

Jesse M. Smith Memorial Library

Policy on Safety and Disruptive Behavior

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees 11/14/2019

The policy of the Jesse M. Smith Memorial Library is to provide a safe and appropriate environment both within the library building and on library grounds in order to facilitate the public's use and enjoyment of the library's services and resources and to ensure a safe workplace for its employees.

Behaviors or actions contrary to this policy including, but not limited to, intimidation, threatening or hostile behavior, physical abuse, vandalism, arson, sabotage, use or display of weapons, bizarre or offensive comments regarding violent events and/or behavior, or any other act which is inappropriate to a public library setting, will not be tolerated.

Employees or patrons who feel subjected to or become aware of such behaviors or actions should immediately report the incident to any library staff person or, in the event of questionable staff behavior, to a library supervisor. Complaints will receive immediate attention and the incident will be investigated and appropriate measures taken.

When a staff person feels that there is a direct and serious threat to the health or safety of others, proper law enforcement authorities will be called immediately.

Specific Procedures and Actions in Support of this Policy

When the behavior of a patron constitutes a disruption which interferes with the use of the library by others or which interferes with a staff member's completion of his/her duties, the following progressive steps will be taken:

1. Staff member will issue a verbal warning to patron(s) stating patron(s) will be told to leave the library if the behavior in question does not cease. In the case of small children whose behavior is excessively disruptive the warning will be issued to the parent or caretaker.
2. If the behavior continues after warning, the person(s) will be told to leave the library and library grounds.
3. If such person(s) refuse to leave, staff will call police.

All instances of eviction and notification of police should be documented in an incident report by staff and reported to the Director or Assistant Director.

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Among the grounds for warnings and evictions are:

- Inappropriate, foul, or vulgar language
- Running or throwing of objects within the library
- Inappropriate use, marring or rearranging of library materials, furniture, fixtures or equipment
- Smoking, including the use of electronic or vapor cigarettes, and the use of any tobacco products inside the library building and within 50 feet of a library entrance or exit
- Loitering or otherwise obstructing movement, entrance or egress either inside or outside of the library building
- Solicitation of library patrons or staff for money, products, services or causes including requests for the signing of political, religious or other petitions not previously sanctioned by the Director or Library Board of Trustees
- Gambling
- Inappropriate public display of physical affection
- Talking, laughing or making other noises in a repeated pattern of loud outbursts that are not of a medical origin
- Engaging in any type of activity with the potential to endanger the public or cause harm to the library facility or grounds
- Bringing in or using any riding apparatus (including bicycles, skateboards, scooters, in-line skates, etc.) in the library building
- Bringing animals inside the library, with the exception of service animals as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), therapy animals as stipulated in Rhode Island General Law 40-9.1-5 (a) and animals part of a library sponsored program
- Wearing inappropriate dress such as no shirts or no shoes

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Behaviors which shall result in immediate calling of police include:

- Use or display of a weapon
- Use of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Violation of any town, state or federal law
- Threats of violence to oneself or others
- Fighting, hitting or striking another person
- Theft or vandalism to library materials or property or the personal property of library patrons or employees
- Continued or grossly disrespectful attitude, foul language, goading, teasing or other types of verbal or physical harassment of Library patron(s) or staff
- Loitering or remaining on Library grounds following eviction from the building