

STOUGHTON PUBLIC LIBRARY  
**APPROPRIATE LIBRARY BEHAVIOR POLICY**

Approved by Library Board 3-20-19



**I. Purpose**

- A. The Board of Trustees is committed to providing an atmosphere where people of all ages may come to utilize Library resources. Under the provisions of Chapter 43 of the Wisconsin State Statutes, specifically Section 43.52 (2), the Stoughton Public Library Board of Trustees may enact regulations that serve to insure the safety of all library staff and patrons, protect the collection and maintain order in the library.
- B. This policy does not prohibit quiet conversations between patrons and/or staff members or conversations required to carry on library programs or business. It is designed to preserve a reasonably quiet atmosphere where library patrons may use library services and materials without disturbance.
- C. Questions regarding the interpretation of these guidelines will be referred to the Library Director and/or the Library Board.

**II. Definitions**

- A. "Inappropriate" is defined as that which disturbs others, interferes with library operations or damages the building or its contents. Any behavior that exhibits rudeness, profanity or is generally considered unacceptable in a public place is inappropriate.
- B. "Illegal" is defined as that which violates federal regulations, state statutes, or municipal ordinances.
- C. "Emergency" is defined as any situation in which an individual's actions present an imminent danger to the life and safety of themselves or others.
- D. "Soliciting" is defined as selling a product or service, or asking for money. "Soliciting for business" is defined as seeking business from potential customers for a product or service.

**III. Inappropriate Behavior**

- A. The rights of individuals to use the library should not be denied without due cause. To guarantee these rights for all patrons, no library patron shall engage in the following behaviors:
  - 1. Eating while using library computers (including laptops). Beverages other than those from library-sponsored events must be in covered containers. Clean-up supplies are available at the Adult Services desk, and patrons who habitually leave food messes may be asked to make use of them; or in extreme cases, may be banned from eating in the Library.
  - 2. Smoking. The library is a smoke-free environment. Smoking is prohibited throughout the facility, including the use of e-cigarettes or vaping.

3. Blocking entry, aisles or traffic areas.
  4. Damaging or defacing public property within or outside the building.
  5. Engaging in repeated loud or boisterous behavior.
  6. Engaging in inappropriate physical contact such as horseplay, roughhousing, or inappropriate public display of affection.
  7. Using profane, obscene, or offensive language.
  8. Intentionally annoying or harassing another person; interfering with other library patrons' use of the facility, including through unreasonable odor or perfume; or unreasonably interfering with the activities of any library employee.
  9. Causing a public disturbance.
  10. Entering or remaining in the library without a shirt, shoes or other appropriate attire.
  11. Loitering on the premises under circumstances that cause concern for the safety or health of any person or property in the vicinity of the library.
  12. Remaining in the building after its regular closing hours.
  13. Sleeping in the library for more than 30 minutes.
  14. Soliciting (selling); soliciting for business by talking to Library patrons, by handing out flyers, or by displaying signs; asking Library patrons or staff for money; surveying and canvassing, except in conjunction with Library Board approved projects. Vendors may meet with authorized library personnel only.
  15. Bringing pets or other animals into the library unless they are service animals or part of a library program. (See the "Animals in the Library Policy.")
  16. Violating the library's Materials Use Policy or Internet Use Policy.
  17. As per City of Stoughton policy, the Stoughton Public Library is a No Hit Zone. Please see the City's brochure (available at all public services desks) for more information.
- B. Personal electronic equipment may be used in the library as long as it does not disturb or offend others. Users of audio equipment will be asked to use headphones.
- C. Guidelines for Handling Inappropriate Behavior
1. If someone creates a disturbance in the Library, that person may be restricted from the use of the library facilities and be asked to leave the building. Those who do not leave within a reasonable amount of time after being instructed to do so by staff, will be subject to action by law enforcement personnel.
  2. A brief written report of any incident involving theft, vandalism, illegal activity, or major disruptive behavior will be filed with the Director as soon as possible after its occurrence.
  3. Library users may lose their library privileges for the day, a week, one month, or six months, depending on the nature of the offense, the extent of damage or disruption caused, and history of previous infractions of library policies. (Wisconsin State Statutes 43.52 (2)). The Director will inform the Library Board if any Library users have been banned for periods of one month or more.

4. The person whose library privileges have been suspended will be advised in writing of the suspension and the reason(s) for such action. The offender will also be informed that the suspension may be appealed. Suspensions will start immediately upon issuance of the written notice. Minors who have been banned for behavior issues will be allowed access if they are accompanied at all times by a parent or guardian for the duration of the suspension when they are in the Library.

#### D. Appeal procedure

If an individual wishes to appeal loss of Library privileges, the individual may file a written appeal with the Library Director within one week of the notification of loss of privileges, clearly stating why the individual believes that Library privileges should be reinstated. The Library Director will respond in writing within one week of receipt of the appeal.

If the Library Director denies the appeal, the claimant may make a further appeal by sending a written appeal to the Library Board of Trustees within one week of receipt of the Library Director's determination. The Library Board shall consider the appeal and make a final determination within 30 days of the date of receipt of the appeal by the Board. Appeals to the Board shall be sent to the Stoughton Public Library, 304 S. Fourth St. Stoughton, WI, 53589. The determination of the Board shall be final.

Any person who enters or remains on the Library premises after losing his/her library privileges will be reported to the Stoughton Police Department for removal.

### IV. Illegal Activity/Emergency Situation

- A. Any individual observed engaged in the following activities will be subject to police intervention/arrest.
1. Assault or threat of assault.
  2. Refusal to remove a weapon from the premises after being requested to do so by library staff.
  3. Possessing controlled substances.
  4. Committing any crime, misdemeanor or violation of a municipal ordinance on the premises of Library facilities.
  5. Knowingly entering non-public areas of Library facilities.
  6. Using the Internet for other than legal purposes.
  7. Entering or remaining on Library premises after having been notified by authorized individual not to do so.
- B. When illegal/emergency activities are committed by an individual, the police will be called.

**V. Theft of Library Materials**

- A. According to Section 943.61 (3) of the Wisconsin State Statutes, the concealment of library material beyond the last station for borrowing this material is evidence of intent to deprive the library of possession of the material. The discovery of library material which has not been checked out in accordance with library procedures and which is concealed by a person upon the person or belongings of another is evidence of theft.
- B. According to Section 943.61 (4) of the Wisconsin State Statutes, an adult employee of the library who has probable cause for believing that a person has committed a theft in her/his presence may detain the person for a reasonable length of time in order to turn the person over to the police. The detained person shall be promptly informed of the purpose for the detention, but shall not be interrogated or searched against his/her will before the arrival of the police who may conduct a lawful interrogation of the accused person.

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