

Racine Public Library

A Library Commitment to Excellence for All

I. Introduction

The Library is a place of information, knowledge, and learning. It is also one of the few public spaces and public goods in communities and in the country where one may come and be welcomed and be served, to find a space and to find a voice.

The Racine Public Library is committed to serving everyone, especially those in the community who most need access to services and resources and for whom barriers may sometimes hinder full and equitable access. This may include those who are experiencing homelessness, those with health challenges, those with income challenges, and other vulnerable or marginalized members of the community.

Because the Library is for everyone, the Racine Public Library Board of Trustees has adopted this Commitment of Excellence for All to ensure:

- All Library community members may use and enjoy the Library's services, materials, and facilities without unreasonable interference or disturbance from others;
- All Library community members enjoy safe and secure Library facilities;
- The Library's materials are protected from theft and damage and;
- All Library employees have a safe and secure workplace.

II. Personal Conduct in the Library

Community members shall respect the rights of other Library users and Library staff. Soliciting, harassing, intimidating or disturbing Library community members or staff is strictly prohibited.

Community Members who require assistance to follow the Commitment to Excellence for All policy must be accompanied by a caregiver.

III. Library Use Guidelines

The Executive Director shall be responsible for developing and implementing the Commitment of Excellence for All Policy. These procedures shall be consistent with the principles outlined in this policy.

- A. The following are illegal or are not permissible on Library property or at Library events. This includes, but is not limited to the following:
- Threat of harm
 - Assault (actual harm)
 - Committing or attempting to commit any activity that would constitute a crime or a violation of City or County ordinances
 - Creating, viewing, sharing, or distributing child pornography
 - Engaging in sexual conduct, sexual contact, or lewd acts (including but not limited to exposure, masturbation, nudity)

- Harassment (physical, sexual, verbal, or stalking)
- Possessing, selling, distributing, consuming or discernibly being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or controlled substance
- Theft, including deliberately removing Library materials from the building without checking them out
- Trespassing by entering or remaining on Library premises after having been notified by an authorized individual not to do so, and entering or remaining on the Library premises during the period in which an individual has been banned from the premises
- Vandalism or destruction of Library property
- Weapons such as explosives, firearms, knives, look-alike weapons, or any other objects that can reasonably be considered as weapons

B. Any of the following behaviors listed and occurring in the Library will be addressed either by staff addressing the community member verbally, staff referring the patron to our social worker, or any of the more serious consequences listed in Section III of this policy, depending on the situation.

No conduct is permitted that may reasonably be expected to create a disturbance or otherwise interfere with the safe use and enjoyment of the Library by others. These behaviors include, but are not limited to the following:

- Engaging in any behavior that could reasonably be considered as disruptive, harassing, or threatening in nature to Library users or staff including prolonged staring at, inappropriate physical contact, or following intentionally behaving in a manner that could reasonably be expected to annoy or disturb other patrons.
- Engaging in excessive or disruptive conversations, talking loudly, using personal electronic equipment at such a volume or making ongoing noise that is unreasonably disturbing to other Library users.
- Entering or remaining upon Library premises when emitting a bodily odor so strong that it creates an issue for others using the Library. The community member may be referred to the social worker in this case.
- Filming and photography conducted by community members is prohibited on minors, patrons' and employees' computer screens, and/or other sensitive or personal information.
- Loud electronic device use (headphones, cell phone rings, etc.) and loud conversations
- Rowdy behavior and profanity
- Selling, soliciting, surveying, distributing written materials, or canvassing for any political, charitable or religious purposes inside a Library building, doorway or vestibule without prior authorization of the Executive Director or designee.

- C. No conduct is permitted that may reasonably be expected to endanger the health and safety of Library users or employees or cause or threaten to cause damage to Library materials or facilities (for example, but not limited to moving furniture in a way which blocks aisles, using tables, chairs or heating units as footstools, sitting on stairways, defacing or vandalizing Library property or materials, etc.)
- D. Patrons may not bring animals into the Library other than service animals or for a specific Library program.
- E. Smoking and vaping are not permitted on the Library premises.
- F. Using Library restrooms or facilities for purposes such as bathing, shaving or changing clothes.
- G. Not wearing shoes or shirts within the Library. The community member may be referred to the social worker in this case.
- H. Library users may not leave personal belongings in the Library when they leave the building. The Library is not responsible for any loss of users' personal belongings. Personal belongings may not obstruct walkways or interfere with use of shared spaces.
- I. Sleeping is allowed in the library, so long as it does not limit access to library entrances and exits, resources, and staff or cause a significant disturbance to others. Laying or sleeping on the library floor is not allowed.
- J. Eating and drinking while using Library computers or in spaces designated as free from food. Eating and drinking is acceptable in certain areas as indicated.
- K. Violations of the Library's Internet Access Acceptable Use Policy & Regulations.
- L. Refusing to follow the directions of the Library Staff.

