

Chelsea Public Library

SAFETY PROCEDURES AND POLICY

No person shall engage in inappropriate conduct on the premises of the Chelsea Public Library or when participating in Library programs.

Inappropriate conduct shall include any individual or group activity which is disruptive to other person's lawfully using Library premises or otherwise inconsistent with activities such as reading, studying, proper use of library materials, and other similar conduct normally associated with a public library.

Support of Staff Members Actions

Library staff acting on their best judgment in confronting a person will be supported by their supervisor, the person in charge, and the Library director.

Any staff member who observes or receives complaints of inappropriate behavior may:

- Handle the problem directly with the patron. Staff should use their judgment as to whether the situation requires assistance from another staff member.
- Immediately telephone the police if the situation is of a severe / violent or emergency medical situation.
- Contact the supervisor in charge if the situation is of a nature that staff member chooses not to confront patron.
- At any time contact police if the patron is not responding to staff requests to conform to the Library Rules.

In all cases the Library Director should be notified as soon as possible when the staff member confronts a library user who violates the Library rules. The Director will be responsible for notifying the Library Board of Trustees if necessary.

Incident Reports

Incident reports must be filed in all cases when it was necessary to call for outside help and in other situations in which the Director and staff should be informed because of possible repercussions. A log of incident reports, patrons banned and problem patrons will be available for staff and police to review in case of repeat offenders. A calendar will be used to keep track of dates of offenses and the time period a patron is banned.

In addition to written reports, staff members are encouraged to talk through upsetting incidents to share their knowledge of possible problems with other staff who might be involved.

INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT - MINOR OFFENSES

The following shall be deemed "inappropriate" and considered to be minor offenses:

Sleeping; excessive and disruptive conversations; eating or drinking in a public area of the library; monopolizing unreasonable numbers of library materials at any given time; unauthorized canvassing, selling, soliciting, or engaging in any other commercial activity; violating Internet and computer policies ; excessive staring at patrons or staff; preventing staff from normal, reasonable, clean-up, re-shelving activities, especially 10 minutes before closing; being in a state of intoxication; smoking; bringing any animal into the library, except working animals which assist the disabled; other activities (not listed as Major Offenses) which are inconsistent with activities such as reading, studying, use of library materials, and other similar conduct normally associated with the use of public library facilities.

TREATMENT OF MINOR OFFENSES

- 1 warning for first infraction of any offense.
- Second infraction within 30 days results in removal from the Library premise for 1 day. Parents of children under 17 will be notified in writing when their child commits a second infraction and has been removed from the library.
- Third infraction within 60 days or continuous repeat infractions may result in banning from the Library premises for not less than 2 weeks or more than 6 months.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR - MAJOR OFFENSES

Any persons violating the following rules will be immediately removed from the building. The patron may be banned from any further Library use at the discretion of the Library Director, depending on the nature and the seriousness of the offense which required removal, the extent of damage or disruption caused, any history of prior infractions of library policies and other relevant circumstances.

Stealing, defacing or damaging library property; abusive, indecent, profane or drunken conversation and/or behavior; committing any crime, misdemeanor, or violation of a municipal ordinance, not covered under MINOR OFFENSES, on the premises of the library; knowingly entering non-public areas of library.

BANNING PROCEDURE

After staff consultation regarding repeat or major behavioral problems, and it is determined that the person should be banned:

- a. Supervisor in charge will make a recommendation to the Director detailing the reasons for the proposed banning;
- b. Director will consult with the Library Board of Directors and provide written decision;
- c. The written decision shall set forth the period during which the patron shall be banned from the library and shall specify the reasons for the determination. The patron may be banned for a period from 2 weeks to 6 months at the discretion of the Library Director, depending on the nature and the seriousness of the offense which required removal, the extent of damage or disruption caused, any history of prior infractions of library policies and other relevant circumstances.
- d. The patron and all staff will be notified in writing of the reasons for and length of the banning. A copy will also be sent to the police and to the Library Board President.
- e. The Director may review or reconsider the decision upon written request of the patron and may shorten or terminate the banning period if information submitted by the patron warrants such modification. The Director will respond in writing and notify the individual of the appeals process.

REPEAT OFFENDERS

Any person who enters or remains on library premises after having been notified by an authorized individual not to do so, and any person who enters or remains on the library premises during the period in which he or she has been banned from the library, will be subject to arrest and prosecution for trespassing.

After the banning period has elapsed, the patron may re-apply for readmission through administrative channels. However, he or she will need to be prepared to show evidence that the offending behavior will not re-occur. In the absence of valid documentation (from a social worker, doctor, or police) application may be denied.

In the event that a person is granted readmission and then exhibits any of the behaviors described earlier, they will be denied access with no further possibility of reinstatement.

SPECIFICS TO LIBRARY RULES

UNATTENDED MINORS:

Children six years of age and under must be closely accompanied at all times by an older responsible person. The child's parent will be contacted if the child is left unattended. The library reserves the right to turn over to the proper authorities minors (under age 17) left unattended for extended periods of time or left after library hours.

INAPPROPRIATE USE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

If an adult in Children's Services is not involved in appropriate use of children's library materials and is observed by staff to be spending an unnecessary and unusual amount of time in Children's Services, such person shall be asked to use other areas of the library. If the person does not comply or repeats, consequences will follow those under "TREATMENT OF MAJOR OFFENSES/ INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR. "

INAPPROPRIATE PERSONAL HYGIENE

Patrons whose bodily hygiene is so offensive as to constitute a nuisance to other persons shall be required to leave the building. When the problem is corrected, patrons may re-enter the library.

THEFT AND VANDALISM ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES

The police will be called when a patron attempts to steal or maliciously destroy library and/or personal property (belonging to staff and/or patrons). The library will prosecute anyone who steals or maliciously destroys library property. When other illegal activities (e.g., indecent exposure) are committed by a patron, the library will prosecute.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

An emergency situation can be defined as any situation in which a person's actions present an imminent danger to the life or safety of him/herself, others or to Chelsea Public Library property. Such incidents may include assault and other crimes of violence, or the threat or attempt to commit such crimes. Call the police immediately if such behavior should occur.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SITUATIONS

If the person is conscious, offer help and try to get identification. Remain calm, supportive, sympathetic, and see that the person is comfortable. Keep other people away. Call 911 and meet rescue squad to direct them to accident. A person who wishes to leave the library, obviously not well, cannot be stopped by a staff member.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In case of inclement weather, such as tornadoes, or hurricanes, staff will alert public over the PA system (if applicable) and direct them to a safe place. The Circulation desk will close. In case of unattended children, staff assumes "loco parentis," and directs them to shelter. Any patron not wishing to follow safety procedures must leave the Library. If the inclement weather is before work hours the library will delay opening until the threat is over. The threat must be in this area for it to apply.

FIRE

Staff will follow fire safety procedures. In case of false alarm, all patrons and Library staff will exit the building and remain outside until the facility is deemed safe to enter by Fire Department personnel. Repeated false activation of the fire alarm will result in the patron's suspension of Library access.

Chelsea Public Library Incident Report Form

Date and Time: _____

Location (i.e., department or area of the library):

Initial staff person:

Other staff involved:

Patron name (if known):

Patron description:

Issue (i.e., stress point):

Resolution: