

North Madison County Public Library System
Patron Behavior Policy

Policy Statement

The purpose of all the library facilities of the North Madison County Public Library System is to provide materials and services in a welcoming environment that is safe, enjoyable and conducive to comfortable library use. All individuals who make use of the library are expected to comply with the following standards of behavior which will assist the library to meet the above purpose.

Guidelines: Behaviors with Progressive Consequences

Instances of irresponsible use of the library and its facilities with examples:

1. Producing excessive noise. (Examples: loud talking, cell phones, singing, playing a musical instrument, or other electronic device, etc., which are determined to be inconsistent with public service operations.)
2. Behaving in a disorderly or disruptive manner which is not conducive to comfortable library use or a manner which threatens personal safety of patrons and/or staff. (Examples: skateboarding, rollerblading, running or groups gathering around a single computer.)
3. Consuming food, beverages, narcotics, alcohol, or tobacco products, including electronic vapor cigarettes, in any inside public area, including restrooms. As of July 1, 2012, Indiana State Law (IC 7.1-5-12) prohibits smoking within 8 feet of any public entrance to a public place or place of employment. Individuals violating this law will be asked to stop smoking. If the patron refuses to stop smoking, the patron will be asked to leave the premises. If the patron refuses both requests, the local law enforcement may be contacted.
4. Loitering – Repeat violators and/or persons who refuse to leave when requested will be subject to arrest and prosecution under Section 35-43-2-2 of the Indiana Code entitled “Criminal Trespass”.
5. Soliciting donations of money or anything of value; selling materials or services. (Examples: Panhandling, etc.) Patrons are expected to have an appropriate form of payment for library charges and other purchases. Soliciting to use an employee’s personal debit/credit card to purchase items is not allowed.
6. Inappropriate attire includes but is not limited to bare feet/torso.
7. During an epidemic or pandemic not following health safety protocols such as wearing a mask.

The behaviors identified above are considered to be unacceptable patron conduct and will result in appropriate discretionary responses from library staff according to the following progressive criteria:

1. Ask patron to cease behavior.
2. Repeat request to cease behavior and communicate that this correction is a warning of expulsion, if behavior continues.
3. Ask patron to leave facility or call security/police if patron refuses to comply. The staff member involved will document the occurrence and any action on the Incident Report form. The patron will not be allowed in the library for one full business day beginning the day after the incident.
4. If there is a second offense, the patron will not be allowed in the library for one week starting with the business day after the incident. The staff member will document any action on the Incident Report form and report it to their direct supervisor. If the patron is under 18 years of age, the parent/guardian will be contacted by phone or mail by the Department/Branch Manager. For patrons over the age of 18 a letter will be sent to the last known address with a copy of this policy and a date of return.

5. If there is a third offense, the patron will not be allowed in the library for six months starting with the business day after the incident. The staff member will document any action on the Incident Report form and report it to their direct supervisor. If the patron is under 18 years of age, the director will contact the parent/guardian by phone, if possible, to discuss the issue and a letter will be sent to the last known address with a copy of the this policy and a return date. The parent/guardian will need to accompany their child after the six months ban to reinstate privileges. If the patron is over 18, a letter will be sent to the last known address with a copy of this policy and a date of return.

Zero Tolerance Behaviors

The behaviors mentioned below will result in immediate expulsion from the library. The Library Director will send a letter to the offending patron detailing the length of the expulsion. If the offender is under the age of 18, the letter will be sent to the parent or guardian. Upon request the Library Director will meet with the offender and parent or guardian, if the offender is under the age of 18, to discuss the consequences of the behavior. If legal action is required, the patron will be banned until legal action is complete.

1. Stealing, damaging, altering of any library property including, but not limited to, defacing of library materials, vandalizing library equipment, furniture, computers, etc.
2. Carrying concealed or obvious weapon(s). An exception to this zero tolerance behavior: A legal U.S. resident who legally possesses a firearm may carry, transport or store a firearm and any accessories, including ammunition, on library property. "Firearm" means any weapon that is capable of expelling or designed to expel or that may readily be converted to expel a projectile by means of an explosion.
3. Stalking which is considered the pursuit of others. It is unsolicited, unwelcome and unreasonable in nature, creates a threatening and intimidating service environment.
4. Committing sexual offenses. (Examples: indecent exposure, inappropriate/unwelcome sexual advances or harassment)
5. Displaying sexually explicit graphics or child pornography.
6. Verbal, physical, written or electronic harassment or abuse. (Examples: Cursing at patrons or staff; approaching patrons or staff and engaging in unwanted or inappropriate interaction; threats to personal safety of patrons or staff; the transmission of threatening, harassing, malicious, or abusive language and/or images, etc.)
7. Any criminal behavior that is not listed above will be considered a Zero Tolerance Behavior.

Any patron banned from the library six months or more may appeal to the NMCPLS Library Board of Trustees for a potential reduction in time away from the library. The appeal will be scheduled for the next public meeting of the NMCPLS Library Board of Trustees.

Adopted 12/08/2008

Revised 11/14/2011, 08/13/2012, 03/11/2013, 08/11/2014, 04/20/2015, 08/10/2020