

Highland City Library

Patron Behavior Policy Statement

All people are welcome to use the library and have access to information and library resources. In order to protect library users' right of access, ensure the safety of users and staff, and protect library resources and facilities, the library prohibits activities that are illegal, interfere with the use or enjoyment of the library by others, present health or security risks, damage library resources, or disrupt the normal flow of library operations.

Patron Behavior

If patron behavior interferes with the use of the library or disrupts the normal flow of library operations but does not require external intervention immediately, the library employee with the assistance of another employee will follow these steps:

- A. Inform the patron that the behavior is inappropriate and if it is not stopped, they will be asked to leave.
- B. Ask the patron to leave if the inappropriate behavior does not stop.
- C. Call the police (911) if the patron refuses to leave or becomes threatening in any way.
- D. File an incident report with the director of the library.

Behaviors That Are Prohibited or Inappropriate in the Library

- A. Destruction of property (either that of other patrons, staff, or the library).
- B. Physical abuse (such as an altercation between two patrons or physically abusive behavior directed at a staff member).
- C. Threatening others; brandishing or displaying weapons.
- D. Exhibitionism, sexual advances or abuse, and lewdness.
- E. Theft.
- F. Extreme obscene language and verbal abuse.
- G. Consuming liquor or using illegal drugs on library premises.
- H. Intoxication.
- I. Soliciting for immoral purposes or for patronage (panhandling).
- J. Smoking.
- K. Excessively wet clothing.

Other Unacceptable Conduct in the Library

- A. Eating and drinking in public areas.
- B. Conducting unauthorized sales or charitable solicitations in the library.
- C. Sleeping.
- D. Excessive noise or loud talking.
- E. Eccentric behavior.
- F. Leering/staring/loitering

Disruptive Children

The Highland City Library encourages children to use its facilities and services. However, children in the library are the responsibility of their parents. The library has neither the staff nor the legal authority to supervise children in the library.

Therefore, parents and guardians should be aware of their responsibility to discipline and supervise their children while they are in the library. A child left unattended in the library may become disruptive or frightened, ill or injured. An unattended child could also be kidnapped or molested.

If a child is found to be unattended in the library (that is, if the responsible adult is not on the library premises) at closing time, or if an unattended child becomes disruptive at any time, the library may take action necessary to resolve the situation. If necessary, the library may ask the police to take the child into custody for the child's protection.

- A. Disruptive behavior is any behavior within the library that infringes on the rights of others using the library.
- B. This policy applies to any child twelve years of age or younger. Older minors who become disruptive will be asked to leave the library premises and failure to comply may result in the police being called.

Guidelines for Staff Members

A. Dealing with Disruptive Children

If a young child is being disruptive (prolonged noise making; running up and down aisles; damaging library property; or bothering other library patrons), library staff may remind the child that they should be quiet (should not run around, etc.) in a library. If the behavior continues, library staff will attempt to locate the child's parent or caregiver. If the parent/caregiver is located in the library, staff will explain that the child's behavior is disturbing other library patrons, and will ask the parent/caregiver to deal with the problem.

If the child is unattended (parent or caregiver cannot be located within the library), law enforcement personnel may be contacted to pick up the child for the child's protection and safety.

If an older child is disruptive, the child should be informed that he/she is behaving inappropriately and asked to behave in a more appropriate manner. If the disruptive behavior continues, library staff will:

1. Ask the child to leave the library. Library staff members are to use their discretion in such situations. (Is the child old enough to leave on his/her own; does he/she live within walking distance; is it light or dark out; etc.)

2. Attempt to locate a parent/caregiver to deal with the problem. If a parent/caregiver cannot be located within the library and the disruption is sufficiently severe, the police may be called to deal with the situation.

A. Disruptive Attended Children

If a child is disruptive with a parent/caregiver nearby, library staff may speak directly to the child or may inform the parent/caregiver that the child is behaving inappropriately and ask the parent/caregiver to correct the behavior. Staff members are to use their discretion in such situations. If the parent/caregiver refuses or is unable to control the child, they may be asked to remove the child from the library until the problem is resolved.

B. Unattended Children at Closing

Library staff will not remain after hours with an unattended child and are not permitted, under any circumstances, to give him/her a ride home. If a child's transportation is not available within 15 minutes after closing, the police may be called to escort the child home or keep the child until parents can be reached.

The library is not responsible for children outside the building who await transportation or who are socializing.

Remember that parents and caregivers, not library staff, are responsible for the safety and behavior of children within the library.

Approved by Library Board January 28, 2009.