could endanger the safety or health of others.
- Behaving in a disorderly, loud, or boisterous manner.

- Use of offensive or abusive language.
- Physical contact or the threat of it, including fist-fighting, shoving, tripping, or roughhousing.
- Theft, vandalism, or the deliberate destruction of Library materials, property, or the personal property of other patrons or staff members.
- Maliciously accessing, altering, deleting, damaging, or destroying any computers, peripherals, computer system, network, computer program, or data.
- Disturbing younger children in their use and enjoyment of the Creative Learning Center.
- Impeding access to the building or an area of the building, or blocking book stack aisles for extended periods of time.
- Running, throwing objects, swearing, yelling, spitting, or climbing shelving.
- Entering the non-public or locked areas, unless accompanied by a staff member or through prior authorization from a staff member.
- Leaving personal belongings in the building. The Library assumes no responsibility for any personal belongings left unattended.
- Rollerblades, skates and bicycles are not permitted indoors.
- Shoes must be worn in the library and diapers must be covered.
- Listening to audio devices either without earphones or at an unreasonable level.
- Taking photos or videotaping individuals unless authorized by the individuals involved or their parents if minors are present.
- Soliciting of sales except at library-sponsored events.
- Soliciting signatures in person for a petition; the library will not accept citizen petitions and make them available in the Library. All petitions regarding local, state or federal ballot issues or candidates for office are strictly prohibited in the library.
- Bringing animals into the Library, except those trained to assist individuals with disabilities.
- Smoking.
- Consuming food except as permitted in designated meeting rooms or at special library programs or events. Covered beverages are allowed in the library.

- Sleeping in the library or using the restroom facilities for bathing.
- More than one person in the restroom at a time, unless a parent or caregiver with a child.
- Consume or possess alcoholic beverages, or use or possess controlled substances on library grounds or be under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances in a manner that causes public disturbance.
- Remain in the library without authorization after regular closing hours, or refuse to cooperate during an emergency evacuation.
- Willfully expose patrons and staff to offensive images or language.
- Use of the library's public phone for extended periods.
- Cell phone usage which disturbs other library patrons. Volume and length of phone calls and ringtones should be considerate of others using the library.
- Use of the library's parking lots as a play or social area, or for improper parking.
- Remove library materials, or hide library materials with intent to remove such materials, without properly checking out or borrowing such material.
- Deposit litter anywhere other than in garbage receptacles provided.
- Post, distribute, or circulate any handbill, circular, card, or booklet without the permission of the library director.
- Violation of any municipal, state or federal law or code.

### **III. Enforcement**

In most cases, patrons who are behaving inappropriately in the Library will be given one warning and asked to behave in an appropriate manner. Patrons who do not modify their behavior after one warning will be asked to leave the Library for the rest of the day.

In the case of any misconduct that – in the judgment of a staff member – presents an immediate and profound threat to other patrons and/or staff (violent or clearly criminal acts), the offender will be ordered to leave the building immediately, and the police may be called.

Patrons engaging in multiple incidents of misconduct in the library will be given notice in

the form of a registered letter of warning, detailing the conduct policy being violated, documenting the date(s) on which the violation(s) occurred and stating the consequence(s) if violations continue. It shall be at the discretion of the library director to determine if the violation of this conduct policy shall result in the loss of library privileges and the length of the suspension.

All incidents in which a patron receives a warning or expulsion by a staff member or police will be recorded. In all incidents involving a minor child, the parent(s) or legal guardian will be notified of the child's misconduct. Patrons who have been notified of loss of library privileges due to misconduct may appeal this decision with the Library Board of Trustees.

#### **IV. Unattended Children**

In order to provide for the general safety of children using the Jefferson Public Library and in order to provide for the general welfare of all persons using the library and in order to prevent the undue disruption of normal library activities, the following policy is in effect.

