



POLICY

SECTION: 4.5

SUBJECT: Rules of Conduct Enforcement

1. The Rules of Conduct should be given to each person when they get a new library card. New cardholders should also get a bookmark showing current library hours, a current Check It Out, and any current program information specific to the library where they get their new card.
2. Enforcement of the Rules of Conduct is everyone's job.
3. Consistency is important. We must enforce the Rules of Conduct for everyone, all the time, in the same way.
4. Treat everyone with respect when we are enforcing the Rules of Conduct.
5. When you see something in violation of the Rules of Conduct, approach the person, provide them with the Rules of Conduct handout, and ask them to comply with the Rules of Conduct. Everyone deserves a one-time warning to make sure they know and understand the Rules of Conduct. If you feel unsafe approaching the person, have another staff member go with you or ask Security (if available) for assistance. One way to approach a person is to say "You may not know that we have Rules of Conduct for the libraries. Please...."
6. When someone has been warned and informed of the Rules of Conduct, but they do not comply, tell them they must comply or they must leave the building and the library property. If you feel unsafe approaching the person, have another staff member go with you or ask Security (if available) for assistance. Call the Police if necessary.

WHAT ABOUT

1. What do we do when someone brings in food/bottle for a baby?

The Rules of Conduct say no food or beverage. Use your judgment in working with parents and children. Generally if it is a baby and they want to give the baby a bottle to keep them quiet, it is fine; if they want to feed a sandwich to a small child, ask them to go outside.

2. What if someone is eating in the Library? When you approach them and ask them to step outside, the person says "I'm a diabetic and I have to eat something immediately"?

Use your judgment. If they appear weak and disoriented, ask them to sit down; a diabetic will usually have something with them to take a bite of and start to recover. If they are unable to communicate clearly what they need, call an ambulance. Never give someone food yourself. If, however, they appear fine, ask them to step outside and return when they have finished eating their snack.

3. How should we handle personal hygiene issues?

When the odor of the individual or their clothes/belongings “constitutes a nuisance” to other patrons, you can provide them with the phone number/addresses of local social service agencies that provide clothing and shower facilities. This is a difficult issue to address. You might say, “You may not realize that other customers

complained about the odor of your clothes, and it’s disturbing people. Would you mind stepping outside? If you need assistance, I can provide you with phone numbers and addresses of local agencies that might be able to help you.”

4. How big can plastic bags be?

The Rules of Conduct say “no bag can be over 18 inches in length.” A plastic bag smaller than that, such as a shopping bag from a drugstore, would be permitted. No more than two bags can be brought in. Garbage bags are specifically prohibited and are generally larger than 18”, so they should not be brought in at all.

5. What if someone asks us to keep their large bags or their food for them?

We cannot take responsibility for keeping anyone’s bags, food or other belongings. They can’t be brought in, and bags left outside of the buildings on library property will be discarded.

6. Sometimes people will sit on the floor to read something from the shelves in that area. What should we do?

Usually this happens with teenagers or college students. If they’re using the materials from that area, leave them alone. If they’re in the way of other people, ask them to be considerate and move.

7. The Rules say children 10 years old or younger should be with an adult, not left unattended. What do we do with children left by themselves?

Unfortunately, parents will send young children to the library by themselves. Children who are behaving appropriately may stay; children who are not behaving appropriately should be asked to leave. If an adult brings a child to the library, and then goes to another part of the library, remind the adult that they should stay within eyesight of their child. If a child is not behaving appropriately, and their parents/responsible adults have gone to another part of the library, you can go get the parent/responsible adult and ask them to properly supervise their child. If the behavior continues, you should ask them to leave the building.

8. What if someone is sleeping in the library?

When you see someone sleeping, warn them once and the second time they must leave the building.

9. What if you see someone talking on their cell phone in the library?

When you see someone talking on their cell phone in the library, make eye contact with the person and quietly say to him/her that cell phone use is prohibited in the library. Tell them to leave the building if they have to continue the conversation.

10. What's the difference between loitering and trespassing?

Loitering is a continual presence for non-specified purposes. It can be difficult to define loitering in places like a public library. If you have persons who appear to only be in the building to have a place to stay inside, and they are in the building for extended time periods, consult with your supervisor or the Deputy or Assistant Director/Director for how to handle the particular instance. If you see persons standing on the front portico or sitting on the front steps longer than a few minutes, please ask Security to handle the situation.

Trespassing is being on property after being told to leave. Someone who has been told to leave the library and remains on library property is trespassing; Security or the Police can be called to tell the person to leave the property entirely. Consistent enforcement is important to effectively enforce loitering and trespassing restrictions.

11. What if someone is continually causing problems by violating the Rules of Conduct?

Individuals who consistently violate the Rules of Conduct can be prohibited from returning to the library. This should only be done if we have a record of the problems with this person's behavior. There should be a written incident report on file for serious and/or repetitive behavior problems with particular customers. Work with the Deputy/Assistant Director or Director to determine how to handle repetitive conduct problems.

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