

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

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Purpose

To ensure a safe, welcoming, and accessible environment that supports intellectual freedom, privacy, equal access, and the library's mission to serve the entire community. This Code of Conduct describes expected behavior in library facilities, on library property, and when using library services.

1. Guiding Principles

The Library's Code of Conduct is guided by the professional standards of the American Library Association, including the ALA Code of Ethics, the Library Bill of Rights, and the Freedom to Read statement.

The Library also complies with applicable Rhode Island statutes, regulations, and municipal ordinances that apply to public libraries.

2. Scope

This Code applies to all visitors, patrons, volunteers, vendors, contractors, and staff while on library property, participating in library-sponsored programs, using library systems, or otherwise representing the library.

3. Expected Behavior

To maintain a safe, respectful, and productive environment, patrons must:

- Treat others (patrons and staff) courteously and without harassment, intimidation, or discrimination.
- Respect others' right to read, study, and use library resources without disruption.
- Follow posted rules for meeting rooms, study rooms, and public spaces.
- Supervise children in accordance with library child-supervision policy; caregivers retain responsibility for children's safety and behavior.
- Wear appropriate attire in the Library at all times (i.e. shirt, shoes, etc.)
- Use library equipment, furnishings, and collections with care and return borrowed items on time.
- Observe posted rules for food and beverages, smoking, and use of alcohol on premises.
- Abide by rules governing use of public computers, internet access, and printing services.

4. Prohibited Behavior

The following behaviors are prohibited on library property and during library-sponsored activities:

- Actions that violate federal, state, or local law
- Actions that violate Rogers Free Library Policies
- Harassment, stalking, threatening, or any physical or verbal abuse directed at staff or patrons
- Sexual activity, indecent exposure, or other lewd conduct
- Possession or use of illegal drugs; unlawful use of alcohol
- Possessing any firearm, knife, or other weapon on library property prohibited by Town Ordinance or State Statutes
- Interfering with others' use of the library by making loud noises, creating persistent odors, or otherwise disrupting the library environment
- Smoking or vaping in the Library
- Riding bicycles, skateboards, roller skates, or other wheeled vehicles in the Library

- Sleeping that interferes with operations or patron safety
- Soliciting, panhandling, or selling goods or services
- Damaging, removing, or stealing library property
- Tampering with library computers, networks, or security systems, or circumventing filters/security measures

5. Enforcement

Staff authority: Library staff have the authority to address behavior that violates this Code.

Progressive response: Except in cases requiring immediate emergency action, enforcement will follow a progressive model: verbal warning → written warning → temporary suspension of privileges → longer suspension.

Documentation: Staff will document incidents and enforcement actions.

Appeal: Patrons subject to suspension or loss of privileges may appeal in writing to the Library Director within 14 days.

6. Communication & Training

Staff will receive regular training on implementing this Code of Conduct, de-escalation techniques, privacy/confidentiality, nondiscrimination, and safety procedures. Library leadership will review the Code at least every three years and solicit community input when substantive changes are proposed.

7. Definitions

- Library property: buildings, grounds, vehicles, and digital services owned or operated by the Library
- Patron: any person using library services or visiting library property
- Service animal: as defined by ADA regulations (dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities)

8. References

Primary American Library Association (ALA) guidance the Library follows:

- ALA, Code of Ethics (<https://www.ala.org/tools/ethics>)
- ALA, Library Bill of Rights (<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>)
- ALA, Freedom to Read Statement (<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement>)
- ALA, Privacy Tool Kit (<https://www.ala.org/aboutala/privacy-tool-kit>); Library Privacy Guidelines for Public-Access Computers and Networks (<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/privacy/guidelines/public-access-computer>); Library Privacy Guidelines for Vendors (<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/privacy/guidelines/vendors>)

Rhode Island statutes, rules, and guidance:

- Rhode Island public library statutes and regulations (RI General Assembly / Office of Library and Information Services) (<https://olis.ri.gov/about-us/laws-regulations>)

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