

Subject: Patron Code of Conduct

Section: Facility

Adopted: April 24, 2024

PATRON CODE OF CONDUCT

Franklin Parish Library has established this Patron Code of Conduct to ensure that library facilities are safe, welcoming and provide equitable access to materials and services for all library patrons. Appropriate library conduct includes without limitation activities such as reading, studying, properly using library materials or computers and other similar conduct normally associated with a public library. This Patron Code of Conduct shall apply to all buildings, interior and exterior, and all grounds controlled and operated by Franklin Parish Library (such buildings and grounds are hereafter referred to as the "Library Premises") and to all persons entering in or on the Library Premises.

A copy of the policies should be close at hand for reference as well as the telephone number of local police, fire department, and hospitals. Library staff should not hesitate to call on one of these agencies listed above for assistance. When the problem patron is a minor, the parent or legal guardian should be notified and asked to come to collect the patron. If the parent or legal guardian cannot be reached, the civil authorities may be called. The library staff is not to be subjected to abuse or placed in danger in the workplace from any person coming into the building with disruptive intentions, or from persons whose actions are no longer under their own control. All library patrons and staff will be protected from dangerous or aggressive persons while the patrons are in the confines of the library or on library grounds. Civil authorities will be summoned to remove dangerous and/or aggressive persons.

Listed below are the library's rules for public behavior. Franklin Parish Library Board authorizes the Director or his/her designee to temporarily or permanently restrict or revoke the library privileges of any individual who violates this Patron Code of Conduct. Patrons who violate these rules may be removed from the Library Premises and excluded from all Library Premises for a period of time based on the severity of the misconduct. Authorized library staff and/or Franklin Parish Sheriff Deputies or Winnsboro City Police Department may intervene to stop prohibited activities and conduct. Failure to comply with these rules may result in withdrawal of a person's permission to remain on the Library Premises and/or a loss of library privileges. A violation of law may also result in arrest and prosecution.

Order and Quiet

The Library is a public space provided for general study and for quiet reflection. It is also a place that provides programming for children and adults. It is a place where people come to seek information and recreation from books. The library staff shall seek to maintain an environment of order, peace, and quiet while providing all the disparate services of the library.

It is the responsibility of all library staff to maintain an atmosphere of quiet. Patrons may be asked to speak more softly, and children must be instructed in the proper use of the library and the need for quiet. Using personal electronic equipment including, but not limited to, stereos, cellular telephones, portable computers and tablets at such a volume or making ongoing noise that is unreasonably disturbing to other library patrons is unacceptable.

It is the responsibility of all staff to control noise amongst themselves and in the performance of their duty, to set the example for patrons in the library.

Disruptive Behavior

The Library is a place of study and contemplative use. Quiet will be maintained to the best staff's ability and the cooperation of the public. Disruptive behavior will not be permitted or tolerated. Persons who interrupt the environment of the library will be asked to leave or be ejected if necessary. The Civil authorities, Franklin Parish Sheriff's Department or Winnsboro City Police Department, will be called if necessary. Children are not to be allowed to exhibit disruptive behavior. If they are accompanied by an adult, then that adult shall be asked to temper the behavior of the child or remove him/her from the building.

Examples of disruptive behavior are:

- Loud noise, such as talk, laughter, screaming and yelling (this includes disruptive behavior of children).
- Running in the open areas and stacks.
- Use of profane and/or vulgar language.
- Harassment of library patrons or staff
- Destruction or theft of library property or the private property of anyone in the library or on the library grounds.
- Use of the library study or reading areas for a social gathering.

Food and Drinks

The consumption of food is not permitted in the library, with exceptions for Library sponsored functions or special permission. Patrons can bring drinks inside the building as long as they are capped. Drinks are not allowed near electronic equipment such as copiers, faxes, computers, etc. Persons entering with any food items will be asked to take them outside.

Harassment of Library Employees or Other Library Patrons

The Franklin Parish Library intends to provide a place where all individuals wishing to utilize the library's services can do so in a pleasant, healthful, comfortable environment free from intimidation, hostility, or other offenses that might interfere with the enjoyment of the library. Conduct that involves the use of abusive or threatening language or gestures is not tolerated. Harassment of any sort – verbal, physical, visual – will not be tolerated. Harassment can take many forms. It may be, but is not limited to: words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation, physical contact, or violence. Harassment is not necessarily sexual in nature. Sexually harassing conduct may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or any other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature. Any report of a patron engaging in such behavior will be duly investigated by Library Administration and reported to the proper authorities. Such behavior can result in restriction of library privileges or potential banning from the library's premises.

