

**Houston County Public Library System
Patron Behavior Policy**

Approved by HOUPL Board of Trustees 2016 Aug 11 ; 2019 Jun 13 ; 2020 Nov 12

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.

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.

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. Any person so excluded shall lose all library privileges for a period of up to five years, and the incident will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

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.

Behaviors that are prohibited include, but are not limited to the following:

Level One Severe Violations		Suspense Duration		
		1 st Offense	2 nd Offense	3 rd Offense
1.	Engaging in sexual conduct including, but not limited to, inappropriate touching of self or others, stalking or other intimidating or harassing behaviors.	1 – 2 years	2 – 3 years	3 – 5 years
2.	Physical abuse or assault, including fighting or challenging others to fight.			
3.	Damaging, altering, stealing, or using library property inappropriately.			
4.	Being under the influence, possessing, selling, distributing, or consuming any alcoholic beverage or controlled substance.			

Moderate Violations		Suspense Duration		
		1 st Offense	2 nd Offense	3 rd Offense
5.	Leaving dependent persons or children under the age of 12 unsupervised by a parent, guardian, or caregiver (at least 16 yrs. of age), at the library during operating hours. Leaving dependent persons or children under the age of 18 unattended by a parent, guardian, or caregiver after the library's closing time.	Warning	6 -12 months	1 -2 years
6.	Using the public restrooms in any manner that is not usual or customary, including laundering or bathing.			

Minor Violations		Suspense Duration		
		1 st Offense	2 nd Offense	3 rd Offense
7.	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.	Warning: patron may leave or correct	7 days	1 month
8.	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.			
9.	Neglecting to provide proper supervision of children.			
10.	Eating or drinking in non-designated areas.			
11.	Running; throwing things.			
12.	Panhandling or soliciting inside the library or on library grounds.			
13.	Blocking aisles, entrances, or exits; or in any other manner impeding access to public areas, including sitting or lying down in them.			
14.	Leaving unattended items in the library.			
15.	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.			
16.	Making loud or unreasonable noise, including but not limited to the use of mobile devices at a volume that disturbs others.			
17.	Adults using youth areas without a minor or need for youth collections or services.			
18.	Bodily hygiene or scent that is so offensive as to constitute a nuisance to other patrons or staff.			
19.	Loud sleeping or putting one's head, feet, or legs on tables and other furnishings.			
20.	Entering the library with animals other than service animals.			