



PATRON BEHAVIOR POLICY

Patrons must comply with all Library policies.

For the purposes of this policy:

- **“Harassment”** is defined as behavior that demeans, humiliates or embarrasses a person, and it is characteristically identified by its unlikelihood in terms of social and moral reasonableness. In the legal sense, these are behaviors that appear to be disturbing, upsetting or threatening. They evolve from discriminatory grounds, and have an effect of nullifying or impairing a person from benefiting from their rights.
- **“Bullying”** is defined as the use of force, threat or coercion to abuse, intimidate or aggressively dominate others. The behavior is often repeated and habitual. One essential prerequisite is the perception, by the bully or by others, of an imbalance of social or physical power, which distinguishes bullying from conflict. Behaviors used to assert such domination can include verbal harassment or threat, physical assault or coercion and such acts may be directed repeatedly towards particular targets. Rationalizations of such behavior sometimes include differences of social class, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, appearance, behavior, body language, personality, reputation, lineage, strength, size or ability. If bullying is done by a group, it is called mobbing.

The following guidelines and rules shall apply to the interior, exterior and all grounds controlled and operated by the Library and to all persons entering in or on the premises, unless otherwise specified. Failure to conform to the *Patron Behavior Policy* may result in a suspension of Library use.

After-Hours Use: Patrons must leave the building promptly at closing and may not be in the Library when it is not open to the public unless for a previously approved meeting room rental or program. Unattended children (under the age of 12) who are still at the Library at closing time will be turned over to public safety as set forth in the Unattended Children Policy.

Alcohol and Drugs: Patrons cannot possess, consume, sell, distribute or be under the influence of alcohol, marijuana or illegal drugs on Library property.

- Alcohol may be allowed at certain Library-sponsored events if specifically approved by the Library Director.

Animals: Animals are not permitted in the Library other than trained Service Animals, including those in training, (as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Michigan law) for those patrons with disabilities, those used in law enforcement or for Library programming. Service Animals are permitted to accompany patrons with disabilities in all areas of the Library where the public is allowed to go.

- Emotional support or comfort animals are not permitted in the Library building. Animals may not be left unattended on Library grounds. The Library is not responsible for animals, including those left unattended.
- The Library is permitted to ask the person requiring a Service Animal the following questions:
 - Is the animal a Service Animal required because of a disability?
 - What work or task has the animal been individually trained to perform?
- The Library may not ask about the individual's disability, require medical documentation, require a special identification card or ask that the Service Animal demonstrate its ability.
- A Service Animal may be removed for either of the following reasons:
 - The animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it.
 - The animal is not housebroken.

Announcements: The public announcement system is used only by staff for Library building operations. Public announcements are not allowed by or for library patrons.

Blocking Access: Blocking aisles, doors or entrances with personal items or leaving such items unattended at the Library at any time is not allowed.

Café Usage: The café seating area is reserved for café customers only.

Care of Library Property: Patrons must not deface, vandalize, damage or improperly use or improperly remove Library materials, equipment or furniture from the Library building or the grounds. Copyright infringement and stealing of library material is not allowed. Patrons shall not load or install any programs or software on Library computers. Patrons shall not cause damage by returning books containing bedbugs or bringing bedbugs into the Library. Climbing on tables, shelving or other library furnishings is not allowed. Patrons will be responsible to reimburse the Library for costs incurred by the Library for violating this provision.

Congregating: Patrons cannot congregate in public areas in large groups (more than 4 people).

Engaging in Proper Library Activities: Patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of the Library while in the building or on Library property. Patrons not engaged in reading, studying, writing, participating in scheduled Library programs, or using Library materials or facilities as intended for civic, educational or cultural purposes will be required to leave the building and cannot remain on Library property. This includes sleeping on Library furniture or floors.

Identification: Patrons must provide identification to Library staff when requested.

Interference with Staff: Patrons cannot interfere with staff's performance of duties in the Library. This includes engaging in conversation or behavior that monopolizes or forces the attention of staff for an inappropriate period of time, inappropriate personal comments, sexual advances or physical and/or verbal harassment.

Library's Phone System: Patrons are not allowed to use the Library's phone system. Staff will not make calls for patrons except in cases of an accident, emergency or a child needing to contact a parent, guardian or caregiver.

- In the event that a child reports suspicious activity or staff notice suspicious activity involving a child, that child can request to contact a parent, guardian or caregiver or, if staff deems appropriate, public safety.

Loud Noise: Producing or allowing any loud, unreasonable or disturbing noises that interfere with other patrons' use of the Library or which can be reasonably expected to disturb other patrons or have the intent of annoying other patrons is not allowed. This includes yelling, cheering, talking (with others), noisy food or noises from electronic devices. Patrons may use headphones or earbuds but at a volume that cannot be heard by other Library patrons or staff. Parents, guardians or caregivers may read aloud to children in the Youth Area, provided that they are reading in a voice that does not disturb others.

