

# **Henry County Library System**

## **Conduct in Libraries Policy**

The Library Board of Trustees has approved the following policies to provide a suitable environment for Library use, and to ensure safety and security of the staff and patrons:

1. Everyone is welcome in the Library. Parents or guardians must be responsible for the conduct and safety of those under their care.
2. Unattended personal belongings are not the Library's responsibility, and if not retrieved by their owners are subject to disposal.
3. Library furnishings and equipment available for public use must be used only for their intended purpose.
4. Library materials must be properly checked out at the circulation desk. Certain materials, such as (but not limited to) reference books, periodicals marked "Non-Circulating" or "Reference," may not be checked out or removed from the library.
5. The Library reserves the right to inspect any and all bags, briefcases, containers, books, backpacks, and any other similar items.
6. Library telephones are for library business only. In consideration of other patrons, Library staff will not page patrons except in an emergency.
7. Cell phone users are requested to respect the rights of other library patrons. As a courtesy to others, we ask that cell phones be turned to silent (vibrate), and that cell phone conversations be conducted in a low to moderate tone or taken outside of the building.
8. Library materials not in use by patrons should be returned to staff or to designated areas to be reshelved, or left on reading tables. Library staff are responsible for reshelving materials not in current use.
9. Electronic personal entertainment devices are permitted if their use does not disturb other Library patrons.
10. Patrons are welcome to use their own computers in the library using wireless internet service, but limited technical support is available.
11. In the event of a recognized public health crisis, the Library Director may enact limits on the number of people allowed in the library buildings at one time, and limit the length of library visits. Library visitors may be required to wear face masks to enter the building. The status of a public health crisis

and temporary restrictions of library visitors will be based on official recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, and executive orders issued by federal, state, and local agencies.

12. All wheeled devices (bicycles, shopping carts, handcarts, etc.), except those required by the disabled, shall be left outside, and may not obstruct traffic entering or exiting the building. Strollers are allowed but may be restricted at times based on occupancy levels, particularly in meeting rooms and during high-demand programs and activities.

Unacceptable conduct includes but is not limited to:

1. Behavior which may disturb other patrons, including but not limited to: loud talking, singing, running, shoving, throwing objects, following another person about the library or persistently asking another person questions, persistent staring and physical or verbal harassment or threats. At the discretion of staff law enforcement may be called.
2. Belligerent or threatening behavior towards staff or other users. At the discretion of staff law enforcement may be called.
3. Entering the library without proper attire, conforming to the standard of the community for public places, including shoes and shirts. Patrons whose personal hygiene is so offensive as to constitute a nuisance to other patrons shall be required to leave the building until the issue is corrected.
4. Damage, destruction, theft or improper use of library property or facilities, or the property of employees or other patrons.
5. Taking library materials into restrooms.
6. Changing clothes or bathing (beyond normal hand and face washing) in restrooms.
7. Littering.
8. Sleeping.
9. Entering non-public areas such as staff work rooms, offices, and storage areas without authorization.
10. Animals, except service animals, unless authorized. Per the Americans with Disabilities Act, a service animal is defined as a dog or miniature horse.
11. Any form of sexual misconduct, including exposure, offensive touching, or sexual harassment of other patrons or staff. At the discretion of staff law enforcement may be called.

12. Using obscene or abusive language or performing abusive or obscene acts.
13. Selling, panhandling, advertising, petitioning, or soliciting for contributions or support, except as authorized.
14. Distributing or posting printed materials or literature without prior approval by the Library.
15. Any illegal act or conduct in violation of federal, state or local law, ordinance or regulation.
16. Unauthorized or unscheduled group meetings or activities that disturb other patrons or interfere with library operations.
17. Consumption of food and/or beverages, except in approved areas or by prior arrangement.
18. Any use of any form of tobacco, alcohol, vaping or illegal substances or drugs. At the discretion of staff law enforcement may be called.
19. Repetitive noise making, such as tapping a pencil on the table, rapping fingers or knuckles.
20. Other atypical behavior which could reasonably be expected to disturb other users, monopolize library equipment, damage library property, or interfere with the library employees' performance of their duties.

Users who, by their behavior, persist in harassing or annoying others and thereby disrupt their ability to concentrate on their work will be given one verbal warning regarding the specific behavior, and will be provided with a written copy of this policy. Upon a second occurrence, the offender will be required to leave the library for the remainder of the day.

Upon a third occurrence, or if the patron's conduct creates a continuing disruption, the patron may be barred from the Henry County Library System library property and buildings for a period determined by the Director. A written notice outlining the reason(s) for the barring will be mailed to the patron, who may appeal the suspension in writing within ten (10) calendar days. When such a written request for a hearing is filed within the 10-day period, the matter will be referred to the Library Board of Trustees for a hearing and final decision.

The police will be called whenever a staff member feels a patron's behavior is threatening to the safety of other patrons or staff members. The police may issue an immediate no-trespass warning if justified by the severity of the incident. Staff members may intervene with a patron to prevent injury or property damage.