



Safety Policy

The Geneva Public Library's ("the Library") Safety Policy is intended to protect the rights and safety of Library patrons, employees, volunteers, and contractors, as well as preserve and safeguard the Library's materials, facilities, and property. The Library strives to provide a safe space for people of all ages and backgrounds, to operate safely, and to reduce the chance of harm.

The Library encourages and seeks mutual respect among patrons and Library employees.

1. Guidelines

All Library patrons, employees, volunteers, visitors, and contractors must not engage in the following prohibited behaviors.

1.1 Illegal Activities

Including but not limited to the following:

- Committing or attempting to commit any activity that constitutes a violation of any federal, state, or local statute, law or ordinance.
- Engaging in sexual conduct or lewd behavior on Library premises. ([New York Penal Law, §245: Offenses Against Public Sensibilities](#))
- Use of controlled substances on Library premises. ([New York State Penal Law, §220: Controlled Substances Offenses](#))
- Smoking or vaping on Library premises or within 100 feet of a library entrance. ([New York State Public Health Code, Section 1399-0](#))
- Drinking alcoholic beverages on Library premises, except for in Library-sponsored programs approved by the Board of Trustees.

1.2 Harmful or Destructive Behavior

Including but not limited to the following:

- The Library does not allow any weapons, whether real or prop, on its premises.

- Exceptions may be made for prop weapons in Library-sponsored programs.
- Using Library materials, equipment, furniture, fixtures, or buildings in a destructive, abusive, or potentially damaging manner, in a manner likely to cause personal injury to any person, or in any other manner inconsistent with the customary use thereof.
- Interfering with the free passage of Library employees or patrons in or onto Library premises. Such as:
 - Placing objects such as bicycles, strollers, shopping carts, or bags in such a manner as to impede free passage in or onto the premises.
 - The Library reserves the right to limit the size and number of items brought into the Library.
 - Loitering on library property, such as in entryways, walking paths, or the parking lot.
- Parking vehicles on Library premises in violation of the Library's *Parking and Towing Policy*.

1.3 Disruptive and Inappropriate Behavior

Including but not limited to the following:

- Engaging in conduct that disrupts or interferes with the normal operation of the Library, or disturbs employees and Library users. Such as:
 - The use of abusive or threatening language or gestures.
 - Excessively loud or boisterous behavior.
 - Recording patrons or patron service areas during normal hours of operation. See *Recording and Photography in the Library Policy*
- Soliciting, petitioning, or distributing written materials or canvassing on Library premises for any purpose without express permission of Library employees.
- Use of any communication or entertainment devices at a volume that disturbs others, with or without headphones.
- Inebriation or being under the influence of illegal substances.
- Patrons must be clothed, including pants, shirt, and footwear.
- Unhygienic behavior, such as:
 - Spitting, clipping nails, or changing diapers in public areas.
 - Removing footwear while in the library.
 - Disturbing other patrons or staff due to offensive body odor.
- Disobeying the reasonable direction of employees.

2. Youth Safety

Children under the age of nine must always be accompanied by a responsible adult while in the Library, unless the children are participating in a Library program and the parent/guardian has spoken with the Youth Services Librarian or Youth Services Assistant. Parents/guardians may designate a responsible adult to act as their representative for a child while in the Library.

Parents/guardians are responsible for the behavior of their children in the Library, whether or not the parent/guardian is present. Although Library employees attempt to ensure the safety of children in the Library, their duties as providers of Library services prevent them from being able to supervise each individual child. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians, and not that of employees, to supervise their children.

Library employees are committed to:

- Helping children find materials for educational and recreational pursuits;
- Providing an environment that encourages study, exploration, and play;
- Planning programs that inform and enrich.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that:

- Children act in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Section 1;
- Children's behavior does not present a safety hazard to themselves, other users, or Library property;
- Children's behavior does not interfere with the use and enjoyment of the Library by others.

3. Youth Safety Procedures

3.1 Unattended Children Under Age 9

If it is determined that a child is lost or unattended, Library employees will attempt to locate the parent/guardian or responsible adult through the following steps:

1. Ask the child where their parent/guardian is and attempt to locate the parent/guardian in the building.
2. If the parent/guardian is not found in the building, an employee will stay with the child until a parent/guardian arrives at the Library.
3. If the parent/guardian has not arrived within an hour, or if the Library is closing, the employee in charge will call the police.
4. Under no circumstances will a Library employee take a child out of the Library building. If the Library has been closed, then two employees will wait with the child inside the Library building.

