

Houston County Public Library System Patron Behavior Policy

Approved by HOUPL Board of Trustees 2016 Aug 11

The Library is supported by community members who expect facilities to be clean, comfortable, and a safe place. To this end, the Library Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing rules of conduct to protect the rights and safety of Library patrons, volunteers and staff, and to protect Library materials, equipment, facilities and premises.

Certain behaviors, which are of a grievous nature, will result in immediate expulsion from the library, regardless of the patron's knowledge of our specific policy.

1. Engaging in sexual conduct including, but not limited to, inappropriate touching of self or others, stalking or other intimidating or harassing behaviors.
2. Physical abuse or assault, including fighting or challenging others to fight.
3. Being under the influence of any controlled substance or intoxicating liquor.
4. Possessing, selling, distributing or consuming any alcoholic beverage or controlled substance.

Any person who violates rules 1-4 while in or on library premises will be immediately ejected and excluded from all Houston County Public Library System premises without first being given a warning. Any person so excluded shall lose all library privileges for a period of up to three years, and the incident will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Inappropriate or unruly behavior is defined as any behavior on Library premises which infringes on the rights of others to use the Library in relative comfort and safety, behavior which could result in injury to oneself or others, or behavior which could result in damage to library materials or property. Behaviors that are prohibited include, but are not limited to the following:

- Leaving children under the age of 12 and dependent persons unattended by a parent, guardian or caregiver.
- Damaging, altering, stealing, or using Library property inappropriately.
- Using harassing, obscene, abusive or insulting language or gestures.
- Eating or drinking except for library sponsored events
- Running; throwing things.
- Smoking or the use of tobacco products including vapor, electric, lighted or any other type of smoking devices inside the library or on library grounds.
- Panhandling inside the library or on library grounds.
- Blocking aisles, entrances or exits or in any manner impeding access to public areas including sitting or lying down in them.
- Leaving unattended items in the Library.

- Placing personal belongings in a manner that interferes with library staff or patron use of the library facility including but not limited to bicycles, skateboards, etc.
- Parking vehicles in undesignated areas or on library premises for purposes other than library use. Vehicles parked in violation of this rule may be towed at the owner's expense.
- Using the public restrooms in any manner that is not usual or customary, including laundering or bathing.
- Making loud or unreasonable noise, including but not limited to the use of mobile devices at a volume that disturbs others.
- Entering the library with animals other than service animals.

Engaging in any of the above behaviors may result in one or more of the following consequences, depending on the severity of the violation.

- Initial warning, given copy of Patron Behavior Policy.
- Library privileges suspended for a period of time up to one year as determined by library administrative staff.

Enforcement of these rules will be conducted in a fair and reasonable manner. Patrons who are suspended from the Library for a period exceeding one day may petition to have their suspension reviewed by the Library Director. Following such a hearing, if the person is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may make a written appeal to the Library Board of Trustees.