

# CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY

## **Patron Conduct Policy**

### **Purpose of Policy**

This policy is intended to protect the rights and safety of library patrons and staff and preserve and protect the library's materials, facilities, and property.

This policy recognizes that the preservation of libraries as places to learn and share ideas demands that people demonstrate dignity, respect, and tolerance for others and their views.

### **Statement of Policy**

The Contra Costa County Library provides library materials and services to the public with the goal of creating a community gathering place that welcomes everyone. We are proud of our commitment to inclusivity, diversity, and creating community. To ensure a welcoming environment for all, no one may engage in conduct that interferes with anyone else's ability or right to use and benefit from library facilities.

Anyone who engages in illegal activity, willful or repeated violations of this policy, or conduct that disrupts someone else's use of the library, or the ability of library staff to perform their duties, is subject to being removed from the library and to having their library privileges suspended. Actions or words that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their personal safety or to feel distressed, alarmed, or harassed are not allowed.

This policy will be enforced by library staff and, when appropriate, local police. Where authorized by federal, state, or local law, conduct violations may result in arrest.

### **Conduct Requirements**

Patrons must be engaged in activities associated with the use of a public library when in the building. Patrons who are not engaged in reading, studying, quiet conversation, working, using library materials or equipment, or participating in a library program or activity may be required to leave the building.

### **Safe Environment**

The following activities or behaviors are prohibited on library property:

1. Any act that constitutes a criminal offense under federal, state, or local law, including but not limited to:

- a. Engaging in prohibited activities that relate to material involving the sexual exploitation of minors.
  - b. Using the Internet for activities that violate California law, including engaging in activities that are harmful to minors when children are present.
  - c. Theft.
  - d. Vandalizing library property or causing damage to any other person's property.
  - e. Indecent exposure, public sexual indecency, lewd acts, or any other sexual offense.
  - f. Gambling.
  - g. Disorderly conduct, including, but not limited to, fighting, challenging someone to fight, engaging in violent or seriously disruptive behavior, or threatening or intimidating library staff or any library patron.
  - h. Harassing or stalking library staff or any library patron. This conduct includes, but is not limited to, persistent staring or gestures that would cause a reasonable person to fear for their personal safety or feel distressed, alarmed, or harassed.
  - i. Trespassing, including knowingly entering the library when your access and use of library facilities has been suspended, and entering restricted areas of the library without permission.
  - j. Camping on library grounds.
2. Bringing guns, knives, other than pocketknives, or other items designed or intended to injure or harm people, unless explicitly permitted by law.
  3. Consuming or selling alcoholic beverages or controlled substances.
  4. Smoking, rolling, or using any tobacco product, marijuana, synthetic tobacco, synthetic marijuana, or electronic or other e-cigarettes (smokeless or equivalent).
  5. Using wheeled devices inside the library or on library grounds, except in designated areas, including using skateboards, roller-skates, bicycles, motorized or non-motorized scooters, and shopping carts. This restriction does not apply to Americans with Disabilities assistive devices or baby strollers.
  6. Entering a library building with animals, except for Assistance Animals, as defined in Section 14331 of the California Code of Regulations.

7. Creating tripping hazards, or blocking aisles, exits or entrances.
8. Bringing into the library, or attempting to place or store in the library, any item that:
  - a. Interferes with library operations.
  - b. Creates a safety hazard.
  - c. Denies space for other patrons.
  - d. Blocks aisles.
  - e. Blocks access to or exit from the building.
  - f. Is unsanitary or foul-smelling.
  - g. Leaving packages, backpacks, luggage, or any other personal items unattended. Unattended items are subject to removal without notice.
9. Leaving young children unattended anywhere in the library, including the children's area. (Children under the age of eight must be accompanied by an individual who is at least 15 years old. See the Contra Costa County Public Library Unattended Children Policy.)

#### Personal Behavior

The following actions or behaviors are not allowed on library property:

1. Failing to comply with:
  - a. A library staff member's request to stop disruptive behavior.
  - b. This Patron Conduct Policy.
  - c. Any other library policy.
2. Behaving in a manner that disrupts library operations, including but not limited to:
  - a. Loud talking, yelling, or profanity.
  - b. Running or physical horseplay.
  - c. Any sexual conduct.

3. Strong, pervasive odors, including body odors, clothing odors, and odors caused by food, perfume, or cologne that are injurious to health, indecent, offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the free use or comfortable enjoyment of library premises by other library patrons or library staff.
4. Inappropriate use of water fountains or restrooms, including, but not limited to, soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct, bathing, or washing clothes.
5. Lying down or monopolizing space or equipment, e.g., using more than one seat per person.
6. Panhandling, soliciting donations or contributions.
7. Conducting unauthorized sales activities.
8. Consuming food or beverages in the library, other than in designated areas.
9. Not wearing shoes or shirts, except for infants or toddlers. Not wearing bottoms.
10. Disturbing other library patrons or library staff. This includes, but is not limited to, creating noise, including loud cell phone use or loud conversation.
11. Harassing other library patrons or library staff. This includes, but is not limited to, engaging in physical or verbal abuse, including the use of racial slurs.

#### Misuse of Equipment and Facilities

The following actions or behaviors are not allowed on library property:

1. Manipulating or bypassing library systems and procedures, such as those that regulate computer use.
2. Tampering with, disrupting, or altering computer equipment, software, or data.
3. Unplugging library equipment.
4. Using furniture for anything other than its intended purpose (e.g., using a table as a foot stool).
5. Misusing library spaces that are designated for particular uses. These spaces vary by branch, and include:

- a. Children's rooms, which are reserved for children under the age of 12 and their caregivers, and patrons using the children's collections at the discretion of library staff.
- b. Teen rooms, which are reserved for patrons who are aged 12 through 18, or patrons using the teen collection at the discretion of library staff
- c. Certain computers and study rooms that are designated for patrons who are working individually and quietly.