3.2 Disruptive Attended Children

1. An employee will inform the parent/guardian that their child is disturbing others.
2. If the parent/guardian refuses or is unable to control the behavior of the child, the family will be asked to leave the Library.

4. Vulnerable Adults

A vulnerable adult is an individual over the age of 18 who is mentally or physically challenged to a degree that may significantly impair that person's ability to provide adequately for his/her personal needs and manage his/her behavior without assistance.

Vulnerable adults must have a parent, guardian, or caregiver 18 years of age or older with them while they are in the Library who can manage their behavior and provide adequately for their personal needs. Physically challenged adults who are capable of providing for their own needs are welcome to remain in the library without supervision so long as a contact person is available in the event that the adult's health or safety is in doubt.

5. Suspension of Privileges

Library employees are authorized to suspend Library privileges of patrons for up to a week for violations of this policy, including banning patrons from entering the Library. The Executive Director or his/her designee is authorized to suspend Library privileges of patrons for periods of time longer than a week based on the severity of the violation(s).

Employees must submit a written Incident Report to the Executive Director or his/her designee no later than the next business day whenever a patron's privileges have been suspended under this policy. The report will, at the least, include the name of the patron, the name of the parent/guardian if the patron is under 18 years of age, the description and date of the incident, and the length of time the patron's Library privileges have been suspended.

In the event that the name of the patron cannot be obtained, the Library may use a photograph of the patron to note and enforce the ban. In such instances, effort will be made to obtain the name of the patron in order to update the records related to the incident and banning.

Employees may verbally give notice for suspension of privileges up to a week in length. In the case of any suspensions, a letter noting the cause and length of the ban will be

kept on file with the incident report and any other applicable documents. If necessary, the Library reserves the right to forward these documents to the police or other parties.

If possible, based on the availability of a mailing address or email account, suspension of a patron's privileges for longer than a week will be communicated to the patron in writing by the Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee. For patrons under the age of 18, written notice shall be sent to the patron's parent or guardian.

Suspension of patron access includes the denial of entry onto the Library's premises. Such entry will be considered trespass. The Library reserves the right to extend the length of the ban, call the police, and/or take appropriate legal action depending on the circumstances of entry onto the premises. Extensions to the length of the ban will be communicated to the banned patron and noted in a separate Incident Report.

At the completion of the ban, the patron may be required to meet with the Executive Director or the Director's designee before being allowed access to the Library again.

Library employees may ask a patron to leave the premises with or without prior warning, depending upon the seriousness of the violation. Criminal violations may result in prosecution under state and/or federal law.

5.1 Employee Violations

Violations of these policies by Library employees are subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

5.2 Suspension for Health and Safety Reasons

It is the responsibility of the Library to maintain a healthy, clean, and safe environment and to protect Library collections, equipment, and property. In order to fulfill this responsibility, the Library may restrict a patron's ability to borrow materials and/or to visit Library facilities when such use may jeopardize the health and cleanliness of Library facilities, collections, and other patrons.

Examples of situations where borrowing of materials may be suspended include, but are not limited to:

- Evidence that items on loan to a patron may have been returned with insects that are known to be damaging to Library materials, e.g. roaches, termites, silverfish, and some types of beetles;
- Evidence that items on loan to a patron may have been returned with insects that

- can result in pest infestations in Library facilities, e.g. bed bugs, ants, or roaches;
- Evidence that items on loan to patrons may have been returned with fungi that can be damaging to Library materials or individuals, e.g. black mold.

Examples of situations where access to Library facilities may be suspended include, but not be limited to:

- Patrons or patron possessions have bed bugs, fleas, or lice;
- Patrons with clothing that is soiled with urine or feces.

Access to facilities and borrowing will be restored when the suspended patron demonstrates that the situation that caused the loss of privileges has been remediated.

For reinstatement requests relating to suspensions due to pest infestation, decisions will be made based upon evidence showing that the address in question has been inspected with no sign of infestation or that the residence has been treated. Confirming information may include copies of receipts for treatment, a letter from a licensed pest control company, or a written statement from the owner or property manager of a multi-family rental residence. In some circumstances, proof of a change of residential address may also be accepted.

6. Patron Reporting

Patrons are encouraged to report incidents to Library employees. Employees will fill out an Incident Report Form and give it to the Executive Director or their designee for further investigation.

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