

## **Middleton Public Library**

### **APPROPRIATE LIBRARY BEHAVIOR POLICY**

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#### **I. Purpose**

- (A) Under the provisions of Chapter 43 of the Wisconsin State Statutes s. 43.52 (1), the Middleton Public Library Board may enact regulations that serve to insure the safety of all library staff and patrons, protect the usefulness of the materials collection, and maintain order in the library.
- (B) The library board is committed to providing an atmosphere where people of all ages are welcome. This policy does not prohibit conversations between patrons and/or staff members nor conversations required to carry on library programs or business. Designated quiet spaces within the building are designed to preserve a reasonably quiet atmosphere.
- (C) Inappropriate behavior includes any activity that disturbs others, interferes with library operations, damages the building or its furnishings, as well as rudeness, profanity, or any other behavior generally considered unacceptable in a public place.
- (D) This policy applies to all patrons. If a patron is not responsive to the needs of other library users or disregards the policies protecting patrons, staff, and library property, the patron will be asked to leave the library and privileges may be suspended.

#### **II. Specific Guidelines**

- (A) The rights of individuals to use the library should not be abridged or denied. To guarantee these rights for all persons, no library patron shall engage in the following prohibited behaviors:
  - 1. Eat. Except as provided for in the library's meeting rooms policy.

2. Smoke. The library is a smoke-free zone. Smoking is prohibited throughout the facility.
3. Willfully annoy, intimidate or bully another person.
4. Damage or deface public property.
5. Engage in loud, boisterous or obscene behavior.
6. Utter profane, obscene, or offensive language directed at another person.
7. Be in a state of intoxication that causes a public disturbance.
8. Enter or remain in the library without a shirt or shoes.
9. Loiter on the premises under circumstances that warrant alarm for the safety or health of any person or property in the vicinity.
10. Remain in the building after its regular closing hours.
11. Interfere with other library patrons' use of the facilities through extremely poor personal hygiene.
12. Sleep in the library for an extended period of time (more than 15 minutes).
13. Bathing, shaving & washing hair in the library are also discouraged.

- (B) No pets or other animals are allowed in the library unless they are guide dogs or part of a library program.
- (C) Only persons on library business will be allowed to solicit for the sale of goods and services in the library. Salespersons may meet with authorized library personnel only. Exceptions may be made for library-sponsored activities and organizations affiliated with the library.
- (D) Surveying of groups or individuals may only be done in conjunction with output measures or other similar surveys designed to quantify library use or satisfaction with library services.
- (E) Canvassing. For example, soliciting signatures for a petition, nomination papers, and the like, is not allowed on library property.

- (F) It is a charge of the library staff to see that the rights of individuals to use of the library are upheld. The staff is obligated to enforce these guidelines so that the facility can be used to the fullest by all persons. Questions regarding the interpretation of these guidelines will be referred to the Library Director or other staff member in charge.

### **III. General Guidelines for Handling Problem Patrons**

- (A) It is patron's responsibility to maintain necessary and proper behavior standards in order to protect his/her individual rights and the rights and privileges of other patrons.
- (B) Occasionally, staff members may have to deal with patrons who violate the rights of others or who create a disturbance in the library. If a patron creates a public nuisance, that patron may be restricted from the library and from the use of library services. Those who are unwilling to leave or do not leave within a reasonable amount of time, after being instructed to do so by staff, will be subject to the law.
- (C) A brief written report of any incident involving theft, vandalism, illegal activity, or major disruptive behavior will be filed with the Library Director as soon as possible after its occurrence.
- (D) The Library Director, acting on behalf of the Library Board of Trustees, may suspend the library privileges of any individual who willfully violates library regulations when the severity or continued reoccurrence warrants such action. Wisconsin State Statutes s. 43.52 (2). The Library Director will inform the library board of any such action taken.
- (E) The person whose library privileges are suspended shall be advised in writing of the suspension and the reason(s) for such action. The offending person shall also be informed that the suspension may be appealed at the next regularly scheduled library board meeting.

### **IV. Unattended Children and Minors**

- (A) One of the primary missions of the library is to provide a variety of services for children of all ages. The library encourages visits by children under the age of eight (8) years old, and it is our desire to make these visits both memorable and enjoyable for the child.
- (B) "Unattended" means that the parent or designated person is not in close proximity to the child. Library staff cannot be expected to assume responsibility for the care of unsupervised children in the library. Caregivers are responsible for their

children while in the library.

- (C) Therefore, it is the policy of the library that all children under the age of eight (8) years old and under must be in the company of a parent/responsible person while in the library. Even if the young person is attending a program, it is required that the parent/responsible person remain in the library throughout the program.
- (D) If it is determined that a child is lost or left unattended, a staff member shall bring the child to the library staff member in charge who will attempt to identify and locate the parent/responsible person. If a parent/responsible person cannot be found, then the child will be remanded to the care of the Middleton Police Department.
- (E) If it is determined that a minor (17 years old and under) is not accompanied by an adult at closing time, staff will attempt to locate a parent/responsible person. If a responsible person cannot be found, then the minor will be remanded to the care of the Middleton Police Department.

#### **V. Disruptive Children**

- (A) Children of all ages are encouraged to use the library. The staff realizes that the library will be noisier at busy times and that children by nature can cause more commotion.
- (B) Examples of disruptive behavior include running up and down the aisles, unsupervised use of library equipment, pulling books from the shelves, encroachment into staff areas -- any behavior that interferes with other people's use of the library or that may damage library property.
- (C) Whether they are with their parents or not, children who are continually disruptive will be given a warning or will be asked to leave the library. If after a second warning the child continues to be disruptive, he/she will be asked to leave the library. If the child needs to contact a parent, he/she may do so and then wait in the lobby until the parent arrives.

#### **VI. Theft of Library Materials**

- (A) According to section Wisconsin State Statutes s. 943.61 (3), the concealment of library material beyond the security gate is evidence of intent to deprive the library of possession of the material. The discovery of library material which has not been checked out in accordance with established library procedures and which is concealed upon the person or among the belongings of the person or concealed by a person upon the person or belongings of another is evidence of theft.
- (B) According to Wisconsin State Statutes s. 943.61 (4), an employee of the library

who has probable cause for believing that a person has committed a theft in his or her presence may detain the person in a reasonable manner for a reasonable length of time in order to turn the person over to the police, or to the person's parent or guardian in the case of a minor.

- (C) The detained person shall be promptly informed of the purpose for the detention, but shall not be interrogated or searched against his or her will before the arrival of the police, who may conduct a lawful interrogation of the accused person.
  
- (D) The library's security gates will sound an alarm when patrons attempt to leave with library materials that have not been properly checked out. The system will also, on occasion, sound a false alarm or an alarm caused by staff oversight. Library patrons will be requested to return to the checkout desk whenever the security system sounds. If the alarm sounds again after a staff member has desensitized the materials a second time, then he/she will ask to inspect any bags the person is carrying. If a staff member suspects that the person is willfully concealing library property, he/she will follow established procedures for dealing with theft.

Approved October 9, 1990  
Amended March 10, 1992  
Amended December 14, 2004  
Amended August 10, 2010  
Amended May 8, 2012  
Amended February 11, 2014  
Amended June 16, 2015  
Amended May 9, 2017  
Amended April 3, 2019