

# **Dolton Public Library District**

## **Patron Behavior Policy**

**Approved by Board (date): September 23, 2019**

### **Purpose**

The Dolton Public Library District has established this Behavior Policy to ensure that the library facilities are safe, welcoming and provide equitable access to materials and services for all library patrons.

### **Overview and Definitions**

Appropriate behavior is expected of all users of the Dolton Public Library District's facilities, as is associated with the normal use of a public library while in the building or on the grounds. Violations of the Behavior Policy will result in increasing levels of action ranging from a staff issued warning, to asking the patron to leave the library for the remainder of the day, to the patron's temporary or permanent loss of all library privileges, to legal action including criminal prosecution. The level of action shall be determined on a case-by-case basis.

### **Behavior Rules**

Patrons must refrain from all conduct that disrupts the use of the library facilities, collections, or services or is otherwise defined as unacceptable behavior in the library. Library materials and services are available for educational as well as entertainment uses, and patrons should keep in mind that these resources are in the library to be shared by all.

### **Inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following conduct or behaviors:**

- Loud, disruptive conversations, including shouting
- Use of personal electronic equipment at a volume that can be heard by others
- Use of profane and/or abusive language
- Sleeping
- Engaging in any behavior that the reasonable library user would find to be disruptive, harassing, or threatening in nature to library users or staff, including stalking, prolonged staring at or following another with the intent to annoy, or intentionally behaving in a manner that could reasonably be expected to annoy or disturb other patrons
- Possessing, selling, distributing, consuming or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or controlled substance
- Committing or attempting to commit any activity that would constitute a violation of any federal, state or local ordinance
- Smoking or other use of tobacco anywhere
- Leaving children under the age of 14 years alone in the library that are not accompanied by an adult
- Engaging in any sexual contact, activities, or conduct

- Selling, soliciting, surveying, distributing written materials, panhandling or canvassing for any political, charitable or religious purposes on library premises
- Eating, or drinking in the library
- Taking or making cell phone call in the library
- Not wearing shoes or shirt within the library premises
- Entering or remaining upon library premises with a bodily hygiene that is so offensive that it constitutes a nuisance to others
- Bringing belongings such as bedding, sleeping bags and changes of clothing
- Bringing animals into the library with the exception of documented service animals
- Improperly using library restrooms or facilities for purposes such as bathing, shaving, laundering, changing clothes and any other inappropriate activities
- Adults not accompanied by a child or teenager may not sit or loiter in the youth services area of the library
- Violating the library's rules for acceptable use of the Internet and public computers
- Possessing, selling, distributing, displaying, or using any dangerous weapon. A weapon shall include, but is not limited to, a knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, and any other toll instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury
- Engaging in any physically intimidating or assault-like behavior, including making any threats of violence or unlawful activities
- The library has a policy of zero tolerance for threats or acts of violence. Any person engaging in such behaviors will be immediately removed from the library

### **Library Response to Violations of Behavior Policy (including Exclusion from the Library)**

Any person who violates the behavior policy will be handled in a professional and courteous manner by the library staff, but the degree of the violation will determine the response.

When a patron is disruptive, it is appropriate to ask that person to leave the library. If the person does not leave the premises, the staff is instructed to call 9-1-1 which will bring Dolton Police Department into the situation, especially if the behavior is deemed dangerous. The staff will call the police for any behavior that is in violation of federal, state, or local ordinances. Staff will call the police if a person or group of persons are asked to leave the library and they refuse to leave and/or become difficult with the staff member.

For most other inappropriate behavior, one warning will be given. Continued violations will result in the patron being asked to leave the library for the day. A serious violation or repeated violations, or a violation where the police are called, may result in longer exclusions from the library up to permanent banning from the premises.

For a patron who is *continually* or *repeatedly* disruptive, exclusion may be an appropriate action. According to the Illinois Compiled Statutes 75 ILCS 5/4-7, 11, the Library Board shall have the power "to exclude from the use of the library any person who willfully violates the rules prescribed by the Board."

The Board has delegated to the Administrative Librarian authority to exclude a continually or repeatedly disruptive patron for a period of time up to the next scheduled Board meeting. At that

meeting, the Administrative Librarian and the Trustees will review the case and determine a course of action which may include extending the period of exclusion and/or conducting a hearing to enable the patron to present any information that bears on the circumstances leading to the exclusion. If such a hearing is held, the Board may invite the library's attorney to attend. The hearing will be recorded.

Before a patron is excluded from the use of the library, the Administrative Librarian must notify the individual that his/her privileges may be suspended or terminated.