



**Pequannock Township Public Library**

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### **Library Behavior Policies**

The Pequannock Township Public Library endeavors to provide a safe, quiet place for all. Patrons using the library are entitled to enjoy a typical library atmosphere - a calm, quiet space, free from distraction - and therefore have an implicit obligation to contribute to the maintenance of that environment. The purpose of this policy is to identify consequences for behaviors that are in opposition to the purpose or which the library is provided.

### **Minor Specific Policies**

#### **Library Child Policy**

The library is a welcoming space for children, but the responsibility for their care, safety, and behavior rests solely with the parent, guardian, or caregiver—not with library staff. To ensure a safe environment for all, we ask that the following guidelines be observed:

**1. Supervision Required:**

- Children aged 10 and younger must not be left unattended in the library under any circumstances.
- Parents, guardians, or caregivers must remain with their child for the entire time they are in the library and directly supervise their child's activities.
- Responsibility for a child's care cannot be delegated to a sibling unless that sibling is over the age of 18.

**2. Behavior:** Children are held to the same rules of conduct as all patrons and will face the same consequences, including being asked to leave library property if their behavior is inappropriate.

**3. Safety Reminder:** The library is a public space, and anyone may enter. It is essential that children are not left unsupervised for their own safety.

**4. Unattended Children:**

- If a child aged 10 or under is found unattended, library staff may contact the Department of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) or local law enforcement.
- In the event that a minor is left unaccompanied for an extended period of time, especially near closing hours or during emergency closures (e.g., inclement weather), library staff will contact the police to take custody of the child.:

**5. Closing Procedures:**

- If unattended children remain in the library at closing time or during early closures, two staff members must stay with the child until they are in the custody of a parent, guardian, or law enforcement.

These guidelines are in place to maintain a safe and secure environment for all patrons. Thank you for helping us keep your children safe while enjoying the library.

**Teen Café Behavior Policy**

The Teen Café is a designated space for middle and high school students after school hours (typically 2:40-4:00 PM) to relax, socialize, and work on school-related tasks. To ensure a safe, respectful, and enjoyable environment for all, the following guidelines must be followed:

- 1. Mandatory Café Attendance:** Any middle or high school student entering the building after school hours will be directed to join a staff member in the Teen Café.
- 2. Quiet Conversation:** Teens are permitted to talk but must use inside voices at all times. Loud or disruptive behavior is not acceptable.
- 3. Personal Items:** Backpacks and personal belongings must remain with you at all times.  
The library is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.
- 4. Food & Beverages:** Are allowed in the Cafe ONLY.
- 5. Library Materials:** If you would like to borrow a book, speak to the staff member overseeing the Café for assistance.

6. **Restroom Use:** Teens wishing to use the public restroom must request the key at the circulation desk. Only one teen is permitted in the restroom at a time.
7. **Respect and Safety:** Harassment of any kind—toward other students, staff, or patrons—will not be tolerated.
8. **Group Accountability:** If a group of teens is acting unruly, staff will issue ONE warning. Willful disobedience of a reasonable staff directive will result in the entire group being asked to leave. Staff will not differentiate between individuals in a group; the actions of one affect the whole.
9. **Unacceptable Behavior:** Teens are held to the same rules of conduct as all patrons and will face the same consequences, including being asked to leave library property if their behavior is inappropriate.

The following behaviors are prohibited:

- Physical or verbal aggression (including offensive language & gestures)
- Bullying or intimidating others
- Vandalism or misuse of library property
- Disrupting the quiet areas of the library
- Refusing to follow staff directions
- Congregating and blocking areas of building access

Failure to comply with these rules may result in being asked to leave the library for the day, or further consequences as deemed necessary by library staff.

We appreciate your cooperation in creating a positive atmosphere for all.

### **Library Property, Behavior, and Usage Policies**

#### **General Use of Library Property Policy**

The library seeks to maintain a safe and welcoming environment for all patrons. To ensure proper use of library property, the following guidelines must be followed:

**1. Prohibited Activities:**

- Running, skateboarding, rollerblading, cycling, scootering, playing, or loitering in the library parking lot is not allowed.

**2. Respect for Library Property:**

- Defacing or damaging library property, whether inside the building, on the exterior, in the gardens, or in the parking lot, is strictly prohibited. Violations may result in consequences including fines, suspension of library privileges, and legal action.

**3. Bicycles and Scooters:**

- Bicycles and scooters must remain outside the library and be parked in the designated bike rack.
- Bicycles are not to be left in the rack during school hours or overnight. ○ The library is not responsible for any items left outside, including bicycles or scooters.

**4. Parking Lot Guidelines:**

- Parents picking up children from the library must observe the following:
  - No queuing up adjacent to the entrance for pick-up.
  - No stopping or standing in front of the entrance.
  - Do not block the entrance at any time.
  - Pick up children in the lot on the side nearest to the school.
  - Follow posted arrows and cones when entering and exiting the lot.
  - Drive slowly and cautiously to avoid any accidents or incidents.

By adhering to these rules, patrons help ensure that the library remains a safe, respectful, and enjoyable place for everyone.

## Staff/Patron Interaction Behavior Policy

Library staff are employed to address the legitimate day-to-day needs of maintaining the facility and ensuring its proper function, as well as serving the public in their use of library resources. However, staff are not social workers, police officers, or daycare providers.

