

Appendix

ASHTABULA COUNTY DISTRICT LIBRARY PUBLIC SERVICES POLICY

SECTION:	PS 8	PATRON CONDUCT AND LIBRARY SECURITY
SUB SECTION:	PS	
POLICY:	PS 8.1-8.22	GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT
REVISIONS:		1/27/99; 4/19/04; 6/15/11; 6/15/16
PAGE:		1 OF 6

PS 8 Patron Conduct and Library Security

Out of concern for the safety and well-being of its patrons and staff, and in an effort to enhance its ability to provide high-quality service to all, the Ashtabula County District Library Board of Trustees has established certain policies. Individuals visiting or using the Library's facilities or services (patrons) must comply with the following Patron Code of Conduct:

PS 8.1 General Code of Conduct

It is our policy that all patrons will be treated in an equitable, positive manner. On occasion, situations may arise which requires an employee take action to ensure that patrons may use the Library's facilities safely and undisturbed. The library reserves the right to cause to be evicted from the library or library grounds and to refuse further admission to those individuals who violate the rights of the library users or library staff; who violate federal or state laws or local ordinances; or who create disorder in the library in any of the following situations:

- When the actions of a person present an imminent danger to the life or safety of others in the library.
- When a person willfully and purposefully disturbs the staff or other library users, or whose behavior is inappropriate or is disruptive to the legitimate use of the library facilities by others.
- When a person's behavior is inappropriate to the use of the library's building, equipment, and materials for the purposes for which it is legally constituted.
- When a person has offensive body odor or poor hygiene or other excessive odors to such a degree that it creates a nuisance to others or disrupts library service.

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SUB SECTION:	PS	
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REVISIONS:		1/27/99; 4/19/04; 6/15/11; 6/15/16
PAGE:		2 OF 6

Inappropriate or disruptive behavior may include, but is not limited to: loitering, sleeping, gambling, voyeurism (peeping Toms), harassment, theft, vandalism, engaging in acts of sexual misconduct (indecent exposure, solicitation, sexual contact, sexual intercourse and/or lewd and lascivious acts), molestation, using obscene or profane language, alcohol consumption, public intoxication, the use of tobacco products, bathing, shaving, or washing clothes on the premises, boisterous conversation and/or audible use of cell phones or other personal electronic devices that interfere with another's library experience, fraudulent use of another patron's library card and/or account number for any purpose including Internet computer usage, buying, selling, or soliciting for personal or commercial gain, and/or leaving a child under seven (7) years of age unattended.

The public is not permitted behind public service desks or in other non-public areas.

PS 8.11 Refusal to Leave the Library

Library staff may ask a patron who violates the policies regarding patron conduct to leave the library. Any patron refusing to leave the library at the request of library staff or after the hours of business set by the library board for closing is considered in violation of Ohio Revised Code 2911.21 regarding trespass. Staff may ask police officers to assist them if the situation warrants.

PS 8.12 Dress and Attire

Patrons are required to wear shoes and a shirt at all times.

PS 8.13 Food and Beverages: Food and covered beverages are permitted in extensive areas of the library. Patrons are expected to properly dispose of any associated waste. For proper clean-up, spills must be reported to library staff immediately.

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POLICY:	PS 8.1-8.22	GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT
REVISIONS:		1/27/99; 4/19/04; 6/15/11; 6/15/16
PAGE:		3 OF 6

PS 8.14 Personal Transportation Items

Bicycle stands are provided for proper bicycle storage while patrons use library services. For public safety, movement within the library by skateboard, scooter, roller blades, shoes with wheels, roller skates, or other similar devices is not permitted. The only wheeled devices permitted within the library are baby strollers or similar devices, and wheelchairs or other assistive devices for the disabled.

The use of skates and/or skateboards is prohibited on library grounds including parking lots and sidewalks.

PS 8.15 Animals in the Library

Patrons may not bring animals, except for service or helper animals, into the library unless it is a library sponsored event. A service or helper animal must stay with its owner while in the library. Service or helper animals that are disruptive may be removed from the building at the staff's discretion.

PS 8.16 Possession of Weapons

Weapons are prohibited on library property. A weapon is defined as a handgun, rifle, knife and/or any other object whose purpose or use is to inflict physical harm to another individual. Library property includes all library-owned or leased buildings and surrounding areas such as sidewalks, walkways, parking lots, and driveways.

