

Code of Conduct/Library Use Policy

Updated September 1, 2021

1. General

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The Albany County Public Library System supports the rights of all individuals to free, open and equal access to ideas and information and use of the library without discrimination, intimidation, threat of harm or invasion of privacy. This policy is designed to foster an environment of mutual respect and courtesy and applies to all patrons, volunteers and staff while using the library. The library environment includes the interior and exterior spaces of the Albany County Public Library building and property, as well as virtual spaces. Respect for the rights and needs of all library users must be maintained at all times. The library expects appropriate and courteous behavior from its patrons.

2. LIBRARY USE. While in the library, patrons are encouraged to:

- 2.1. Inform the staff if they need accommodation or assistance to use library services.
- 2.2. Be responsible for the safety, well-being and conduct of children and others in their care.
- 2.3. Cooperate with the requests of library staff.
- 2.4. Be respectful of the shared library space and fellow library users.

3. While in the library, individuals are expected to respect others and respect library property. The following examples of disruptive, unsafe, or disturbing behavior are prohibited in the library:

- 3.1. Being under the influence of alcohol or other chemical substances.
- 3.2. Fighting with other patrons or staff.
- 3.3. Pushing, running, shoving, or throwing objects.
- 3.4. Engaging in sexual misconduct such as exposure, unwanted touching, verbal or other unwanted sexual advances to others.
- 3.5. Accessing adult content or pornographic material that may be considered offensive, harmful to minors, or inappropriate for a public place.
- 3.6. Harassing or threatening others. This includes pursuing unwanted conversation, impeding access to the building, following another patron with the intent to harass, using offensive language, or other actions which are reasonably perceived as hostile.
- 3.7. Talking loudly or excessively.
- 3.8. Having offensive bodily hygiene or odor that constitutes a nuisance to others, i.e., an unreasonable or unwarranted obstruction or injury to the common right of all people to use and enjoy the library materials and services.
- 3.9. Tampering with the arrangement of library materials to the extent that it would

- make finding the materials difficult for patrons.
- 3.10. Destroying library materials.
- 3.11. Accessing non-public areas.
- 3.12. Refusing to comply with county mandates.

This list of examples is not all-inclusive. Other behaviors judged to be inappropriate by the library staff may lead to Consequences of Misconduct as outlined in Section 10 of this policy.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT DURING EXIGENT SITUATIONS. During exigent situations such as a community or natural disaster, a public health crisis, or any similar emergency situation the Library Director is authorized to institute any reasonable temporary code of conduct requirements as are appropriate to the situation. Failure to comply with such temporary measures may result in an individual being denied entry into the facility and/or a temporary loss of services.

5. SMOKING. Smoking is not allowed anywhere in the library per Laramie, WY Code of Ordinances ch. 8, § 8.56.030 (2014) Original Ordinance No. 1901 (adopted 5/19/87; amended 11/98, 3/21/02, 12/05).

6. DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION

6.1. SOLICITATION. Soliciting the public is prohibited. Solicitation includes the sale or distribution of materials, merchandise, tickets, insurance, pamphlets, or campaign material. The only exceptions are solicitations by the library, Friends of the Library and the Albany County Public Library Foundation.

6.2. PETITION. The right to petition for redress of grievances being part of the democratic process, individuals with petitions may use the library's sidewalks, grounds, reserved meeting rooms, or a table in the lobby to solicit signatures for petitions (adopted 1/27/91, reviewed 12/05). Individuals may not block access to the library building or intimidate patrons while soliciting signatures for petitions.

6.3. BULLETIN BOARDS. Non-library displays are for information about civil, cultural, or charitable activities likely to be of interest to the community. While library bulletin boards are a service to the public, a staff member must approve items before they are posted. Library Staff will remove outdated and unapproved materials.