Inappropriate conduct shall also include without limitation the following:

- Committing or attempting to commit any activity that would constitute a crime or a violation of federal, state or local law.
- Selling, distributing, or using any dangerous weapon upon the Library Premises or using or threatening the use of any other object in such a manner that it may be considered a weapon.
- Engaging in any physically intimidating or assaultive behavior; making any threats of violence or unlawful activities toward library staff or other library patrons; using threatening, abusive or obscene language. The Library has a policy of zero tolerance for threats and acts of violence. Any person engaging in such behaviors will be immediately ejected from the Library Premises.
- Possessing, selling, distributing, consuming or being under the influence of any intoxicating beverage or controlled substance.
- Trespassing by entering or remaining on the Library Premises after having been notified by an authorized individual not to do so, and entering or remaining on the Library Premises during the time in which an individual's library privileges have been suspended.
- Engaging in any behavior that a reasonable person would find to be disruptive, harassing, or threatening in nature to library patrons or staff including without limitation stalking, prolonged staring at or following another with the intent to annoy, or intentionally behaving in a manner that could reasonably be expected to annoy or disturb other patrons.
- Leaving children under the age of ten (10) unattended on the Library Premises.
- Engaging in any sexual contact, activities or conduct including without limitation the physical manipulation or touching of a person's sex organs through a person's clothing in an act of apparent sexual stimulation or gratification.
- Selling, soliciting, surveying, distributing written materials, panhandling or canvassing for any political, charitable or religious purposes inside a library building or on the Library Premises without prior authorization of the Library Director or designee.
- Smoking or other use of tobacco products including electronic cigarettes and chewing tobacco anywhere on the Library Premises.
- Emitting strong pervasive odors, including odors caused by perfume or cologne that unreasonably interferes with library user or staff comfort.
- Dressing inappropriately for a public building including attire that does not sufficiently cover those parts of the body considered private; failing to wear shoes or a shirt inside a library building.
- Dressing inappropriately for a public building used by children including attire that displays profane language and/or curse words.
- Using library materials, equipment, furniture, or buildings in a manner inconsistent with the customary use thereof; or in a destructive, abusive or potentially damaging manner; or in a manner likely to cause personal injury to themselves or others.
- Interfering with the safe and free passage of library staff or patrons on the Library Premises, including without limitation the placement of objects in hallways, aisles, flooring or elsewhere in a manner that impedes the free passage of such persons inside the Library Premises.

- Entering nonpublic areas of the Library Premises without permission.
- Taking any library materials into restrooms.
- Bringing fireworks or other dangerous substances on the Library Premises
- Violating the library's rules for acceptable use of the internet and library public computers. A user accepts these rules before accessing the Internet through a library computer. Copies of these rules will be made available by staff upon request.

Suspension of Library Privileges

Patrons violating this Patron Code of Conduct may result in suspension of library privileges for a period of time commensurate with the severity of the offense, the patron's history or policy violations, and any other relevant factors. Library privileges include without limitation entering the Library Premises, checking out library materials, accessing library computers, or attending library programs. Patrons engaged in conduct that poses a serious imminent risk to health or safety may be immediately expelled from the Library Premises without prior warning and with or without the assistance of local law enforcement. A suspension may be indefinite if the offense is severe. Library staff are authorized to contact the Franklin Parish Sheriff's Office or Winnsboro City Police Department to respond to such situations and police may issue a criminal trespass citation.

Note: Library staff may not restrain or otherwise physically intervene in any situation that could potentially become violent.

Loss of Library Privileges

Incident reports will be kept on file by the Library Director for violations of this Patron Code of Conduct. After an individual has engaged in severe or repeated misconduct, the staff will recommend to the Library Director that the individual involved should lose his or her library privileges.

If after consultation with the members of the staff, the Director agrees with the decision to rescind the individual's library privileges, h/she will inform the Board of the recommendation. Upon Board's approval, when appropriate, a written notification to the individual involved informing the individual that he or she has lost his or her library privileges at all branches of the Franklin Parish Library for a period of time up to one (1) year. The letter shall indicate the reasons for the loss of privileges and the corresponding time period. A copy of this letter will also be given to the President of the Franklin Parish Library Board of Control.

The Library Director will officially inform all staff at all locations of the individual's name and his or her misconduct when a decision is made to impose a loss of privileges.

The Library Director shall notify the individual of the process for appealing the loss of privileges decision, but all conditions of the loss of privileges decision will be in full force and effect once the written notification has been issued unless reversed at any requested appeal hearing.

The Library Director will review and may reconsider the decision to impose a loss of privileges upon written request of the individual and may shorten or terminate the disciplinary period if information submitted by the individual warrants such modification.

FRANKLIN PARISH LIBRARY POLICY MANUAL

The Library Director may consult with the Franklin Parish District Attorney's Office before issuing the response to the individual. Until such time as the loss of privileges letter has been reviewed and/or modified by the Director or reversed on appeal by the Library Board, the individual may not use the library.