

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Administrative Procedure #6.01.03

POLICY AUTHORITY: Conduct Policy

STATUTORY REFERENCE: RCW 27.12.290, RCW 70.160

DATE: 07/07/11

REVISION #: 2

SCOPE: Applies to all patrons and staff in every facility of the Whatcom County Library System

I. CONDUCT POLICY RULES

Disruptive Behavior is any activity which endangers the perpetrator or others, interferes with the library activity of other patrons or staff, or is illegal. This may include any activity which results in harm to library equipment or services.

A patron who is **disruptive** will be notified that the behavior is inappropriate. If the behavior continues, the patron will be asked to leave the library. If the patron refuses to leave, local law enforcement officials will be called. Disruptive behavior on the part of a library patron may result in the suspension of an individual's library privileges, for a length of time to be determined by the library staff.

A. EXAMPLES OF PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

1. Any activity prohibited by law or any other conduct that interferes with others' use, safety, or enjoyment of the library.
2. Disruptive or unsafe behavior which may disturb other patrons' privacy and solitude, cause injury, or damage library property. Examples include running, climbing, pushing and shoving, and throwing things.
3. Loud or unnecessary noise. This includes noise created by cell phones and other devices. (Library-sponsored activities are sometimes noisy by necessity.)
4. Harassment or threats to library patrons or staff, including but not limited to stalking, intimidating, prolonged staring, and harassing behavior related to use of the Internet.
5. Leaving young children unattended or unsupervised in violation of the Safe Child Policy.
6. Soliciting or begging in the library or on library property.
7. Using the restrooms for laundry or bathing.
8. Entering into the Library barefoot or removing one's footwear while in the Library, or being otherwise attired so as to be disruptive to the Library environment.
9. Using tobacco products inside the library or within 25 feet of the entrance, windows that open, or ventilation intakes as provided in RCW 70.160.
10. Eating in the library except during staff-approved activities.
11. Carrying a weapon in the library or on library property (unless authorized by law.)
12. Violating any policy or procedure regarding the use of the library's computers or the Internet.

13. Failing to comply with a reasonable staff request.

B. THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES MAY BE DEEMED INAPPROPRIATE IF THEY INTERFERE WITH OTHERS' USE OR ENJOYMENT OF THE LIBRARY:

1. Having a personal scent or odor so strong as to be offensive.
2. Sleeping or loitering -- remaining in the library without being engaged in library-related activities.
3. Bringing animals into the library (except service animals or animals used in library-sponsored activities.)
4. Consuming beverages that may cause damage to library property. Beverages with secure lids may be allowed.

These rules will be enforced in a fair and reasonable manner. Library staff or local law enforcement officers will intervene to stop prohibited activities and behaviors.

Library privileges may be limited or revoked for violating any of these rules. The library may withdraw permission for a person to re-enter its facilities if the person continues violating these rules or if a person's physical condition is deemed offensive or dangerous to other library patrons (RCW 27.12.290).

II. DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR PROCEDURES

If this is an emergency or police matter, see Emergency checklist (page 6.01.02). If in doubt, call 911 – they will help you determine whether the situation is an emergency or not.

- A. Discussing Behavior with patron (when possible have two staff members involved & consult with branch manager or supervisor if available):
 1. Explain which behavior is inappropriate.
 2. Explain why it is inappropriate
 3. Give reasonable choices with consequences-this is the warning.
- B. If the behavior continues:
 1. Ask the patron to leave
 2. If the patron refuses, call the police
- C. **When police are involved, complete an Incident Report Form.**
 - Obtain names and phone numbers of witnesses if possible
 - Notification by faxing the form to CS-attn Reception.
 - If there is damage, when possible use a camera or cell phone to document it.
- D. Ejecting a patron from the local library-One day or up to 30 days
 - Staff have the authority to eject a patron after following the 3 steps of explaining and warning as listed above.
 - Suspension of library use privilege may be a day for a first offense and behavior that does not endanger other people (e.g. noise, loitering, and intoxication); and longer (from one week up to one month) for subsequent offenses and for threatening, harassing, unsafe or illegal behavior.

- Manager will alert branch staff by email and insert a block in the patron's library record disallowing library use until the date noted.
- Manager may alert other branch managers if the patron is known to use other libraries.
- Manager will mail a letter to adult patrons or to minor's parent if the suspension of library use privilege is for more than one week.

E. Trespassing (RCW 27.12.290)

- When the behavior warrants more than 30 days of suspension of library use privilege—the Director will make the determination to trespass a patron; and determine if it is system wide or local branch only.
- Director will have a certified WCLS letter of trespass mailed to the adult patron or to the minor's parent.
- Director will have staff alerted by email and a block will be placed in the patron's record.
- When the person trespassed is either unidentified or not a registered borrower, the Director will take appropriate steps to provide staff with any information that would assist them in identifying the person.