Missing/Lost Person: If staff are approached by a patron and informed that a person is missing/lost and is thought to be in the Library, staff will assist the patron in searching for the person on Library property only. Staff will not make a public announcement, but can assist the patron in contacting public safety upon request. Should there be a request by phone to assist with a missing/lost person, in the interest of patron and staff safety and privacy, staff will not disclose the whereabouts of another patron or staff member to a patron over the phone.

Mobility Devices: Wheelchairs, scooters and other power driven mobility devices are allowed by those individuals with disabilities in accordance with Library rules, unless a particular type of device cannot be accommodated because of legitimate safety requirements.

Nondiscrimination

It is the policy of the Library not to discriminate on the basis of race, skin color, sex, age, height, weight, disability, religion, language, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity in the operation of the Library, in its employment policies and other Library administered programs.

Odor: Offensive odor, including but not limited to body odor due to poor personal hygiene, overpowering perfume or cologne or odors from items brought into the Library that cause a nuisance, is not allowed. (For example, if a patron's odor interferes with staff or other patrons' use of the Library, the patron violates this Policy.)

Open Flame: Lighters, candles, matches, Sternos and other flame-producing devices are not allowed and cannot be used inside the Library.

Parking or Standing: Vehicles are not allowed to park or stand at the main entrance or in the drive-up window lane. Parking is not allowed in fire lanes.

Patron Privileges Denied: A patron whose privileges have been denied cannot enter the Library. Any patron whose privileges have been limited cannot use the Library in any manner that conflicts with those limits placed on the patron by the Library Director, Director's designee or the Library Board.

Patron Use of Youth Area and Computers: The Youth area of the Library is intended for use by children and the parent, guardian or caregiver who accompanies them. Computers located in the Youth area are for children and adults who are accompanying a child. Adults who are not accompanied by a child may browse the collection but may not remain or be seated in the Youth area. In the interests of protecting children, any patron may be asked to leave the area if they are not using the Youth area for its intended purpose.

Personal Property: Personal items brought into the Library are subject to the following:

- One carry-on item (backpack or briefcase) can be carried into the Library. The Library does not allow large items such as suitcases, large sports equipment bags/duffle bags or large plastic garbage bags. Items must be small enough to fit under a chair at the Library and cannot block doors, entrances, walkways or aisles.
- The Library is not responsible for personal belongings left unattended, and Library staff will not guard or watch personal belongings (unless the patron is utilizing a restroom).
- The Library does not provide storage for personal property.
- Personal items may not take up seating or space if needed for use by other patrons.
- Items will be moved to Lost and Found if they reasonably appear to be abandoned or have been left unattended for ten (10) minutes or more.

Phone Usage: Quiet conversations utilizing phones or other electronic devices are allowed. Phone usage is not allowed in the Quiet Study Room. Staff have the right to request a patron move to another location to complete their phone conversation. Patrons are expected to end phone conversations before approaching a Library service desk.

Recreational Equipment and Personal Transport Devices: Use of skateboards, rollerblades, roller skates or other wheeled forms of recreational equipment is not allowed in the Library or on Library property with the exception of bicycles. Bicycles are not allowed in the Library, and Library patrons must park bicycles or other recreational vehicles in designated areas outside the Library.

Respecting the Rights of Others: Patrons shall respect the rights of other patrons and staff. Patrons may not stare, stalk, harass, bully, threaten, photograph, record or behave in a manner that:

- can be reasonably expected to disturb patrons or staff while at the Library;
- interferes with any patron's use of the Library or the ability of the staff person to do their job;
- would create or may result in a hostile work environment for Library staff; and/or

- violates federal, state or local law, ordinance or regulation (including but not limited to assault, indecent exposure, larceny, removing library materials from the property without authorization through the approved lending procedures, vandalism or copyright infringement).

Restrooms: Misuse of restrooms, including laundering, sleeping, shaving, bathing, hair cutting/trimming, drug usage or sexual activity, is not allowed. Unless a parent, guardian or caregiver is assisting a child or a patron is assisting a person with a disability, there must be only one person to a stall. Library materials are not allowed in the public restrooms.

Sales or Solicitation: Sales or solicitation of monetary donations is not allowed unless incidental to library programming and requires advance approval by the Library Director.

School Groups and Tours: School groups and tours must be approved in advance through Administration. A teacher or other appropriate staff is required to be present to ensure students use the Library in accordance with this Policy.

Seating: In the interest of safety, only one (1) patron per chair and one (1) patron per computer is allowed.

Sexual Activity: Engaging in any sexual contact, activities or conduct is not allowed.

