



## **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 risk 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 stated in sections 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3. The Library reserves the right to make exceptions for specific library-sponsored programming or events.

#### **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.

#### **1.2 Harmful or Destructive Behavior**

Including but not limited to the following:

- 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.

- Having any weapons, whether real or prop, on the Library's premises.
- 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.
    - 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 Lot 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.
  - Harassing behavior, whether in person, via the internet, or via phone
  - Excessively loud or boisterous behavior.
  - Using any communication or entertainment devices at a volume that disturbs others, with or without headphones.
  - 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 the express permission of the Library.
- Being inebriated or under the influence of illegal substances.
- Patrons must be clothed, including pants, shirt, and footwear.
- Engaging in unhygienic behavior, such as:
  - Spitting, clipping nails, or changing diapers in public areas.
  - Disturbing other patrons or staff due to offensive body odor.
- Disobeying the reasonable direction of employees.

## **2. Lost, Missing, or Damaged Personal Property**

The Library assumes no responsibility for damage, theft, or loss of any kind to patron personal property brought into or used at the Library's facilities. Patrons are expected to monitor their personal belongings, and the library highly recommends patrons not leave items unattended.

The Library reserves the right to take steps to remove unknown/suspicious packages or bags from the premises, and dispose of perishable items.

### **3. Youth Safety**

Parents/guardians are responsible for their children's behavior in the Library, whether or not they are present. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians, and not that of Library employees, to supervise their children.

Library employees are committed to:

- Helping children find materials for educational and recreational pursuits;
- Providing a welcome 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 Safety Policy;
- Children's behavior does not present a safety hazard to themselves, other Library users, Library staff, or Library property;
- Children's behavior does not interfere with the use and enjoyment of the Library by others.

Children ages 9 and under must be accompanied by a responsible adult while in the Library. The responsible adult should not leave the library building. Parents/guardians may designate a responsible adult to act as their representative for the child while in the Library.

#### **3.1 Disruptive Accompanied Minors**

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, they will be asked to leave the Library for the day.

#### **3.2 Unaccompanied Minors Age 9 and Under**

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.

### **3.3 Unaccompanied Minors ages 10-17**

To help ensure the safety and well-being of Library patrons, Library staff, and Library property, the following guidelines regarding the behavior of unaccompanied minors will be strictly enforced.

Library building/property capacity for unaccompanied minors is limited to 10 people. The Library reserves the right to increase this number at employee discretion.

Unaccompanied minors' visit to the Library building/property is limited to 60 minutes per day. The Library reserves the right to extend this time at employee discretion.

All minors ages 10-17 should remain in the Teen Area during their visit. Unaccompanied minors are not permitted in other areas of the library without staff permission.

Once they leave the library building/property, the unaccompanied minor may not return on the same day. The library is not responsible for teenagers who remain on library property after their hour of use has expired or after the library has closed for the day.

All youth are expected to comply with section 1. *Guidelines*, and the following:

- Minors are expected to be respectful and kind to one another and others' belongings.
- Minors are expected to keep their hands to themselves, including rough-housing, pushing, shoving, or excessive public display of affection.
- Minors are expected to clean up after themselves, to avoid future infestations and prohibition of free passage.
- The Library's telephone may only be used in the case of an emergency.
- Public viewing of digital content must be rated PG-13 or under. Played video games must be rated T and under. Patrons may not display material on screens that are easily visible to others if the content is discriminatory in nature.
- Bikes must be locked up at the bike racks outside the library. Un-lockable transport (such as skateboards, scooters), and sports equipment (such as basketballs, softball bats) must be stored behind the Ground Floor Desk during the youth's visit.

### **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 adequately provide for their personal needs and manage their 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 in order to 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 three business days for violations of this policy, including banning patrons from visiting the Library property. The Executive Director or their designee is authorized to suspend Library privileges of patrons for longer time periods based on the severity of the violation(s).

Employees must submit a written Incident Report to the Executive Director or their designee no later than the end of 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 when the patron is under 18 years of age (if available), 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, an effort will be made to obtain the name of the patron in order to update the records related to the incident and ban.

Suspension of patron privileges includes the denial of entry onto the Library's premises. Entry onto library property 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.

Employees may orally give immediate notice of suspension of library privileges for up to three days. In the case of any suspensions lasting longer than three days, a letter noting the cause and length of the ban will be provided to the patron. One copy of the letter will also 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 necessary 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, an attempt to send a written notice to the patron's parent or guardian may be made.

At the completion of the ban, the patron may be required to meet with the Executive Director, Library Board of Trustees, or the Director's designee before being permitted 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 Immediate Consequence for Guideline Violations by Unaccompanied Minors**

Unaccompanied minors who do not use the library appropriately, engage in disruptive, offensive, or inappropriate behavior, or are disrespectful to the library, library staff, or other patrons will be asked to leave the library. The police will be called when necessary.

1. The minor will receive one warning for inappropriate or disruptive behavior.
2. If disruptive or inappropriate behavior continues, the person will be told to leave the library property for the rest of the day.
3. If behavior is persistent, the minor refuses to leave the property, or behavior escalates to harmful or destructive, the above *Suspension of Privileges* procedures will take effect.

Illegal activities of any kind, such as vandalism, will be reported to the police.

### **5.2 Suspension for Health and Safety Reasons**

It is the policy 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 are not be limited to:

- Patrons or patron possessions with 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 remedied.

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.

### **5.3 Employee Violations**

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

## **6. Patron Reporting**

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

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