

## **BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES**

The Whitman 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 and refrains from problem behaviors. Those who fail to conform may be required to leave the library, and further disciplinary measures may be enacted depending on the specific infraction.

### **DEFINITION OF PROBLEM BEHAVIOR**

Problem behavior is any behavior that either consciously or unconsciously violates or restricts the rights of others to use the library; prevents library employees from doing their jobs, or jeopardizes the safety of library users, staff and/or property. Disruptive behavior may include excessive noise, physical altercations, pranks, foul language, excessive chattiness, running, individuals under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and other behaviors that disturb patrons.

### **GENERAL BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES**

- **ALCOHOL:** No alcohol may be consumed on library property.
- **ANIMALS:** Bringing animals into the library except those needed to assist a disabled person is not allowed.
- **AUDIO EQUIPMENT:** Playing audio equipment so that others can hear it is not allowed.
- **BICYCLES:** Bicycles must be parked in designated areas outside the building.
- **CELL PHONES:** The use of cell phones is tolerated within reason. Loud voices and ring tones that may be disruptive to others may prompt library employees to request cell phone users take their phones out to the foyer, or shut them off.
- **CIVIL DISCOURSE:** It is the library's expectation that all discussions between patrons and staff, whether in the library, by telephone, or any other means of communication, shall be conducted with courtesy and mutual respect. Neither staff nor patrons should accept rudeness, insulting language, profanity, or raised voices from one another.
- **COMPUTER EQUIPMENT (MISUSE OF):** The abuse of library computer equipment violates the law (MGL, Ch. 266, Sec. 100) and will be prosecuted. 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. Consult the Library's policy on "Acceptable Use of the Internet and Library Public Computers" for a more comprehensive description.

- CUDDLING: Excessive displays of affection are inappropriate behavior for the library.
- DRUGS: Use of illegal drugs are not allowed on library property.
- DAMAGES: Those who damage or deface library materials or property will be prosecuted (MGL, Ch. 266, Sec. 100). Caregivers can be liable for damage done by a child under the age of eighteen (MGL, Ch. 231, Sec. 85).
- DISTURBANCES: Creating a disturbance by making noise, talking loudly, or engaging in other disruptive conduct is not allowed (MGL, Ch. 272, Sec. 41).
- FEET: As a safety precaution, patrons must have shod feet on library property.
- FOOD AND DRINK: Because of the potential damage to library materials, food is not allowed in the library, except at designated times or in designated rooms. Patrons may consume food outside and then return to the library. Covered beverages are allowed in the library, but they may not be consumed near the computers. No food or drinks are allowed in the Local History Room.
- 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, it is forbidden to sit on tables or ledges, place feet on furniture, lie on floors, or to deface walls and shelving. Patrons should sit one to a chair and should not tip the chair back.
- LOITERING: Loitering on library property is not allowed. In general, the determining factor will be whether the offending party prevents others from enjoying the library.
- PERSONAL HYGIENE: Patrons may be required to leave the library if their personal hygiene interferes with the ability of other patrons to use and/or enjoy the facility.
- 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.
- REST ROOMS: Misusing the rest rooms (i.e. using them as a laundry or washing facility) is not allowed.
- RUNNING: Running is not allowed in the library building.

- **SKATEBOARDS AND ROLLER SKATES:** 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.
- **SOLICITING:** Soliciting patrons and staff for donations or for the purpose of obtaining signatures on petitions is not allowed in the library.
- **STAFF ONLY AREAS:** Patrons are not allowed to enter areas posted “Staff Only” without permission.
- **THEFT:** Theft of library materials, use of false identification to obtain a library card, or use of another person’s library card without his/her permission are against the law and may be prosecuted (MGL, Ch. 266, Sec. 99).
- **THREATS:** Threatening behavior including, but not limited to, violence, threats of violence, and possession of weapons is not allowed.
- **TOBACCO:** Smoking and the use of tobacco products is prohibited in the library (see MGL Ch. 270, Sec. 21-22). The use of electronic cigarette devices are also prohibited.

## **YOUTH SERVICES AREA GUIDELINES**

The Youth Services staff of the Whitman Public Library strives to create a warm, inviting, fun environment for children and teens. The library offers many programs and services that encourage children and teens to develop a love of books, reading and learning. The safety and well-being of children and teens at the library is of serious concern. It is the intention of this policy to enlist the cooperation of caregivers and other adults responsible for children and teens to ensure that the Whitman Public Library provides a safe and pleasant experience for all who use it.

### **GENERAL BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES FOR THE YOUTH SERVICES AREA**

- The Youth Services Area serves children and teens, their caregivers, teachers, some adults with developmental disabilities (with prior approval of the Director or Youth Services Librarian), and students who need children's or young adult materials. Other patrons should use the general library collection and facilities.
- **Unaccompanied Adults in the Youth Services Area:** For the safety of children in the library, adults unaccompanied by children are asked to remain in the Adult sections of the library unless they are actively using the materials or services in the Youth Services Area. Adults who wish to use children's or young adult

materials in the library should notify the staff on duty of that need, and take those selections to the main floor.

- Groups of adults wishing to use children's materials should schedule a visitation time in advance. A collection of children's and young adult materials can be made available for their use in the Adult sections of the library.
- Use of restrooms in the Youth Services Area is restricted to children, or adults with children. All others must use the restrooms in the other areas of the library. There is a changing table available in the Handicapped Accessible restroom in the library foyer.
- Caregivers/guardians may not leave children aged nine and under unattended in the library. Older children caring for younger children must be able and willing to supervise the younger ones while in the library.
- Caregivers/guardians are responsible for their children's behavior while in the library. Caregivers/guardians will be notified if their children are left in a vulnerable situation or require supervision due to disruptive behavior.
- Children engaging in any activity identified as a “Problem Behavior” are subject to the same disciplinary actions as any other patron, including being asked to leave the library.

Reviewed and approved by the Board of Library Trustees on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014.