



Behavior Policy

Introduction/Overview

The Wissahickon Valley Public Library aims to insure high quality, professional service to all its patrons. The Library serves the community most effectively when everyone conforms to the following guidelines.

General Library Behavior Guidelines

Inappropriate conduct includes any individual or group activity which is unreasonably disturbing to other individuals (including staff) lawfully using library facilities, materials and/or premises or is otherwise inconsistent with activities such as reading, studying, properly using library materials and other similar conduct normally associated with a public library. Inappropriate behavior shall include, without limitation by enumeration, the following conduct or behaviors:

Alcohol and Controlled Substances: Any possession of alcohol or controlled substances without a valid prescription is prohibited. Any patron who is visibly impaired will be asked to leave the Library.

Animals/Pets: Certified service animals, guide dogs or animals used in library programming are allowed in the Library at all times. Service animals should have proper identification. All others are not permitted in the public area. Unattended animals not in a vehicle in the parking area are not permitted.

Audio Equipment: Patrons are required to listen to all audio equipment with headphones sufficiently soft so other patrons will not be disrupted in their use of the Library.

Bicycles: Bicycles must be parked in designated areas outside the building. They are not allowed inside the building.

Cell Phones: As a courtesy to other Library users, patrons entering the Library with a cell phone, pager, or similar electronic device should turn the device off or set it to a non-audible signal (flashing light, vibration, etc.). Cell phones and pagers should be answered promptly. Patrons should speak in low tones and keep conversations brief. If phone calls cannot be concluded quickly, patrons should move away from reading, research and study areas.

Children: All of the expectations in this document apply to children. In addition, see the Children's Policy for additional information about general use of the library, attendance at library programs and use of computers by children.

Clothing: Library users must be fully clothed (ie. wearing shoes, shirts and pants/shorts/skirts, or dresses).

Computer Equipment (Misuse of): The abuse of library computer equipment will not be permitted. Abuse of equipment includes banging on the keyboard or other use of excessive force, misappropriation of hardware or software, and attempts to alter the software. Oftentimes "misuse" may be nothing more than a small child unknowingly banging on the keyboard. If this is the case, the child, or the child's guardian will be asked to stop the behavior. For additional information, see WVPL's Internet Use Policy and Wireless Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

Community Bulletin Board: Patrons representing non-profit organizations may submit flyers for review to be posted on the community bulletin board to the Community Outreach Coordinator. The library does not post flyers for for-profit organizations.

Conversation: Conversation is permitted at a volume at or below the general noise level of the library in that area at that time. Conversation is not permitted in designated quiet areas or other areas currently in use by a majority of library users for quiet activities.

Daily Closing: All patrons are to leave the facility upon closing time. Staff will give a 15 minute warning prior to closing time.

Damages: Those who damage or deface Library materials or property will be prosecuted. Parents can be liable for damage done by a child under the age of eighteen.

Staff Direction: Patrons are expected to follow the reasonable directions of library staff. Failure to do so is a violation of this policy.

Disturbances: Creating a disturbance by making noise, talking loudly, or engaging in other disruptive conduct is not allowed. Engaging in activities not associated with the use of a public library is not permitted.

Emergency Closing: When the library is forced to close due to an emergency (power failure, inclement weather, etc.) and there are people in the building, the staff will make every effort to assist people in finding a place to go. However, ultimately it is the responsibility of the patron to leave the facility as soon as possible and go to a suitable location.

Entrances: Building entrances and exits may not be blocked.

Food and Drink: Food and drinks are allowed if patrons dispose of trash appropriately and clean area that are soiled. There must be a lid on all drinks.

Harassment: Harassment of library patrons and employees is prohibited including sexual or other harassment based upon an individual's protected class. Harassment shall be defined as behavior which annoys, alarms or intimidates another and involves:

1. Physical contact, or attempts or threatens to do the same;
2. Following another other person in or about the library facility or parking lot;
3. Engaging in a course of conduct or repeatedly committing acts which violate WVPL's Behavioral Policy;
4. Communicating to or about such other person any lewd, threatening or obscene words, language, drawings or caricatures; or
5. Conduct not described above but of a similarly serious nature.

