

Patron Behavior Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the purpose of the Skowhegan Free Public Library System to provide materials and services to the public in an environment that is safe, pleasant, and conducive to comfortable library use.

The purpose of the library's guidelines for behavior as described in this policy are to protect the rights and safety of library patrons; to protect the rights and safety of staff members; and to preserve and protect library materials, facilities, and property.

These guidelines shall apply to all buildings, interior and exterior, and all grounds controlled and operated by the Skowhegan Free Public Library and to all persons entering in or on the premises.

GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOR

The Skowhegan Free Public Library Board of Trustees have adopted the following guidelines for behavior. Library staff members have been authorized to enforce these regulations. The staff may require a patron to leave the library premises and may call the police for noncompliance with these guidelines for behavior.

- A. The following actions are not permitted in the library or on library premises:
1. Smoking and the use of tobacco products in the library or in close proximity to the public entrances
 2. Loud, excessive, or disruptive conversations, cellular telephone use that is disruptive to library patrons or staff, and the audible use of music devices
 3. Disorderly conduct or disruptive behavior that interferes with the normal operation of the library or that disturbs patrons or staff
 4. Sleeping

5. Failing to wear shirts and shoes or other footwear
6. Exhibiting extremely poor personal hygiene, obnoxious body odor, or overpowering perfume or cologne that is disturbing to others
7. Bathing, washing hair, shaving, and washing clothes in library restrooms.
8. Physical, verbal, or sexual harassment of patrons or staff
(Harassing behavior is deliberate and/ or repeated behavior that is not welcome and creates a hostile environment. Some examples of harassment include spitting, constantly staring at or following another person, and using offensive, vulgar, or abusive language or gestures.)
9. All threats of violence (whether an imminent threat or a threat of future violence) and/ or endangering behavior to library staff, patrons, or others are prohibited. Any threats, behavior or acts which may appear to be a danger to life or safety to oneself or others are also prohibited. These include assault, fighting, or other acts of violence or the threat or attempt to commit such crimes. All threats, behavior, or acts described in this paragraph will be reported to the police.
10. Possession of guns, stun guns, knives, explosive devices, dangerous substances or materials, or other weapons
11. Thievery and vandalism
12. Soliciting, panhandling, proselytizing, and gambling
13. Possessing alcohol, illegal drugs, or drug paraphernalia or appearing to be intoxicated or under the influence of illegal drugs
14. Exhibitionism (indecent exposure), voyeurism (peeping), and crimes of obscenity as defined under Maine state laws
15. Excessive displays of affection including any physical contact deemed inappropriate for a public place
16. Operating roller skates, in-line skates, skateboards, scooters, or other similar devices on walkways or in the building
17. Bringing bicycles into the library or parking bicycles in a manner that interferes with the free passage of others

18. Entering non-public work areas or public areas which have been temporarily restricted
 19. Public use of library business telephones without permission
 20. Remaining in the library after closing time
 21. Refusing to comply with the reasonable requests of library staff
 22. Violating the library's Electronic Resources Policy or other library regulations
 23. Violating any federal, state, or local laws
 24. Photography or filming on library premises without permission from those involved
 25. Bringing animals into the library except animals trained to assist individuals with disabilities or animals allowed at a library-approved event or program
- B. The library prohibits bringing more than one personal bag into the library. This bag should be backpack/book bag sized or smaller. All personal belongings should be placed so that they do not interfere with the free passage of library patrons or staff or leaving personal belongings in the library.
- C. The library does not act in loco parentis. A responsible adult or caregiver should accompany children while they are using the library. While in the library, parents and caregivers are responsible for behavior of their children as well as monitoring and regulating the content consumed or checked out by the children in their charge.
- D. Library staff may restrict adult use of children's or young adult areas within the library.

Violation of the above rules of behavior may result in eviction from the library and temporary or permanent suspension of library privileges.

BANNING AND APPEALS PROCESS

Library staff members may ask a patron to leave the premises with or without prior warning, depending upon the seriousness of the violation of these guidelines for behavior. The length of the eviction shall depend upon the nature and seriousness of the offense that

required removal, the extent of damage or disruption caused, any history of prior infractions of library policies, and other relevant circumstances.

When possible, any patron who has been evicted and/or prohibited from returning to the library shall be provided with written notification indicating the reasons for the ban, the time period of the ban, and the appeals process. When a minor has been banned for 30 days or more, the Library Director may attempt to contact the child's parent or legal guardian by telephone and/or send a certified letter to the child's parent/guardian.

Any patron whose library privileges have been suspended has the right to appeal the decision to the Library Director. A patron may appeal in writing to the Library Director or in person after scheduling an appointment with the Director. The Library Director may shorten, modify, or terminate the banning period if the information submitted by the individual warrants such modification.

NONCOMPLIANCE WITH EVICTION OR BAN

Any person who is asked to leave the library as a result of the violation of these guidelines and refuses to do so shall be considered to be trespassing and may be subject to permanent exclusion from the library and/or arrest. Any person who enters or remains on library premises during the period in which he has been banned from the library will also be subject to arrest and prosecution for trespassing.

The Library Board of Trustees reserves the right to alter this policy without prior notice.

Approved 03/04/14

Updated 3/19/2024