To maintain a professional and respectful environment:

1. **Primary Responsibilities:** Staff are responsible for assisting patrons with library-related functions, including answering questions, providing information, and maintaining library services.
2. **Boundaries:** Staff are not expected to take on roles outside of their scope, such as providing social work services, policing, or child care.
3. **Inappropriate Requests:** If a patron seems to be placing staff in the position of providing a non-library-related service, staff have the right to decline the request and redirect the patron to appropriate services or resources.
4. **Inappropriate Behavior:** Any inappropriate behavior towards staff, whether in person, online, or over the phone, will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, harassment, abusive language, or any actions that make staff uncomfortable.
5. **Ending an Interaction:** If a patron behaves inappropriately or continues to request non-library-related services, staff are empowered to bring the interaction to a prompt conclusion and, if necessary, report the incident to their supervisor.

This policy helps ensure that staff can perform their duties effectively while maintaining a safe and respectful work environment.

### Staff Enforcement Procedure

Library staff are responsible for enforcing library policies to maintain a respectful and safe environment for all patrons. The following procedure outlines the steps for addressing rule violations:

1. **Observation and Initial Warning:**
  - o Any staff member working 15 or more hours a week who observes a patron violating library rules should courteously inform the patron of the unacceptable behavior and request that they refrain from continuing.
2. **Second Warning and Ejection:**
  - o If the patron does not cease the improper behavior after the initial warning, the staff member will ask them to leave library property for the remainder of the day.
3. **Refusal to Leave:**
  - o If the patron refuses to leave, the staff member should discreetly call the non-emergency number for the police without informing the patron. The staff member will meet the responding officer at the door, explain the ongoing issue, and inform the officer that the patron has refused to comply with the request to leave.
4. **Same-Day Ejection Enforcement:**
  - o Patrons ejected under this procedure are not permitted to re-enter the library for the remainder of the day. If a patron re-enters the library that same day, they will

face a suspension of library privileges for one week.

#### **5. Suspension Enforcement:**

- If a patron continues to enter the library during their suspension period, this will be treated as harassment of library staff and misuse of library property.
- In such cases, the issue will be escalated to the library director and potentially the Board of Trustees to determine the appropriate consequences.

This procedure helps ensure that all patrons understand and comply with library rules, while also providing clear steps for staff to follow in maintaining order. This policy applies to patrons of all ages.

### **Suspension Policy and Procedure**

Patrons removed from the library for rule violations may face extended suspensions, especially for repeated or habitual improper behavior. The following outlines the policy and procedures for suspensions:

#### **1. Definition of Suspension:**

- A suspension means that the patron is prohibited from entering the library or being present on library property for any reason during the suspension period. ○ During the suspension, all library privileges, including the use of a library card, will be suspended.

#### **2. Enforcement of Suspension:**

- If a suspended patron enters or is found on library property, the police will be notified with the intent to remove the patron from the premises. The patron may also be subject to criminal charges for trespassing.

#### **3. Extended Suspensions:**

- For habitual or serious rule violations, the suspension period may extend beyond the standard one-week duration outlined in the staff enforcement procedure.

#### **4. Appeal Process for Suspensions Longer than Seven Days:**

- Patrons facing suspensions longer than seven days have the right to appeal the decision to the Library Director and the Board of Trustees, or to a designated committee of board members and the director.
- To request a suspension hearing, the patron must submit a written notice. This notice can be emailed to the library director, mailed, or hand-delivered to the library's main desk.
- Upon receiving a written notice, the library will convene a suspension hearing as soon as practicable. During this hearing, the patron can present their case for reconsideration of the suspension.
- If no written notice is received, the suspension will automatically go into effect, and no appeal will be granted.

This policy ensures that the library maintains a safe and respectful environment, while also providing patrons an opportunity to appeal extended suspensions through a fair and structured process.

### **Library Rules**

To ensure a positive experience for all, patrons are expected to follow these library rules:

**1. Cell Phone Use:**

- Cell phones may be used, but all phone conversations must be taken outside.
- Patrons should keep device volume off and use headphones when using any device, including library computers.
- Any noise disturbances will result in staff following the enforcement procedure.

**2. Noise Level:**

- Use respectful and appropriate language at all times.
- Keep conversations low and private to avoid disturbing others.
- Noise-making, including loud talking, whistling, humming, yelling, tapping, or clicking, will be noted by staff.

**3. Respect for Personal Items:**

- Keep personal items with you at all times, ensuring they do not create a hazard or obstacle.
- Staff is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Theft or vandalism of personal property will be reported to the authorities.

**4. Food and Beverages:**

- Only beverages are allowed in the main area of the library. All food must be eaten in the designated cafe area.

**5. Inappropriate Behavior:**

- Harassment of any kind, misuse of restrooms, or misuse of library property (e.g., tables, chairs, electronics) will not be tolerated.
- Offensive language, including obscene language, gestures and behaviors will not be tolerated.
- Destructive, abusive, or potentially damaging actions involving library materials or property are prohibited.
- Willful disobedience of a staff member's reasonable directive is unacceptable.
- Interfering with others' use of the library, blocking pathways, violence or threats of violence, and bringing bicycles or scooters inside are prohibited.
- Running, throwing objects, or engaging in behaviors that disrupt daily operations will not be tolerated.
- Sleeping inside or on library premises is not allowed.

These rules ensure the library remains a welcoming and respectful environment for all. Violations may result in actions taken per the staff enforcement procedure.