IV. Potential Consequences & Procedures for Enforcement

In the event disruptive or illegal behavior occurs, the Racine Public Library staff may take the following actions, as appropriate to the situation:

If the behavior constitutes a violation of criminal law or the City of Racine Municipal Code, staff may request police assistance. Illegal conduct may result in the suspension of Library privileges for a period of time up to and including a one-year renewable suspension.

The Library staff is authorized to use security footage of those who violate this policy, and to request identification.

A. Level I – Warning

Advise the violator that their behavior is disruptive and request that the person comply with Library policy. Library staff may warn the person that if their behavior does not comply with Library policy, they will be directed to leave the facility.

B. Level II- Evicted for the Day

If the person fails to comply with Library policy after being warned, staff may order the person to leave the building for the rest of the day. If a person does not obey an order to leave the building, Library staff may request assistance from the Racine Police Department to remove the person from the building. A Level II eviction applies to warnings given the same day as the eviction.

C. Level III-Suspension of Library Privileges

If a person repeats disruptive behavior, this may result in a suspension of Library privileges for a period of time up to and including a one-year renewable suspension.

V. Patron Suspension Privileges

A. Suspension of Library Privileges

The Library staff are authorized to give Level II suspensions to patrons after the appropriate number of warnings are given as outlined in the Commitment of Excellence for All policy. For Level III suspensions, the Library staff must report the facts to the Executive Director, who shall examine the facts in the report in consultation with the Library social worker and other Library staff as deemed appropriate. If they warrant a suspension action, they shall authorize the action after notifying the community member of the pending action and the community member's right to state their position in writing within one week of the notice.

B. Appeals Process

Community members have the right, within one week after receipt of this notice, to state their position in writing. The Executive Director shall, in consultation with the Library social worker and other Library staff as deemed appropriate, review the submitted community member statement. After that time, Library privileges may be suspended.

Prior to the end of a community member's banning period, the community member may be required to meet with the Library's social worker to create a return plan and to discuss how best the Library may support them to prevent the incident from repeating itself. After this meeting, community members are welcome to return after their suspension, as long as they follow the policy. Any further unacceptable conduct may result in another suspension, up to and including a one-year, renewable suspension.

Written requests to have the suspension reduced should be directed to the Executive Director of the Library. These shall be forwarded to the Finance and Personnel Committee of the Library Board, for recommendation to the full Board. Their decision shall be final.

This policy supersedes all of the Racine Public Library's previous policies on patron behavior.

Addendum Concerning the Behavior and Supervision of Minors and Children's Areas of the Library

I. Philosophy behind the Addendum Concerning the Behavior and Supervision of Minors and Children's Areas of the Library

The Racine Public Library welcomes children of all ages. Libraries provide another space for children to learn and are a doorway to lifelong learning. Parents/caregivers are responsible for their child's safety and behavior while in the Library whether the parent/caregiver is present or not. Library employees cannot function as caregivers or babysitters. The Library is not equipped—and it is not the Library's role—to provide long-or short-term childcare. The Library assumes neither responsibility nor liability for the actions, care, supervision or safety of minors.

Considering any number of emergencies could take place in a public building, it is for the safety of each child that the Racine Public Library Board of Trustees has adopted this policy concerning the behavior and supervision of minors the Library.

II. Safe Child Policy

Parents, guardians, and caregivers are responsible for the safety of those who require care while visiting the library. A person under the age of twelve will not be considered a responsible caregiver; this includes siblings. The caregiver is responsible for the child's behavior while in the building.

Children attending a family program must be supervised by a caregiver. Children participating in a class visit must be supervised by the accompanying teacher and the teacher must remain with the students at all times.

Children aged eight or over may remain in the Library unattended, provided they follow all Library rules as listed in the Commitment of Excellence for All policy, unless special circumstances, defined in the **Safe Child Procedures**, exist.

III. Safe Child Procedures

All children are subject to the Commitment of Excellence for All Policy. Library staff or security will intervene when a child is violating Library rules and take whatever action is considered appropriate including - but not limited to - notifying the child's caregiver, summoning the police, restricting Library privileges and/or access to the Library.

Child left unattended

If a child under the age of eight is left unattended and the caregiver cannot be located, appropriate staff member will be called.

If a caregiver is not found in the building, law enforcement officials will be contacted and the child will stay with Library staff until law enforcement officials arrive.

Child left unattended at closing

At closing, if a child who is age fifteen or younger is left unattended in the Library and a caregiver cannot be reached or does not arrive within fifteen minutes, law enforcement officials may be contacted. The Person in Charge will wait with the child until law enforcement officials arrive.

Special Circumstances

If a child becomes ill or injured and a caregiver cannot be contacted, law enforcement officials or, if appropriate, a rescue squad may be called.

Approved by: RPL Board of Trustees

Approved Date: April 20th, 2023 (*October 21st, 2021, October 20th, 2022*)

Review Schedule: Annual

Next Review Date: April 2024