

Patron Conduct Policy

The Lehigh Public Library has established this patron conduct policy to ensure that our library facility is safe, welcoming and provides equitable access to materials and services for all library users. In order to ensure that every patron has the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the library, patrons visiting or using the library's facilities or services must comply with the Lehigh Public Library's patron conduct policy while on the library premises or anywhere else the library provides services or events.

Patrons are expected to:

- Understand that the library is a public space shared by many
- Avoid disruptive behaviors that may hinder other library patrons
- Be courteous and respect other library patrons and staff
- Conduct themselves in a safe and orderly way; allowing others to do the same
- Attend to children or vulnerable adults in their care, keep them safe, and pick them up before the library closes (see Unattended Children and Vulnerable Adult Policy for more information)
- Respect library property and materials; including using library furniture, equipment and materials for their intended function
- Safeguard their personal items
- Not bring items into the library larger than a backpack or briefcase and cannot impede passageways in any way
- Wear appropriate clothing and shoes while on library property
- Refrain from solicitation of any kind for any purpose unless it is a library sanctioned event
- Refrain from sleeping in the library
- Comply with all federal, state and local laws

The following examples are provided in this administrative policy as a way to illustrate ways in which a patron's conduct would violate the responsibilities defined in this policy. The examples are intended to guide staff decision making. It does not presume to be a complete list.

Examples of conduct that would violate this policy:

- Behavior that is abusive, intimidating or disrespectful including obscene, racially charged, or abusive language or gestures.
- Conversation that is disruptive to other patrons, including loud conversations, personal phone calls, using library speakers without headphones, or using personal devices that have loud sounds.
- Disruptive behavior such as arguing, running, or roughhousing.
- Offensive body odor, including excessive scent, which unreasonably interferes with other patrons' or staff's ability to use the library and its services.
- Impeding access to the building or an area of the building.
- Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey taking, soliciting, or selling unless authorized by the Library Director.
- Picture taking or video taping of people, except at events, unless authorized by the people involved or their guardians.
- Consuming alcohol, smoking cigarettes or vaping in the library
- Bringing a weapon in to the library

The Lehigh Public Library reserves the right to determine what it considers to be disruptive or inappropriate behavior by the patrons in the library. The library reserves the right to require anyone violating the patron conduct policy to leave the library. Anyone who is required to leave the library due to a violation of the patron conduct policy will not be permitted in the library for the remainder of the day. Serious or repeated misconduct may lead to legal action or criminal prosecution.

The Lehigh Public Library considers the following activities to be serious violations of the patron conduct policy:

- Physical abuse or assault, including fighting or challenging others to fight
- Engaging in intimidating or harassing behaviors, including following or stalking other patrons or library staff, staring fixedly or leering at others, or attempting to peer under another patron's or staff member's clothing

- Making violent or threatening statements to other patrons or library staff
- Damaging, destroying, stealing or otherwise vandalizing library property
- Distributing, selling or using illegal drugs or alcohol on library property
- Engaging in sexual contact, conduct or harassment of library patrons or library staff

Any patron engaging in one or more of the above behaviors will be instructed to leave the library immediately and may have his or her library privileges suspended. The length of the suspension will be based on the severity of offense, and while it is the library's goal to reinstate privileges as quickly as possible, library privileges will not be restored until library staff is confident that incidents will not recur. In addition, law enforcement may be called and appropriate legal action may follow.