Hygiene: Patrons must conform to generally acceptable standards of hygiene and cleanliness. Body odor that is sufficiently malodorous that it is a nuisance to or annoys other patrons is not permitted. In addition, the lack of hygiene that results in infested clothing or personal effects is not permitted.

Interference: Interfering with another person's right to use the Library or with the Library staff's performance of their duties is not allowed.

Library Furniture (Misuse of): In order to maintain clean and attractive Library facilities and furniture, abuse of such is forbidden. Examples include sitting on tables, placing feet on furniture, lying on floors, or defacing walls. Patrons should sit one to a chair. Patrons are not permitted to move furniture without prior staff approval.

Loitering: Loitering on Library property is not allowed. This rule requires staff to exercise discretion with regards to what is considered unacceptable loitering behavior. In general, the determining factor will be whether the offending party prevents others from enjoying the Library.

Monopolizing Staff Time: Any behavior by a library user that monopolizes staff time and attention to the detriment of service to other library users is not permitted.

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.

Posted Signs: Patrons are to obey posted signs on library property, including signs inside the library and parking and other traffic signs.

Public Displays of Affection: Excessive displays of affection, or sexual activity, are inappropriate behavior for the Library.

Restrooms: Misusing the rest rooms (e.g. using them as a laundry or washing facility, or defacing the walls) is not allowed.

Running: Running is not allowed in the Library building.

Skateboards, Roller Skates and Other Sports Equipment: Patrons may bring these into the Library while they look for materials, however they may not be used on Library property.

Sleeping: Habitual sleepers, noisy sleepers and those who are sprawled on furniture or the floor in a manner that is disturbing to other persons will not be tolerated.

Solicitation: Soliciting patrons and staff for donations or for the purpose of obtaining signatures on petitions is not allowed on Library property.

Staff Only Areas: Patrons are not allowed to enter areas posted "Staff Only" without permission.

Theft: Any theft of property, either Library or patron property, is a crime and strictly forbidden. The library reserves the right to inspect all bags, purses, briefcases, backpacks, or other containers when there is a reasonable suspicion of theft. Thus, there may be no expectation of privacy of such while in the library. Keep all valuables and personal property with you at all times. The library is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Threats: Threatening behavior, including, but not limited to, violence, threats of violence, and possession of unlawful weapons is not allowed.

Tobacco: Smoking and the use of tobacco products is prohibited in the Library.

Unattended Belongings: Items may be removed from the library premises if they reasonably appear to be abandoned or have been left unattended for 30 minutes or more.

Unlawful Activity: Any activity in violation of federal or state law is not permitted.

Expulsion from Building/Suspension of Library Privileges

Failure to comply with the behavior guidelines stated above will result in the offending patron(s) being asked to leave the Library; continued noncompliance will result in suspension of library privileges.

The Director delegates to Library supervisors, and by extension any Library staff member, the authority to request a patron leave the building. If the Director is present, s/he may be asked to take the necessary disciplinary action, including expulsion. Patrons misbehaving are generally given two warnings and then asked to leave the facility. Particularly egregious behavior may warrant immediate expulsion. Patrons asked to leave the facility for disciplinary reasons are at a minimum barred for the remainder of the day and/or evening.

Barring a patron for a period greater than one day is a decision that will be made by the Library Director. The Director is authorized by the Wissahickon Valley Public Library Board of Directors to exclude from the privileges of the Library any problem patron.

Notice of suspension of library privileges will be sent by mail, to the last known address of the patron or, in the case of a minor child, his/her parents or guardian. Appeal of the suspension may be made, in writing, to the Board of Directors of the Wissahickon Valley Public Library within ten (10) days of receipt of notice of suspension. The patron, or in the case of a minor child, the parents or guardian, will be notified by the Board of the date and time of the hearing on the notice of appeal.

It is important to emphasize that at no time will physical force be used by any library personnel to remove a patron from the building. If the patron refuses to leave, the police will be contacted.

This policy will be posted in each facility. Copies of the policy are available for distribution as needed at each service desk.