

Hastings Public Library

Patron Code of Conduct Policy

Purpose

To ensure that all patrons of the Hastings Public Library may safely and freely use the Library, patrons are expected to behave in a manner that does not interfere with the mission of the Library, the rights of others, damage to the Library or cause injury to others.

This Policy covers behavior on Library property. Inside it includes the lobbies, restrooms, meeting rooms, and all first and second floor spaces both public and private. Outside, it includes areas adjacent to the building including: entrances, lawns & gardens, benches, parking lot & driveway, and walking paths. The library is considered a limited public forum.

Guidelines for Library Use

- Be considerate of others.
- Be respectful of the facility, equipment and materials.
- Be responsible for your children.
- Be responsible for personal belongings; do not leave them unattended.

No Patron Shall:

Commit or attempt to commit any activity that constitutes a violation of Federal, State or Local criminal statute or ordinance, including but not limited to:

- Endangering the health and safety of other patrons or staff by not complying with existing laws, Executive Orders and/or public health official directives during, but not limited to, times of public emergency.
- Destroying, defacing or stealing Library or another patron's property.
- Displaying or using an unholstered/unsheathed weapon in a threatening or dangerous manner. Open carry of firearms and knives is legal in Michigan for adults 18 years of age and older so long as they remain holstered/sheathed and are safely controlled by the owner.
- Viewing pornographic material, whether on library computers or personal devices. Pornography is defined as exposed genitals and one or more people engaged in a sex act. Nudity is not necessarily pornography, but patrons are asked not to view it in the presence of others within the Library.
- Threatening or harassing patrons or staff, including sexual harassment or misconduct.
- Engaging in sexual conduct, including excessive public displays of affection.
- Being intoxicated, smoking, chewing tobacco or using e-cigarettes on Library property, inside or outside, other than on public sidewalks or in private vehicles.
- Drinking alcoholic beverages, other than at Library approved after-hours events.
- Using illegal drugs or other substances on Library property.

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Abandon or leave children unattended in the Library

- Library staff cannot legally assume the role of parent or caregiver.
- See PAT-3_Library Policies Regarding Children.

Engage in disruptive, disorderly, or unsafe conduct, including but not limited to:

- Displaying boisterous behavior including running, throwing things, pushing, shoving, fighting, climbing and jumping.
- Eating in unapproved areas or drinking beverages without a spill-proof container.
- Using the restrooms to change clothes or perform personal maintenance where it unreasonably interferes with other patrons' use, or staff use of the restroom, or involves willful and lewd exposure in violation of ordinances and state law. It is not a violation for a person to change a dependent's diaper. Library bathrooms are not to be used for shaving or bathing other than the washing of hands and faces.

Threaten, harass, harm, or violate the rights of library users and/or staff, including but not limited to:

- Offensive, abusive, or threatening language, writing, gestures or physical acts, including profanity and hate speech. Hate speech is any kind of communication (speech, writing, or behavior) that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or group on the basis of who they are, which can include but is not limited to religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, color, gender, sexual orientation or other identity factor (adapted from United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech).
- Unwelcome contact between people.
- Stalking, staring or invading personal space.

Interfere with others' use of the Library or willfully violate related Library policies, including but not limited to:

- Selling or soliciting on Library property without Library authorization. This includes posting material on library bulletin boards, campaigning, petitioning, interviewing or similar activities.
- Sleeping on Library property. Staff regularly conduct wellness checks and may need to report sleeping for health and safety purposes.
- Not being fully clothed. Clothing covering the upper and lower body is required inside the Library, including footwear. Exceptions to footwear may be made for children under age 5 in children's sections only.
- Obscuring faces. A mask, hood, or device by which any portion of the face is so hidden, concealed, or covered as to conceal the identity of the wearer is prohibited on Library Property, except for persons wearing head covering or veils pursuant to religious beliefs or customs or masks worn for medical reasons. Patrons are required to reveal their faces to Library staff when requested.

