

## **2.5-1 Appropriate Library Behavior**

The staff and the Board of Library Trustees of the Chelmsford Public Library are responsible for determining the rules of behavior necessary to protect all library users' access to the library and to its materials, to ensure the safety of library users and staff, and to protect the library's resources and facility from damage. To maintain an atmosphere appropriate for work, study, and enjoyment for all library users and staff, the following policy on behavior at the library and on library property has been established. Library employees will courteously enforce the policy.

Inappropriate behavior is defined as noisy, boisterous, or acting-out behavior that is disruptive to library patrons. Examples of this include, but are not limited to: running, throwing, playing hide and seek or similar games, loud or abusive talking (including profanity to either the public and the staff), eating or drinking in other than designated areas, putting feet on furniture, loitering, gambling, inappropriate public displays of affection, excessive socializing, proselytizing, soliciting, selling, distributing leaflets, use of alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana products, e-cigarettes, vaping, and other activities which disrupt the library. Any illegal activities including vandalism and theft will not be tolerated.

In addition, inappropriate behavior includes: sexual advances, unwelcome comments of a personal nature or behavior that discomfits the staff or other library patrons. This behavior may represent a physical danger to people or property, or may interfere with the legitimate library business of other users or staff and will not be tolerated.

Appropriate attire, including shirts and shoes, must be worn. (Examples of inappropriate footwear include, but are not limited to skates, cleats, or rollerblades.)

When recommended by state and health officials, the Library may require patrons to wear masks and practice physical distancing. Signs will be posted during these times and patrons must adhere to these requirements while in the Library. Library resources and services, such as online resources and curbside pickup, will still be available for those patrons who choose not to wear masks and not to enter the building. Patrons unable to wear masks due to medical reasons should contact the Library Director.

As the library is a community space used by people of all ages, backgrounds and beliefs, patrons must be aware of others and conduct themselves in such a way that does not intimidate or offend. The library is a public building and objectionable or pornographic images that can be seen by others (either intentionally or accidentally, and either on screen or in print) are not permissible. The library reserves the right to ask patrons to refrain from displaying images which are blatantly offensive and/or inappropriate for public viewing. Patrons who witness such behavior should alert library staff as soon as possible so that we can assess the circumstances of the situation and address it accordingly.

Staff will handle occasional misbehavior informally.

Staff will take the following steps when dealing with frequent, egregious or escalating misbehavior:

*1st Offense: Patrons who are behaving inappropriately or disruptively will be verbally warned that the behavior must stop. Patron will be handed a copy of the behavior policy. Staff member will document that a verbal warning was issued and a policy was received.*

*2nd Offense: The patron will be issued a written warning. Patron will again be handed a copy of the behavior policy. Staff member will document that a written warning was issued and a policy was received.*

*3rd Offense: Patron will be banned from the library for 3 months. A letter will be issued to the patron confirming the ban. If the patron is under the age of 18, parents will also be informed by a call from the library director.*

*4th Offense: Patron will be permanently banned from the library with a letter of no trespass issued through the Chelmsford Police Department.*

If patrons at any point in this disciplinary process refuse to cooperate, the police shall be called for assistance.

In extreme cases, no warning is required to expel a patron, if in the judgment of the library staff, the behavior in question (a) violates federal, state, county or municipal laws, or (b) poses an immediate threat to the safety or well-being of other library users or staff. Police will be notified by the supervisor on duty, if the threat to the public or the staff appears imminent.

The Board of Trustees or the Director may impose sanctions against any person who has engaged in prohibited conduct or activity within the library, its vehicle or upon its grounds. Sanctions may include restrictions or suspensions of the individual's library privileges and/or prohibiting the individual from entering or being present on, the library, its vehicle or grounds. Notice of such sanction or proposed sanction shall be given in writing and delivered either in person or by certified mail. In the case of a minor child, a copy of such notice shall be delivered, either in person or by certified mail, to the child's parent or guardian, if the identity of such person is known to the Director. Such notice shall inform the person of the specific conduct or activity which is the basis for the sanction, the date of its occurrence and the right of the individual to a hearing on the sanction. Any person who enters the library or its vehicle or grounds, after receiving notice of a sanction prohibiting such entry shall be subject to arrest and prosecution for trespass.

Patrons whose privileges are revoked may appeal to the Board of Library Trustees for reinstatement of library privileges. Appeal has to be made in writing and will be addressed as part of the following trustee meeting.

*Updated, Library Board of Trustees, July, 2020*