Shirts, Shoes and Masks: Patrons must wear shirts and shoes at all times in the Library building. Bathing suits are not allowed. Based on city, county or state regulations, masks worn over the nose and mouth may be required for health and safety purposes.

Smoking, Tobacco or Marijuana Use: The Library is smoke free. Smoking, using e-cigarettes, vaping (or electronic nicotine delivery systems), chewing tobacco or otherwise using tobacco products is not allowed within 100 feet of Library entrances (City of Novi ordinance, Chapter 22, Article V, Section 22-101 (d)) and within the Library Building. Using, smoking or possessing marijuana on Library property is not allowed. Violators will be asked to leave the premises.

Staff Areas: Patrons are not allowed in any areas designated as "staff only" without prior authorization.

Study Rooms: The Library has rooms of various sizes, accommodating from one (1) to six (6) people, available throughout the Library at no cost. These rooms cannot be reserved and are available on a first-come, first-served basis with no time limit. Patrons cannot exceed the posted room capacity. Rooms left unattended for ten (10) minutes or more will be forfeited to the next patron waiting and any personal items will be moved to Lost and Found.

Tables or Structures on Library Property: No person may use or set up a table, stand, display, sign or similar structure on Library property. This does not apply to Library sponsored or co-sponsored events.

Verbal Harassment: Abusive or threatening language or writing that expresses prejudice, intends to vilify, humiliate or incite hatred against a group or a class of persons on the basis of race, skin color, sex, age, height, weight, disability, religion, language, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity will not be tolerated.

Weapons: Carrying guns, pistols or other weapons, except as specifically allowed and exempt from local regulation by law, is forbidden.

Disciplinary Process for Library Facilities

As stated more fully below for violations of this Policy, the Library Director or Director's designee may restrict access to the Library with immediate dismissal of the patron from the premises, by suspending the patron's access to the Library for a set period of time or by denying access to specific services and/or programs pursuant to this Policy. If necessary, public safety may be called to intervene.

Incident Reports:

Staff will complete an Incident Report Form for any violation of this Policy resulting in a verbal warning or a suspension of Library privileges. By the end of the day on which the incident occurred, an Incident Report shall be written and forwarded to the Library Director for logging and review. The report should include physical descriptions in addition to the name of the patron. A copy of the suspension of privileges letter should be attached, if applicable.

Violation of the Policy – Suspension of Privileges:

Unless otherwise provided in this Policy, the Library shall handle violations as follows:

- **Initial Violation:** Library patrons observed violating this Policy will be asked to stop the violation with a verbal request. If the patron does not comply, the patron will be asked to leave the building for the day. If the patron refuses, public safety will be called.
- **Subsequent Violations:** The Director or Director's designee may further limit or suspend the patron's Library privileges if infractions continue. Such limitation or revocation shall be in writing specifying the nature of the violation. Subsequent violations of the same Policy shall result in additional suspensions of increasing length.

Violations that Affect Safety and Security:

Violations involving verbal abuse, violence, threatening behaviors, sexual harassment, vandalism, drug sale or use or attempted drug sale or use, intoxication, theft or attempted theft, physical harassment, sexual misconduct or any behavior that threatens the safety and security of staff and/or patrons shall be handled as follows:

- **Initial Violation:** Public safety will be called immediately. If the conduct constitutes a violation of local, state or federal law, arrest or criminal prosecution may ensue. Violations of this nature will result in an immediate minimum two-week suspension of Library privileges in order to give the Library sufficient time to investigate the incident. After the investigation is completed, the Director or Director's designee may add additional time to the initial limitation or suspension period.

- **Subsequent Violations:** Public safety will be called immediately. If the conduct constitutes a violation of local, state or federal law, arrest or criminal prosecution may ensue. The Director or Director's designee may further limit or suspend the patron's Library privileges in escalating responses, which will be documented in writing. Subsequent violations of the same rule will result in additional suspensions of increasing length.

Reinstatement:

The patron whose privileges have been limited or suspended shall attend a meeting with the Director or Director's designee to review the *Patron Behavior Policy* before their privileges may be reinstated.

Right of Appeal:

Patrons may appeal a decision to limit or suspend privileges by sending a written appeal to the Library Board within ten (10) business days of the date the privileges were suspended or limited. The appeal should be sent to the President of the Library Board. The decision of the Library Board is final.

Approved by the Novi Public Library Board of Trustees: June 17, 2009

Amended: May 15, 2010; August 15, 2012; July 17, 2013; June 22, 2017; June 27, 2019; February 25, 2021; September 23, 2021 (to include policy P12: Smoking In/On Library Property); August 24, 2023 (to include policy B5: Phone and Electronic Communications Devices); April 25, 2024; June 27, 2024 (to include policy P15: Nondiscrimination); September 26, 2024