The only exception to this policy will be for law enforcement officials, security guards, or other persons who have been given consent by the Library to carry a weapon on the property.

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PUBLIC SERVICES POLICY**

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REVISIONS:		1/27/99; 4/19/04; 6/15/11; 6/15/16
PAGE:		4 OF 6

PS 8.17 Soliciting, Surveying and Signature-gathering

Library patrons should be free to use library facilities without interruption from outside petitioners, survey takers, interviewers, or solicitors. Members of the public may not engage in solicitation or distribution of materials within the library at any time for any purpose. Petitioners, survey takers, and interviewers are permitted outside the building on library grounds provided that access to the library is not impeded and patrons are not pressured to sign. In the event any petitioner fails to follow the above instructions, he/she will be asked to leave the premises for creating a disturbance (as outlined in the code of conduct and eviction policies). Library-related questionnaires sponsored or co-sponsored by the library are permitted inside library buildings. Panhandling is not permitted on library property.

PS 8.18 Theft/Damage to Personal Property

Intentional damage and/or defacement of materials, furnishings, equipment, and the theft of or any attempt at theft will be prosecuted according to Ohio Statutes. Clipping coupons, cutting articles out of magazines/newspapers, hacking and/or altering computer settings, writing on, scratching or in any way damaging materials, furniture, or premises are included in this policy. Library patrons must keep personal belongings with them at all times as the Library is not responsible for theft of personal belongings.

PS 8.19 Unattended Minors

Minor children visiting an Ashtabula County District Library are the responsibility of their parents or guardians. The Library does not serve in loco parentis. The Library cannot accept responsibility for the safety and supervision of minor children.

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PAGE:		5 OF 6

Children under the age of seven (7) (six or under) must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or other responsible person while in the library. If a young child is attending a library program, a parent/responsible person must remain in the library throughout the program.

If the parent/responsible person cannot be located within one-half (1/2) hour of the initial determination that a child is lost or unattended, or if the library is closing, staff will contact a police officer for assistance.

Under no circumstance will a patron under the age of fifteen (15) years be left alone in the library or on library property upon closing. If a young patron is waiting for a ride, the on-call supervisor and one other staff person will wait until the patron is deemed safe. If, after fifteen (15) minutes, the patron is still waiting, police may be contacted to handle the matter.

PS 8.20 Eviction and Suspension of Library Privileges

A patron who has violated the Library Code of Conduct Policy may be evicted from the library and refused further admission to the library for a set time. The library recognizes the right of the patron to contest the eviction and present his or her side of the story. The patron may request to speak to the director or his/her designee in order to hear the reason for eviction and to present any counter-arguments. If possible, such a discussion may take place prior to the patron's eviction or denial of service. However, the Library reserves the right to take immediate action if necessary to answer an ongoing threat to the operation of the library or a continuing danger to the health or safety of patrons or staff; in these circumstances, the patron may schedule a discussion at a later date.

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PAGE:		6 OF 6

The director or his/her designee may, when possible, send written confirmation stating the period during which the patron may not enter library property. This letter may also include the reasons for the patron barring and any conditions under which the patron will be re-admitted to the library. Notices regarding the barring of a minor patron from the library will be sent to the minor patron, parent and/or legal guardian.

PS 8.21 Reinstatement of Library Privileges

A patron who has been evicted from the library and permanently refused admission may request reinstatement of his/her library privileges. Requests must be submitted in writing to the director and should include a statement demonstrating that the patron understands why the conduct that resulted in the loss of privileges is unacceptable in the library or on library grounds, and a statement from the patron that he/she understands and will abide by the library Patron Code of Conduct.

The director will make all decisions concerning reinstatement of privileges in all cases. Decisions of the director may be appealed to the board.

PS 8.22 Video Surveillance and Recording

The purpose of video surveillance is to deter crime and to aid in protecting the safety of individuals and the property of the library. Video surveillance of areas for security purposes is conducted in a manner consistent with other existing library policies and is limited to uses that do not violate the reasonable expectation of privacy.

The director will review all requests to release recordings obtained through video surveillance. Video recordings and/or photos obtained through video surveillance will be released in accordance with applicable laws.