

Patron Behavior Policy

Approved 10/20/03; Revised 9/17/07, Revision Approved 4/17/17

I. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the purpose of the Lafayette 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 Lafayette Public Library System and to all persons entering in or on the premises.

II. GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOR

The Lafayette Public Library Board of Control has adopted the following guidelines for behavior. Library staff members and security guards 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:
- a. eating and drinking. Exceptions: Bottled drinks and drinks with lids are allowed unless posted. Light snack foods are allowed. Restrictions may be placed in computer areas and certain study room areas. Meeting room activities follow the food and drink guidelines in the library's meeting room policy.
 - b. smoking and the use of electronic or vapor cigarettes or tobacco products in the library or within 25 feet of the public entrances per City/Parish Ordinance No. 0-179-2005
 - c. loud talking, the creation of loud noises, excessive or disruptive conversations, cellular telephone use that is disruptive to library patrons or staff, and the loud, disruptive use of music, phone, computer, tablet, or gaming devices
 - d. disorderly conduct or disruptive behavior that interferes with the normal operation of the library or that disturbs patrons or staff
 - e. sitting on tables or putting feet on furniture
 - f. sleeping
 - g. failing to wear shirts and shoes or other footwear
 - h. exhibiting extremely poor personal hygiene, obnoxious odor coming from clothing or the body, or overpowering perfume or cologne that is disturbing to others
 - i. bathing, washing hair, shaving, and washing clothes in library restrooms
 - j. 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.

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, and 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**.

- k. displaying guns, stun guns, knives, explosive devices, dangerous substances or materials, or other weapons, except as allowed by law
 - l. thievery, setting a fire or burning anything in or around the library, and vandalism or intentional damage and/or defacement of materials, furnishings, equipment, signs, landscaping, lighting, or any part of the buildings or grounds
 - m. soliciting, panhandling, proselytizing, and gambling
 - n. possessing alcohol, illegal or synthetic mood-altering drugs, or drug paraphernalia or appearing to be intoxicated or under the influence of illegal drugs
 - o. exhibitionism (indecent exposure), voyeurism (peeping), and crimes of obscenity as defined under Louisiana Revised Statute 14:106
 - p. excessive displays of affection including any physical contact deemed inappropriate for a public place
 - q. operating roller skates, in-line skates, skateboards, scooters, or other similar devices on walkways
 - r. parking motor vehicles, bicycles, motorcycles, or scooters in non-designated spaces, using more than one parking spot, abusing handicapped parking, or bringing bicycles into the library or parking them in a manner that interferes with the free passage of others
 - s. entering non-public work areas or public areas which have been temporarily restricted
 - t. using library business telephones without permission
 - u. remaining in the library after closing time or trespassing after hours or after being banned from the library
 - v. refusing to comply with the reasonable requests of library staff or security guards
 - w. violating the library's Computer Use Policy or other library regulations
 - x. violating any federal, state, or local laws
 - y. refusing to return to the circulation desk when the library security gates sound an alarm
 - z. polling, photography, or filming of patrons or staff on library premises without prior permission from the library administration
 - aa. bringing animals into the library except animals trained to assist individuals with disabilities and animals allowed at a library-approved event or program
 - bb. placing personal belongings so that they interfere with the free passage of library patrons or staff or leaving personal belongings in the library
 - cc. falsely setting off fire alarms or exiting the library through alarmed fire exit doors
- B. 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 monitoring and regulating the behavior of their children.
- C. 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.

III. BANNING AND APPEALS PROCESS

Library staff members and security guards 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 receiving a 30-day ban must schedule a conference with library administration after his/her ban is complete before he/she can reenter a library facility. Minors must have a parent or guardian contact the library to schedule a conference with library administration before the minor patron can return to any library facility.

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 Director may shorten, modify, or terminate the banning period if the information submitted by the individual warrants such modification. The Director will respond in writing and notify the individual of the appeals process. Until such time as the determination has been reviewed and/or modified by the Director or reversed on appeal by the Lafayette Public Library Board, a banned individual may not enter or remain on library premises.

The Director's written determination may be appealed to the Lafayette Public Library Board, if the aggrieved individual files a written notice of appeal within 10 days after he receives the Director's determination. Such notice shall be filed with both the Library Director and the Library Board President, c/o Lafayette Public Library, P.O. Box 3427, Lafayette, LA 70502. The Board shall hold a hearing within 30 days after the patron's notice has been filed. The appellant shall be notified at least 10 days before the hearing. Failure to appear on the assigned day of the hearing without prior notification to the Library Board President will result in the denial of the appeal.

The President of the Lafayette Public Library Board shall conduct the hearing. At the hearing, the appellant may be represented by counsel, may present evidence, and may call and examine witnesses and cross-examine witnesses of the other party.

Within 30 days of the completion of the hearing, the Board shall issue a written decision stating the reasons therefore. The Board shall have the power to affirm or reverse the written determination or to remand it to the Library Director with instructions for reconsideration. The decision, except for remand, shall be a final determination for the purposes of judicial review.

IV. 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.