6.3.1. The following items/types will not be approved for use on bulletin boards:

6.3.1.1. Political campaign materials of a partisan nature urging people to vote for or against a person or issue.

6.3.1.2. Postings designed for individual or commercial profit or gain.

6.3.1.3. Postings proselytizing for a specific religious sect or affiliation.

6.3.1.4. Postings containing content that could be considered discriminatory or harassing based on a group or individual's protected status or which advocates in any way for such discrimination.

7. UNATTENDED CHILDREN AND OTHER PERSONS IN NEED OF SUPERVISION (approved 7/26/2011).

- 7.1. Children eight (8) years of age and younger must have a parent/guardian or a person authorized by the parent/guardian to supervise the child in the immediate vicinity of or in visual contact with the child. A non-parent/guardian caregiver must be at least sixteen (16) years of age and be able to provide emergency contact information for the child's parents/guardians.
- 7.2. Children nine (9) years of age and older who are able to provide emergency contact information for their parents/guardians may use the library on their own. Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children in the library, whether or not the parent or an authorized caregiver is present. If a child is unable to provide emergency contact information, the parents shall be notified that further violations of this policy may result, at the sole discretion of the library, in a suspension or revocation of library privileges.
- 7.3. Children thirteen (13) years of age and younger who do not have transportation home at closing time will be asked for contact information so that library staff can contact a parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will be asked to pick up the child immediately and informed that future incidents may result, at the sole discretion of the library, in a suspension of library privileges for the child. Under no circumstances will a staff member give a child a ride home or take the child outside the building to wait for a ride home. If the parents/guardians cannot be contacted within a reasonable time, the staff may call the police for assistance.
- 7.4. Children 14 and older without transportation at closing time will be assessed and handled at the sole discretion of library staff based on maturity.

An up-to-date library card is an acceptable substitute for emergency contact information.

8. ANIMALS IN THE BUILDING (approved 6/28/2011) (amended 7/23/2013). Service animals, as defined by the U.S. Department of Labor pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 As Amended or animals with the express prior approval of the Library Director may be allowed into the library building. All animals must be housebroken and under the immediate control of their handlers. The following behaviors are prohibited by service animals while in the library or on library property:

- 8.1. Aggressive behavior toward people or other animals, including, but not limited to, biting, snapping, snarling, growling, lunging, or barking.
- 8.2. Jumping up on people or furniture.
- 8.3. Soliciting food or seeking petting from people other than their owner. Service animals may not go up to people, whether in a friendly manner or not.
- 8.4. Sniffing merchandise or people or intruding into another dog or person's space while on library property.
- 8.5. Roaming so that the leash is a tripping hazard.

- 8.6. Blocking an aisle or main walkway.
- 8.7. Unruly behavior or unnecessary vocalizations in the library.
- 8.8. Urinating or defecating in the library.

All animals participating in library programs are exempt the day of the program.

9. CONSEQUENCES OF MISCONDUCT. The Library Director or designee will apply these rules in a fair and equitable manner for the benefit of all. The consequences of misconduct may be any of the following:

- 9.1. VERBAL WARNING: A staff member or designee will verbally remind the offender of their inappropriate behavior and request they comply with this Code of Conduct;
- 9.2. DENIAL OF ACCESS: The offender will not be granted access to the library building or library property.
- 9.3. EVICTION: The offender is asked to leave the premises immediately for a specified period of time.
- 9.4. LOSS OF LIBRARY PRIVILEGES: Offender is barred or restricted from all library materials and services for a set period of time or permanently.
- 9.5. REFERRAL TO LAW ENFORCEMENT: The library reserves the right to prosecute offenders to the fullest extent of the law, should the misconduct so warrant.

10. DUE PROCESS. Patrons who are evicted, denied access or who lose library privileges may meet with the Library Director or her designee in an informal session to protest the eviction or loss of privilege. The patron shall be given notice of the reasons for the disciplinary action and an opportunity to respond, i.e. present their side of the story. The decision of the Library Director/designee shall be final and may not be appealed in any forum.