



SECTION	POLICY #	SUBJECT
<b>100 – Public Service</b>		<b>Library Behavior and Banning Policy</b>

### **Behavior Policy**

The Newport News Public Library aims to assure high quality, professional service to all of its patrons. The Library serves the community most effectively when everyone conforms to the following policies. As such, this policy applies to all patrons entering in or on Library premises.

Behavior within the Library or on Library premises that interferes with the use of the Library by other patrons, creates a risk of injury to other patrons or Library personnel, interferes with the work of Library personnel, or creates a risk of damage to Library property is not permitted.

The Newport News Public Library supports the rights of all individuals to:

- Use the library without discrimination.
- Receive friendly, courteous and respectful service.
- Have free and equal access to information.
- Have a clean, comfortable and pleasant environment.
- Use the library undisturbed without threat of harm to person or property, or interference with library use.

### **Inappropriate Behavior**

The Library is for everyone's enjoyment. For the comfort and safety of patrons, volunteers, and staff, and the protection of Library property, the following actions are examples of inappropriate behavior on Library property. This list is not all-inclusive.

1. Committing or attempting to commit any act that would constitute a violation of Federal, State, local or other applicable law, or Library policy.
2. Carrying weapons of any type (except as permitted by law).
3. Being under the influence of alcohol/illegal drugs or selling, using, or possessing alcohol/illegal drugs.
4. Behavior that a reasonable person would find to be harassing or threatening, including stalking, prolonged staring at or following another with the intent to annoy, harass or threaten, lurking, unwanted touching, obscene or offensive gesturing, and obscene acts such as sex acts & indecent exposure.
5. Threats or acts of violence.
6. Stealing, damaging, altering, or unauthorized use or removal of Library property in Library facilities or on Library grounds, including print and non-print materials, technology hardware and software, other equipment, and furniture.
7. Fighting or challenging to fight; running, pushing, shoving, or throwing things.

8. Using obscene or vulgar language and/or gestures.
9. Gambling and other group activities which are disruptive to other patrons in the Library environment.
10. Excessive noise, including loud talking, singing, boisterous activity, or using audible devices in nondesignated areas in a manner that disturbs others.
11. Soliciting, petitioning, or conducting surveys inside the Library.
12. Failure to abide by the Library's "Internet Use Policy".
13. Entering the Library barefooted and/or without a shirt.
14. Lying down or sleeping in the Library.
15. Blocking aisles, stairways, entrances or exits.
16. Using wheeled devices such as skateboards, roller skates, bicycles, recreational scooters or shopping carts in Library buildings or in a manner that blocks entrances or exits. Carrying or storing a wheeled device in a designated area is permissible. The use of wheelchairs, walkers, strollers, and similar devices is permitted.
17. Use of library furniture, materials, equipment and facilities for anything but their intended purpose.
18. Using restrooms for bathing, shampooing, shaving or doing laundry.
19. Bringing pets or animals into the Library other than certified service animals necessary for those with disabilities or part of a pre-authorized program. Unattended animals, inside or outside of the building, are not permitted.
20. Excessive displays of affection.
21. Littering.
22. Smoking, chewing, and other tobacco use in Library facilities.
23. Consuming food or beverages, except for beverages in closable, spill-resistant containers such as travel mugs, plastic bottles with screw-on or snap-shut tops, or cans which have a plastic snap-on lid.

### **Personal Possessions**

Personal possessions should not be left at public service points for safekeeping. The Library is unable to guarantee the security of such items. Personal belongings left in the Library at closing time will be locked in the building until the Library is next open to the public.

### **Enforcement**

1. A patron who violates this policy will be given one warning and asked to modify his or her behavior. If, after receiving this warning, the patron continues to engage in inappropriate conduct, the patron will be asked to leave the Library.
2. When a group is disruptive or otherwise in violation of this policy, the group will be given one warning and asked to modify its behavior. If the group continues to be disruptive, all members of the group will be asked to leave the Library.
3. Groups and individuals who have previously violated this policy may be asked to leave without warning if their behavior is in violation of this policy.
4. If a patron refuses to leave the Library when asked, or engages in illegal activity on Library property, the police will be called.
5. Repeated violations of Library policy, or severe violations, such as conduct that is illegal or otherwise threatens the health, safety or welfare of Library patrons or staff, may result in the

suspension of Library privileges, including but not limited to barring the patron from Library property.

Patrons who are aggrieved by consequences imposed as a result of this policy may appeal to Library Administration.

### **Banning Policy**

Patrons are expected to abide by the Library Behavior Policy. Patrons exhibiting inappropriate behavior in a Newport News Public Library facility may be asked to leave the Library. The purpose of banning is to address the inappropriate behavior of a patron and to remove the individual from the Library environment where members of the public and staff are affected.

The length of the ban will match the severity of the behavior. After warnings from staff, a first incident may result in a one day ban. Various banning periods up to one year may be issued in response to continual and/or escalating problems. Longer banning periods can be instituted when the problem is particularly egregious, or the inappropriate behavior escalates in severity and reoccurs despite prior warnings and shorter bans.

### **Children and Youth**

Children exhibiting inappropriate behavior in the Library may require special consideration. The age of the child and the severity of the behavior are factors to weigh when dealing with the inappropriate behavior of a child.

### **Specific Behaviors and Banning Lengths**

Shown with examples of inappropriate behavior (this list is meant to be illustrative, not all-inclusive).

#### **One Day Ban**

Resulting from repeated staff warnings about any of the following behaviors or situations:

- Unreasonable noise, including loud talking, singing, boisterous activity, or using audible devices in non-designated areas in a manner that disturbs others.
- Using obscene or vulgar language and gestures.
- Using racial slurs or fighting words.
- Being under the influence of alcohol/illegal drugs.
- After violating the Library Behavior Policy or any Library policy more than three times.

#### **One Week up to One Month Ban**

- Recurrence of any of the above behaviors after receiving a one-day ban for the behavior.
- Patrons who have received three one-day bans.
- Repeated threats or acts of violence in any Newport News Public Library branch.

#### **One Month up to Six Month Ban**

- A recurrence of any of the above behaviors after the institution of a one month ban.
- Threat of damage to the building.

#### **One Year Ban**

- Engaging in any activity in violation of Federal, State, local or other applicable law. The Police will be called if illegal behaviors are observed.
- Selling, using, or possessing alcohol/illegal drugs.

- Carrying weapons of any type (except as permitted by Law) or threats issued with a weapon.
- Behavior that a reasonable person would find to be harassing or threatening, including stalking, prolonged following another with the intent to annoy, harass or threaten, lurking, unwanted touching, obscene or offensive gesturing, and obscene acts such as sex acts & indecent exposure.
- Threat of violence or physical violence of any kind.
- Stealing, damaging, vandalizing, altering, or inappropriate use of Library property in Library facilities or on Library grounds, including print and non-print materials, computer hardware and software, printers, copiers, phones, and other equipment.
- Fighting or challenging to fight, running, pushing, shoving, or throwing things.
- Repeated offensive behavior over a period of time in multiple libraries.

**Longer Than One Year**

- Any repeated and escalating behavior that prior bans did not correct.
- Anyone convicted in court whose sentence includes banning from the Library.
- Anyone convicted of viewing child pornography on Library computers or networks.

A ban of one week or more applies at all Newport News Public Library locations. Banned patrons are only allowed on Newport News Public Library property to return Library materials.

Anyone who has been banned has the right to appeal the decision. Patrons may contact Library Administration to discuss Library banning issues.

APPROVAL  
