

## **Chapter 5**

### **Public Conduct**

#### **5.1 Code of Conduct**

Behavior that reduces, discourages, or interferes with others' equitable access to library materials, services, and spaces – including acts of racism or hate speech – will not be tolerated. To assist in maintaining an atmosphere conducive to the public's use of the library and its collections, the Library Board has adopted this Public Conduct policy and the consequences of violation of this policy.

Section 51-212 of the Nebraska Statutes specifically gives public libraries the power to regulate the use of the library and to exclude from the library persons who violate or refuse to comply with the library's rules and regulations.

For the comfort and safety of all library users and staff and for the protection of library property, everyone using the Plattsmouth Public Library is required to follow these rules:

##### **Be Kind**

- Respect one another, including library staff and other library customers.
- Speaking should be kept to normal conversational levels.
- Comply with any reasonable staff request.
- No abusive, obscene, or threatening language is allowed.
- No fighting is allowed.
- Use cell phones in a manner that is not disruptive to others; set the ringer to vibrate and speak quietly or step outside.
- Be considerate of library users and staff; do not harass, intimidate, or disturb them.
- Do not interfere with the library staff's performance of duties.

##### **Be Responsible**

- No weapons are allowed.
- The use of alcohol, illegal drugs, and tobacco products and smoking in any form, including electronic cigarettes, are not allowed anywhere on library property.
- Do not deface, damage, or destroy library materials or property.
- Check out all library materials before leaving the premises.
- Pay for all printing from library computers and for all for-charge services.
- Limit the number of people at a computer to no more than two. Only one person in a chair at a time.
- Use restroom facilities properly.
- Do not leave personal items unattended. The library is not responsible for personal belongings.
- Do not tamper with or use computers in a manner that violates library policy.
- Only service or guide animals are allowed unless the animals are part of a library program.
- Use proper waste receptacles to dispose of trash.

- Appropriate dress is required (shirt, shoes, and pants or dress).
- No sleeping is allowed.
- Eat or drink in designated areas only; the area should be clean when you leave.
- Audio/video devices should not be audible to others.
- Maintain orderly and safe entry/exit at library facilities by not loitering in high traffic areas, doorways, stairways or entrances/exits.
- No roller skating or skateboarding on library property.
- Do not run or engage in behavior that endangers the safety of self or others.
- Maintain proper personal hygiene.
- No soliciting or panhandling, though selling products may be permitted as part of a library-sponsored program.
- Taking surveys, circulating petitions, and distributing or posting materials in the library are permitted only when authorized by the Library Director.
- No excessive public displays of affection.
- The taking of photographs, movies, or videos in the library is permitted as long as it does not disturb other library users or obstruct library employees from performing their duties. Persons wanting to take pictures or videos of minors or vulnerable adults should ask for permission from the parents or guardians. Requests for permission to photograph or videotape for commercial purposes must be submitted in writing for review by the Library Director who will either approve or deny the request.
- Children under the age of eight and vulnerable people of any age should not be left unattended. (See Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults policy in section 5.2.)
- Library users must adhere to the guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control as it pertains to communicable diseases.
- All patrons should leave when the library closes. If someone refuses, staff should call the police non-emergency number for assistance.

### **Infractions**

Any staff member who observes or receives complaints of inappropriate behavior may:

- Handle the problem directly with the patron. Staff should use their judgment as to whether the situation requires assistance from another staff member.
- Contact a supervisor or the Library Director if the situation is of a nature that the staff member chooses not to confront the patron.
- At any time, contact the police if the patron is not responding to staff requests to abide by the Code of Conduct.
- Immediately call 911 if the situation is of a severe or violent nature or is an emergency medical situation. A severe or emergency situation can be defined as any situation in which a person's actions present an imminent danger to the life or safety of him/herself, others, or to library property.

In all cases, the director should be notified as soon as possible when the staff member confronts a library user who violates the Code of Conduct.

The first infraction will result in a verbal warning. A second infraction will result in the person being asked to leave the library for the day. Depending on the severity of the incident, the person may be banned from the library for a week or longer. Continuous repeat infractions or

criminal infractions may result in a permanent ban from the library, civil liability, and/or criminal prosecution. In such cases, the police will be called to file a formal ban or to begin criminal prosecution. A note to that effect will be placed on the patron's library record.

Parents or guardians of children under 18 will be notified in writing when their child commits an infraction resulting in a ban of one week or more.

A patron whose privileges have been denied may request, in writing, to have the decision reviewed by the Library Director.

## **5.2 Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adults**

The library strives to maintain a safe environment for library staff and users. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of unattended children and vulnerable adults.

An unattended child is any child not accompanied by a parent, guardian, or caregiver.

A vulnerable adult is an adult who can't care for himself/herself independently without the constant attention of a caregiver.

Library staff are not trained or expected to provide care and supervision for children or other persons in need of constant attention. The parent, guardian, or caregiver is responsible for monitoring the activities and regulating the behavior of children or other persons requiring supervision during their library visit. The library is not responsible for any consequences of parents, legal guardians, or caregivers not fulfilling their responsibilities.

The library acknowledges that children mature at different ages. These rules are subject to the discretion of library staff who may apply them to children other than the ages stated below if they deem it necessary.

Children under the age of 8 and vulnerable people of any age must have a parent, guardian, or responsible caregiver at least 12 years old in the immediate vicinity.

Library staff will attempt to contact a parent, guardian, or caregiver when:

- the health or safety of a child or vulnerable adult is in doubt;
- a child or vulnerable adult is frightened while alone at the library;
- the behavior of a child or vulnerable adult disturbs other library patrons and has caused staff to ask the individual to leave the library;
- a child or vulnerable adult has not been met by a parent, guardian, or caregiver at closing time.

If a parent, guardian, or caregiver can't be reached, the police will be notified at the non-emergency number (402-296-3311) and asked to assist in the successful resolution of the situation.

**At Closing**

Library employees will notify the Library Supervisor of any unattended child or vulnerable adult still present in the library 10 minutes prior to closing. Staff will help these people contact a parent, guardian, or caregiver for a ride.

If an unattended child under 12 or a vulnerable person of any age has not successfully contacted a parent, guardian, or caregiver at closing or that caregiver has not arrived by closing, contact the police at the non-emergency number (402-296-3311). Two staff will stay with the child up to 10 minutes after closing.

Under no circumstances will staff take the unattended person to another location.

Approved by the Library Board, 1/28/2015

Revised and approved by the Library Board, 5/30/2018, 6/28/2023