

NWRL Patron Behavior Policy

Purpose

All branches of the Northwest Regional Library system are supported by the taxes of the people of our cities and counties, who expect each of our facilities to be clean, comfortable, and safe places for selecting materials, reading, researching, studying, writing, and attending programs and meetings. To this end, the Library is responsible for establishing rules of conduct to protect the rights and safety of Library users, volunteers, and staff, and for preserving and protecting the Library's materials, equipment, facilities, and grounds.

This policy pertains to children, youths and adults. Young children must, at all times, be accompanied and supervised by an adult. Library staff is not responsible for the care, safety or supervision of children. Parents or caregivers are solely responsible for the actions of their children on Library premises. Library staff cannot and will not serve as caretakers. See Policy on Unattended and Disruptive Children.

In order to ensure that every Library user has the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the Library, patrons visiting or using the Library's facilities or services must comply with the Behavior Policy while on the Library's premises. These rules will be enforced by Northwest Regional Library staff. Enforcement of these rules will be conducted in a fair and reasonable manner. Any person who violates the behavior policy will be handled in a professional and courteous manner by staff, but the degree of the violation will determine the staff's response. Failure to comply with the Library's established rules, regulations, and policies could result in removal from the premises and expulsion from Northwest Regional Library system libraries for a period of one day to one year, or in arrest or prosecution. Expulsion for more than one week may be appealed in writing and submitted to the Northwest Regional Library Board, PO Box 593, Thief River Falls, MN 56701.

Behavior Rules

Disruptive and unacceptable behavior includes any activity, as determined by Library staff, which:

- Is in violation of Federal, State, local or other applicable law, or Library policy
- Interferes with the rights of other people to use the Library
- Disrupts the normal functioning of the Library
- May result in physical, emotional or mental injury to oneself or others (including sexual content displayed on screens in public traffic areas)
- May result in damage to materials, equipment, building and grounds
- Constitutes a failure to comply with library staff directives

Examples of disruptive or unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Playing audio equipment so that others can hear it
- Smoking, striking matches or lighters, or carrying lighted smoking materials
- Carrying a weapon into the Library unless authorized by law
- Bringing animals into the Library, other than service animals, animals for a scheduled library program or with special permission from the Director or a Branch Librarian
- Misusing the restrooms
- Violating the library's rules for acceptable use of the Internet and public computers
- Leaving a child under the age of 8 unattended
- Talking loudly, making noise, or engaging in any type of conduct which reasonably can be expected to disturb and interfere with the use of the Library by other persons
- Interfering with another person's use of the Library or with Library personnel's performance of their duties
- Disregarding posted rules regarding cell phone use
- Behaving or speaking in a way that is offensive to others
- Damaging Library property
- Stealing Library material
- Threatening to harm, or physically harming staff or library users, or verbally abusing staff or library users
- Using obscene or abusive language or gestures
- Distributing and/or posting of unauthorized materials
- Skating and related activities such as use of scooters, inline skates, skateboards etc. on any Library property, inside and outside the building
- Solicitation of contributions or signatures without Branch Librarian's permission
- Selling merchandise or services without Branch Librarian's permission
- Conducting surveys without the permission of the Branch Librarian
- Using alcohol or illegal drugs or coming to the library intoxicated
- Requesting staff to protect or monitor children, adults needing care, or personal belongings
- Filming or photographing users within the library without the permission of the Branch Librarian and users
- Engaging in sexual acts
- Failing to wear proper attire, including shoes and shirt
- Not maintaining an acceptable standard of personal hygiene, e.g. infected clothing or personal effects or unpleasant body odor that may disrupt other users or employees of the library
- Disregarding posted computer rules
- Disregarding posted rules regarding food and beverages
- Disregarding posted opening and closing times

The Library reserves the right to:

- Inspect all Library materials, backpacks, oversized handbags, coats, briefcases, purses, luggage, shopping bags or any other similar item. Library staff may ask library users to leave bags and other items at the library desk until the library user is leaving.
- Report repeated disruptive behavior to parents, in the case of children, or to the Police
- Require anyone who engages in disruptive behavior to leave the premises. Anyone asked to leave the Library is not allowed to loiter in the entryway, parking lot or lawn areas
- Notify Police immediately of unlawful or threatening activities

The Northwest Regional Library Board reserves the right, on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the Library Director, to:

- Restrict Library privileges of disruptive individuals for a specified period of time
- Ban disruptive individuals from Library premises for a specified period of time or permanently
- Take further disciplinary action

Staff response to violations of behavior policy

Any person who violates the behavior policy will be handled in a professional and courteous manner by staff, but the degree of the violation will determine the response

Staff is instructed to call 9-1-1 immediately in response to any behavior that is deemed dangerous. Staff will call the police for any behavior that is in violation of federal, state or local ordinances. Staff will call the police if a person or group of persons is asked to leave the library and they refuse to leave and/or become difficult with the staff member.

For most other inappropriate behavior, one warning will be given. Continued violations will result in library user being asked to leave the library for the day. A serious violation or repeated violation, or a violation where the police are called, may result in longer exclusions from the library up to permanent banning from the library.

For exclusions of more than one week, the violator will be informed that a letter will be sent to them detailing the consequences of their actions. During the period of exclusion, any questions regarding the exclusion will be answered over the phone or by registered mail. In some circumstances, repeated violations may result in increasingly lengthy periods of exclusion from Northwest Regional Libraries and all Northwest Regional Library services, from one day to permanent exclusion. Cases regarding a minor violating the behavior policy may result in the minor being allowed in the Library only under constant supervision by a parent or legal guardian.

An individual who is banned from the Library may be criminally charged with trespassing if they return to Library property during the term of the ban. Violations could also result in the restriction and/or termination of Library privileges, including the use of Library computers and other equipment.

Any patron whose privileges have been denied may request in writing to have the decision reviewed by the Northwest Regional Library Board.