

General Policy on Conduct

The Orange County Public Library is a public facility that offers services to a wide range of citizens. The library has a responsibility to provide an environment that is safe and comfortable for every patron who is appropriately using its services and facilities. To ensure this environment, our library has devised guidelines for patron conduct which can be found in policies 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. Children and young people are expected to adhere to the same standards of behavior expected of adults. Parents, guardians or caregivers are responsible for the behavior of the children in their care while they are in the library.

General rules for the library system are:

Patrons and staff will be appropriately attired at all times which includes the wearing of shirts and shoes.

No smoking or use of tobacco products including e-cigarettes.

No food may be consumed in the public areas of the library except in the library meeting rooms. Covered beverages (e.g. water bottles with lids, covered cups with lids and straws such as those from McDonalds, coffee cups with lids) will be allowed in the libraries.

No illegal activities are permitted.

No weapons may be carried onto library property except by law enforcement officials and except by special permission of the staff member in charge. (e.g. a program on the Civil War with muskets as an exhibit or hunting safety courses) **(except as permitted by VA Code § 18.2-308)**

No children under age 9 may be left unattended by an adult in the library for any period of time (Except when children over age 5 are attending a library program, then the adult may wait elsewhere in the library)

No animals other than those assisting the handicapped or law enforcement officials are permitted in the library except by special permission from the staff member in charge

Any conduct that disrupts the quiet atmosphere of the library or disturbs other patrons is prohibited.

Patrons are expected to use the facilities in a appropriate manner (not stand on furniture, deface materials, misuse equipment, etc)

Failure to comply with the Library's established rules and regulations may result in expulsion from the facility for the day, for up to six months or in arrest. Persons refusing to leave when asked are subject to arrest under Virginia trespass laws.

(Approved by the Library Board of Trustees 1/98, amended 5/2000; 5/2006;4/2008, 3/2009;3/2011;3/2014)

Policy on Unattended Children

Statement of Policy

Children age 5 and under must be accompanied by a parent, guardian or responsible older child of at least 13 years of age at all times when in the library, even when attending a library program. Children ages 6-9 may be left unattended at the library only during a scheduled library program providing that their parent or caregiver remains in the library during the program. While children ages 10 and over may use the library unattended, adult supervision is recommended for all elementary school children as they use the library, in accordance with Orange County Child Protective Services guidelines.

Parents assume the responsibility for their children's behavior in the library whether the child is accompanied or unaccompanied. There is no substitute for an accompanying parent. Library staff cannot control or be accountable for children who are left unattended at the library.

Appropriate library behavior (as explained in policies 4.1 and 4.3) is expected of all library patrons, regardless of age. Patrons of any age who display inappropriate or disruptive behavior may be asked to leave the library.

If a child under age 13 is left unattended at closing time, or if the library closes early due to an emergency, the library staff will attempt to reach the parents. If this is not possible, staff will contact the local law enforcement authorities and have them take charge of the child.

Rationale for policy

It is our desire to provide a positive library environment for everyone, including children. The public library, however, is just that, a public building. As such, anybody can come into it—law abiding or otherwise.

Library staff members have many duties to perform and they cannot monitor the behavior or whereabouts of individual patrons, including children. Library staff cannot and do not assume parental responsibilities for children who use our library.

There are risks to the child when he/she is left unattended at the public library. A child could be tempted to go off with a stranger. He/she could become ill. An emergency situation or early closing due to inclement weather could require evacuation of the building prior to our normal closing time. A child could be asked to leave the building due to disruptive behavior.

It is for the safety of each child that this policy has been adopted.

(Approved by Library Board of Trustees 1/98, amended 10/2001, 10/2002, 4/2003)

Vandalism and Improper Behavior

We want to ensure a safe and peaceful environment for all of our patrons. Thus, in instances of vandalism or improper behavior by patrons whether inside the library or on the library grounds, the Library reserves the right to call in the proper authorities and/or have the patron ejected. Persons may be banned formally from entering the library in the future in cases of vandalism or repeated problem behavior.

For the following infractions:

Staff members will warn customers of improper conduct two times before ejecting them.

Examples of problem behavior include, but are not limited to,

Loud noises which are disruptive to others: talking, singing, playing audio or computer equipment or using telephones so that others can hear them

Running, skateboarding or moving in a way dangerous to the patron or others.

Climbing on or otherwise improperly using furniture or fixtures.

Deliberately disorganizing library materials.

Interfering with the employees' performance of their duties

Smoking

Eating or drinking in public areas of the library, excluding the meeting room.

Harassing other patrons by staring at them or following them

Misuse of the restrooms

Strongly offensive body odor which results in complaints to staff.

Selling items on library property except by permission of the staff member in charge.

Loitering

For the infractions listed below:

Customers engaging in the following behaviors or in any behavior prohibited by statute will be asked to leave immediately and the appropriate authorities will be contacted:

- 1) Attempts to improperly use computer equipment or access computer files not available for public use
- 2) Defacing, destroying or damaging library property or other incidences of criminal mischief.
- 3) Use of obscene, suggestive, profane or abusive language which results in complaints.
- 4) Engaging in soliciting or panhandling.
- 5) Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs; and/or possessing drug paraphernalia.
- 6) Carrying or brandishing weapons (**except as permitted by VA Code § 18.2-308**)
- 7) Improper touching of any staff member or patron
- 8) Breaking any local, state or federal law
- 9) Stealing library materials

In the event of repeat occurrences: Patrons will be banned for a period of 1 month after the 2nd offense and banned for 6 months if a 3rd offense occurs.

(Approved by the Library Board of Trustees 6/98, amended 4/2000, 3/2003, 5/2006, 3/2011)

Solicitation of Funds in the Library

No group or agency other than the Friends of the Orange County Public Library, the Wilderness Friends of the Library, the Gordonsville Friends of the Library, The Orange County Library Foundation, the Library Board of Trustees or its representatives may solicit funds or sell items within the library.

(Approved by the Library Board of Trustees 6/98)

