

POLICY

SUBJECT: Patron Behavior Policy
APPROVED BY: Board of Library Trustees
APPROVAL DATE: August 24, 2023
EFFECTIVE DATE: August 25, 2023

NEW () **REVISED (X)**

Allen County Public Library (“ACPL” or “Library”) has established this Patron Behavior Policy to ensure its patrons safe, welcoming, and equitable access to its facilities, materials, and services.

ACPL staff will enforce these guidelines in a consistent and impartial manner. Library staff will remind patrons of the rules, when necessary, and may approach a patron to discuss this Policy. Staff will apply Library policies, applicable local, State and Federal laws, and call law enforcement, when necessary. ACPL does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status, or any other protected status under the law, in any of its activities or operations.

Violation of this Policy may result in removal from Library premises, forfeiture of Library privileges, and/or criminal prosecution. Minor violations of these rules will first result in ACPL staff attempting to inform individuals about the policies before enforcing such policies. Staff respects, and will respond to, complaints from patrons and will exercise professional judgment in taking appropriate action on a case-by-case basis.

Standards of Behavior

Individuals and groups using ACPL’s facilities are expected to exercise appropriate and responsible behavior at all times. All patrons must conduct themselves in a manner which enables other patrons, ACPL staff, and themselves to accomplish their intended tasks in a safe and pleasant environment.

Inappropriate and banned behavior includes any individual or group activity that

- Creates a safety risk to oneself or others
- May result in physical, emotional, or mental injury to oneself or others
- Could result in damage to ACPL facilities, materials, and property
- Unreasonably disturbs or interferes with other individuals or groups properly using ACPL facilities and services

In addition, the following conduct and actions are prohibited:

1. Committing or attempting to commit any activity that would constitute a crime or a violation of federal, state or local laws, rules, regulations and ordinances.
2. Engaging in any disruptive, harassing, threatening, or assaultive behavior to ACPL patrons or staff, including stalking, prolonged staring, loitering, and following an individual with the

intent to annoy and/or disturb that individual. ACPL has a policy of zero tolerance for harassment, threats, and acts of violence.

3. Firearms are permitted in the Library only in accordance with Indiana law. Patrons must follow all guidelines provided by Indiana law. In order to avoid disruption to public meetings, firearms are not permitted to be displayed, brandished, or otherwise visibly shown during the course of public meetings. For additional information, refer to ACPL's *Firearms and Dangerous Weapons Policy*. Any violation of this policy shall result in ACPL having the right, in its discretion, to remove the offending person from the ACPL facility, contact law enforcement officials, or take any other reasonable measures to remove or de-escalate the threat posed by the offending party.
4. Smoking, vaping, or using any tobacco products on ACPL property is prohibited.
5. Possessing, selling, distributing, consuming/using, or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or illegal substance.
6. Entering ACPL facilities without wearing shoes, a shirt, pants, dress, or skirt. Patrons must wear these items and cover their upper and lower torsos at all times while using ACPL facilities and services.
7. Engaging in acts of sexual solicitation or other misconduct of a sexual nature, including, but not limited to, indecent exposure, sexual contact, and sexual intercourse.
8. Selling, soliciting, surveying, distributing written materials, panhandling, petitioning, or canvassing for any political, charitable, or religious purposes on any ACPL property without prior authorization from ACPL administration or designee.
9. Damaging, tampering with, or improperly removing any Library property, or property of other Library users.
10. Using abusive or obscene language.
11. Making excessive noise or engaging in other disruptive behaviors.
12. Emitting offensive odors or scents from self, personal belongings, or food which unreasonably interfere with other patrons' ability to use the Library and its services.
13. Refusing to follow reasonable requests of any Library staff member.
14. Entering non-public areas of ACPL facilities without permission.
15. Trespassing by entering or remaining on Library premises after having been notified by an authorized ACPL individual not to do so, and entering or remaining on the ACPL premises during the period in which an individual has been banned from the ACPL premises.
16. Blocking aisles or doorways in any way that interferes with the free movement of any person or persons.
17. Leaving personal items unattended on ACPL premises at any time. Items may be removed from the ACPL premises if they reasonably appear to be abandoned or have been left unattended.

18. Improperly using Library restrooms or facilities for purposes such as bathing, shaving, and laundering personal belongings. If a patron needs these services, Library staff will refer them to local social services agencies, if desired.
19. Displaying sexually explicit images on computer screens or violating any rules for acceptable use as outlined in ACPL's *Computer Resources and Internet Policy*.
20. Leaving children age 8 and under unattended or under attended on Library premises. Refer also to ACPL's *Supervision of Minors and At-Risk Patrons Policy*.

Other:

- Food and covered beverages are permitted in ACPL facilities except around computers, in the Genealogy Center, and in other specifically-designated areas. Alcoholic beverages are permitted only as authorized in ACPL's *Facilities and Meeting Room Policy*.
- Pets and non-service animals (as defined by federal or state law) are not allowed in ACPL facilities; although animals associated with ACPL programs may be allowed in ACPL facilities and on ACPL grounds at the discretion of Library management and with proper approval.
- Bikes, roller skates, roller blades, shoe-skates, skateboards, scooters, Segways, motorcycles, drones, and other such equipment may not be used inside ACPL facilities.
- Sleeping is not allowed, except by young children under a parent or caregiver's supervision.
- In ACPL's effort to provide a welcoming atmosphere for our young patrons, both children and teenagers, the Library reserves the right to restrict adult patron use of children and teen areas within its buildings. Adults using youth areas without a minor or need for youth collections or services will be requested to leave youth areas.
- Professional photography must be approved by Library administration. Amateur photography by patrons/visitors wanting a memento of their visit is permitted in Library facilities so long as additional equipment such as tripods and/or lighting is not used and filming only captures the image of the person filming or of people who have provided express permission to be filmed/recorded. No filming or photography of children is permitted without the written consent of the child's parent or guardian.
- ACPL is not responsible for lost or stolen personal items. Personal belongings should not be left unattended.
- If the federal, state, county, or local government declares a state of emergency, Library users must follow the recommendations and requirements declared in the order as well as comply with ACPL staff directives when using Library services.

Individuals must follow all other Allen County Public Library policies not included under this Patron Behavior Policy and will be subject to the penalties prescribed for violations of such policies.