1. All children age six years or younger shall at all times be attended and adequately supervised by a responsible care provider (adult or mature adolescent).
2. Children age seven years or older may use the library unattended, subject of course, to the rules of conduct at the Jefferson Public Library.
3. Children attending programs at the library are the sole responsibility of their parent/guardian/care provider before and after the program.
4. The Jefferson Public Library assumes no responsibility for children left unattended on the Library premises.
5. Under no circumstances shall a library staff member take the child out of the building, drive the child home or take the child to the staff member's home. Neither shall a staff member ever touch a child or use physical force of any kind.

#### **V. Sex Offenders Against Minors**

Iowa Code Chapter 692A of Subtitle 1 of Title 16 prohibits a sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor from being present on the real property of a public

library without written permission of the Library Director. Under no circumstance shall permission be given to enter the Children's or Teen Departments of the Library. Local law enforcement will be notified if any person believed to have been convicted of a sex offense against a minor is on Library property without permission.

Exceptions allowing registered sex offenders to be on library property: (1) they may be present on library property during the period of time reasonably necessary to transport their own minor children or wards to or from the library; and (2) during the period of time reasonably necessary to vote in a public election if the polling place is located in the library.

Persons barred from library property under the law remain entitled to library service. It is the responsibility of the offender to arrange for a third party courier to select, check out, and return materials to the library through possession of the library user's card.

Persons barred from library property under the law will not be served by the library's homebound delivery service.

The issuance of a library card to registered sex offenders does not grant those individuals permission to enter the library or to be present on library property. Registered sex offenders must follow proper library procedures and policies to request and obtain written permission to be on library property, regardless of whether or not they possess a valid library card.

In addition, Iowa law prohibits a sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor from being employed by or from acting as a contractor or volunteer at any public library. Volunteers and applicants for employment will be screened as appropriate for compliance with the law.

Violations of this policy will be immediately reported to law enforcement.

Adopted: February 13, 2012

Reviewed and Revised:

July 8, 2013; November 10, 2014; September 7, 2015, November 13, 2017, July 12, 2021

# **Unattended Children**

## **PROCEDURES**

1. Children left unattended are often frightened and crying and should be comforted by the staff member on duty.
2. If it is determined that a child is lost or left unattended, the staff member on duty should try to identify and locate the parent or adult responsible for the child:
  - a. Walk around the library with the child, children's department first, looking for the parent.
  - b. When the parent is located, explain firmly the library policy on unattended children.
  - c. If the parent is not found in the building, stay with the child until the parent can be located by telephone.
  - d. Staff should ascertain the procedure the parent wants followed – either let the child walk home or the parent (or another responsible person such as an older sibling) will come to pick up the child.
  - e. If the parents have not been located and the library is closing, two library staff must stay with the child and may call the police for assistance.
  - f. Under no circumstances shall a staff member take the child out of the building, drive the child home, take the child to the staff member's home, or turn a child out of the library at nighttime or during extreme weather conditions.

## **DISRUPTIVE UNATTENDED CHILDREN UNDER AGE SEVEN**

If a child under the age of seven is unattended and behaving in a disruptive manner:

1. The staff member on duty will ask the child to correct the behavior. Give the child a copy of the "Policy on Unattended Children" to give to his/her parent.
2. If the child's disruptive behavior persists, he/she will be told to sit quietly at a table.

3. The staff member will then obtain the child's and parent's names and attempt to locate the parent within the building. If located in the building, explain that the child is being disruptive and inform them of the library's unattended child policy.
4. If the parent cannot be located within the building, the staff member will attempt to contact the parent by telephone. When contacted, he/she will be told that the child is being disruptive, and will be reminded of the library's policy and told to pick up the child immediately. If he/she is unable to come immediately, he/she will be told the child may stay this time, but not again.

### **DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN OVER AGE SEVEN**

1. Tell the young person that he/she is causing a disturbance and that this is a warning. The next time he/she will be asked to leave.
2. If the disruptive behavior continues, the young person will be told to leave the building. If library staff determines that the behavior of the child or others involved poses a safety risk to the child, then child should be allowed to remain inside the library in a separate area. Local law enforcement may be contacted for assistance.
3. Under no circumstances should a staff member ever touch a child or use physical force of any kind.