

Sampson-Clinton Public Library System

Code of Conduct

Purpose

The objective of this policy is to ensure that the Sampson-Clinton Public Library system provides each community member with a welcoming, pleasant, and safe environment free from harassment, physical discomfort, danger, and psychological / emotional stress. Library service will not be denied or abridged because of race, religion, age, gender, handicap conditions, national origin, belief, social and/or political views.

Overview and definitions

Any behavior or activity on library grounds that is disruptive, hinders a person's ability to use the library or poses a threat to the safety and wellbeing of patrons or staff is strictly prohibited.

It is at the library staff's discretion to identify / determine if a patron is engaged in any prohibited or disruptive conduct. Prohibited conduct includes any illegal activity as defined by County, State and Federal laws. To maintain our welcoming safe environment for all patrons, the following behaviors are prohibited:

- Willfully annoying, harassing, or threatening another person, physically or verbally.
- Loud talking, laughing, or using audio equipment or cell phones that disturbs or could disturb other patrons.
- Carrying weapons of any sort.
- Use of abusive or intimidating language or gestures to patrons or staff members.
- Staring at or following another patron or library staff member in a manner which is intimidating or can reasonably be expected to disturb.
- Bringing animals into the library building or on library property, other than service animals as defined by the American with Disabilities Act 35.136.
- Using library equipment (i.e. library telephones) or supplies without approval.
- Engaging in boisterous or disruptive behavior such as fighting or threatening to fight, running, pushing, shoving or throwing things.
- Loitering, blocking or in any way interfering with the free movement of any person.
- Soliciting, petitioning, and posting notices, fundraising, selling, canvassing or distributing any written material unless authorized by the Library Director.
- Using the library as a place to conduct business or sales.
- Consuming alcohol, illegal substances, being intoxicated, smoking, vaping or using tobacco products.
- Drinks in covered containers and packaged snacks may be allowed in designated areas. No meals (fast food) are allowed in public areas.
- Using or defacing the library building, furniture, or equipment in a manner that could cause harm to self, patrons, staff or personal or public property.
- Removal of material from the library collection without authorization through established lending procedure.
- The library does not allow the use of sports or recreational equipment on the property.

- Sleeping in the library or on the grounds and/or occupying excessive space beyond that of a reasonable footprint.
- Failure to maintain a level of personal cleanliness that prevents library patrons from enjoying their use of the Library. Performing personal hygiene, including shaving, bathing, or washing clothes in restrooms is prohibited.
- Unwelcomed interaction with minors is prohibited in the library.
- Entering into non-public areas, unless by invitation or approval of library personnel.
- Failure to wear proper attire at all times in the library. Shirts and shoes are required.
- Leaving personal items unattended on library grounds (The library is not responsible for the loss or theft of unattended items).
- Failure to exit the building at closing and/or not following directions from staff during an emergency.

Procedure

Library staff will deal with the disruptive behavior according to the guidelines of this policy, and may contact law enforcement whenever deemed appropriate.

- For minor disruptions: In the case of a minor disruption, the library patron will receive two warnings. If the disruptive behavior continues, the patron may be asked to leave the library for the day.
- For extreme disruptions: In the case of an extreme disruption based on the judgement of a staff member, the patron may be given only one warning, may be ordered to leave the Library immediately for a stated amount of suspension, or the police may be called.
- Serious or repeated violation of the rules may result in a patron being banned from the library and/or permanently denied services. Any person who fails to comply with a request from library staff shall be considered to be trespassing, and the staff person in charge will contact the police. The Library Director, or designee, is authorized to ban violators from the premises for a specified amount of time or permanently banned depending on the severity of the violation.

Incidents of unacceptable behavior may result in one or more of the following actions or disciplinary procedures:

- Oral warning
- Written warning
- Immediate dismissal or banning from the library in which the behavior occurred

Disruptive behavior meeting the criteria of immediate banning will be enforced at all Sampson-Clinton Public Libraries. The Library Director will:

- Send the patron a formal letter
- Change the account information to indicate that the patron is banned
- Notify each Library

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