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- Exhibiting strong odors that disrupt others. This can include body odor due to poor personal hygiene, strong perfumes/colognes or odors from items brought into the Library.
- Loitering in inappropriate areas, such as adults in the Teen Room when teens are present, or adults and teens in the Children's Room when young children are present. Exceptions to this include caregivers needing to attend a younger child or patrons browsing for materials.
- Removal, defacement, or other alterations to Library displays.
- Conducting phone calls via speakerphone that are excessively loud, disruptive, or lengthy in duration. Quick phone calls may be necessary, but should otherwise be taken outside the building or in study and meeting rooms.
- Playing music or audio from other media via speaker. Headphones are required so as not to intrude on other Library users.
- Blocking ingress or egress to the Library or its parking lot.
- Abusing computer and/or internet privileges: see TEC-1_Public Internet Policy and TEC-4_WiFi Policy.
- Using unauthorized wheeled vehicles inside the Library: see PAT-9_Wheeled Vehicle Guidelines.
- Leaving animals unattended outside the library, or bringing animals into the library with the exception of service animals and for authorized programming activities: see PAT-10_Service Animals in the Library Policy.
- Unauthorized photography and/or filming: see PAT-4_Photo & Video Policy.

Policy Enforcement

The Library Board of Trustees has delegated the authority to the Library Director and staff to enforce these rules and exclude people from the building. Every effort will be made to respond to potentially difficult circumstances of user behavior in a timely, respectful, direct, and open manner that is consistent and fair.

In accordance with the Michigan Statute (MCL 397.206), any or all patrons who willfully violate the Code of Conduct adopted by the Library Board may be excluded from using the Library. Such exclusion shall occur on the orders of the Library Director or the Director's duly authorized representative(s).

Any patron who is unwilling to modify unacceptable behavior will be asked to leave the premises. The library uses video surveillance cameras to assist in monitoring behavior. The police will be called immediately when a patron's conduct is thought to be illegal or when a patron has been requested to leave the library and refuses to do so. In the case of a minor being excluded, attempts will be made to contact the minor's parent or guardian to give notice of the exclusion. Minors must be able to provide contact information for a parent or guardian when requested by Library staff.

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In a situation where a group of people are implicated in a conduct violation, library staff will make efforts to ascertain who is responsible. There may be cases where the whole group is treated as equally responsible.

For violations unlikely to cause immediate harm to others and not perceived to be threatening, the patron(s) violating the rules will receive at least one (1) warning at the discretion of library staff.

For violations of these rules that cause or are likely to cause immediate harm to others, the patron(s) violating the rules may be immediately excluded from the library without first being given a warning.

The following loss of library privileges will be enforced for library patrons who have been asked to leave the library. Depending on the circumstances, patrons may still be able to use library services available via the drive-thru window and digital access.

- 1st offense: Patron will be asked to not return until the next day the library is open.
- 2nd offense: No inside library privileges for one (1) week.
- 3rd offense: No inside library privileges for one (1) month.
- 4th offense: No inside library privileges for six (6) months.
- 5th offense: No inside library privileges for one (1) year.

Refusal to leave when asked may cause loss of privileges at the next level of offense, i.e. a first offense and refusal to leave may immediately increase the loss of privileges from one day to one week. This is at the discretion of the Director or their duly authorized representative.

Appeal

A patron who has been excluded from the library may appeal the exclusion in writing to the Library Director within 10 days of the exclusion. The Library Director will schedule a hearing, which shall not take place more than one week after receipt of the written request. The hearing will be informal, and the Library Director will consider testimony from library staff involved in the incident, from the patron requesting the hearing, and from any other witnesses to the incident. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Library Director may affirm, modify, or cause the exclusion to be canceled. A written copy of the decision will be delivered or mailed within 10 days to the patron making the appeal. This decision may be appealed to the Library Board of Trustees. That appeal must be in writing to the Board President and delivered to the Library within 10 days of issuance of the Library Director's decision. The appeal process shall be the same as the appeal to the Library Director, with Board members as assigned by the Board President conducting the hearing. Decisions by the Board are final.