



whatcom county
library system

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE NUMBER: 6.01.03

POLICY AUTHORITY: Conduct Policy 6.01; Harassment Policy 12.28

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

A. 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.

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

- a. Any activity prohibited by law or any other conduct that interferes with others' use, safety, or well-being in the library, including statements that are intentionally demeaning to people based on age, ancestry, color, creed, disability, gender identity, marital status, national origin, parental status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, use of service animal, military status, class, economic status, or other personal characteristics.
- b. Disruptive or unsafe behavior which may disturb other patrons' privacy, cause injury, or damage library property. Examples include running, climbing, pushing and shoving, and throwing things.
- c. Unreasonably loud noise.
- d. Harassment or threats to library patrons or staff, including but not limited to stalking, intimidating, and prolonged staring.
- e. Leaving young children unattended or unsupervised in violation of the Safe Child & Children's Program Policy 6.03.
- f. Unsanctioned soliciting in the library or on library property.
- g. Using restrooms for laundry or bathing needs that are excessive or unreasonable.
- h. 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.
- i. Using tobacco or vapor products inside the library or within 25 feet of the entrance, windows that open, or ventilation intakes as provided in RCW 70.160 and Whatcom County Code 24.14.
- j. Carrying a weapon in the library or on library property (unless authorized by law.)
- k. Violating any policy or procedure regarding the use of the library's computers or the Internet.
- l. Failing to comply with a reasonable staff request.

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

- a. Having a personal scent or odor so strong as to impact others.
- b. Excessive use of space that impacts others' ability to use the library.
- c. Bringing animals into the library (except service animals or animals used in library-sponsored activities.)

- d. Consuming food or beverages in a way 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).

B. DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR PROCEDURES

1. Discuss behavior with patron (when possible have two staff members involved and consult with branch manager or supervisor if available):

- a. Explain which behavior is inappropriate.
- b. Explain why it is inappropriate.
- c. Give reasonable choices with consequences—this is the warning.

2. If the behavior continues:

- a. Ask the patron to leave.
- b. If the patron refuses, call 911.

3. **When the police are involved, complete an Incident Report Form.**

- Obtain names and phone numbers of witnesses if possible.
- Notification by sending the form to the Executive Director and the Deputy Director.
- If there is damage, take a photo to document it when possible.

4. 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 or when the situation is hostile, threatening, or violent.
- 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.

5. Trespassing (RCW 27.12.290)

- When the behavior warrants more than 30 days of suspension of library use privilege—the Executive Director will make the determination to trespass a patron; and determine if it is system wide or local branch only.
- Executive Director will have a certified WCLS letter of trespass mailed to the adult patron or to the minor's parent.

- Executive 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 Executive Director will take appropriate steps to provide staff with any information that would assist them in identifying the person.
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STATUTORY REFERENCE: RCW 27.12.290 Violators may be excluded; RCW 70.160 Smoking in Public Places.

APPROVED: November 17, 2005.

REVISED: December 9, 2022; June 25, 2018; April 21, 2014; July 7, 2011, March 22, 2010.