

## **RACINE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

### **Policy on Patron Behavior**

*Adopted by the Library Board June 15, 2006*

#### **Purpose of the Library**

The purpose of the Racine Public Library (RPL) is to provide library service to all people within its service area. RPL defines its library service as providing access for the general public to sources of ideas, information and inspiration as well as providing the necessary assistance and encouragement in the use of these sources.

#### **Need to Maintain an Acceptable Library Environment**

In order to fulfill its purpose, the library must maintain an orderly, safe, pleasant, and attractive environment, conducive to reading and studying. Any activity that would disrupt this environment could impede the library's ability to achieve its purpose, and must, therefore, be considered unacceptable. Persons engaged in unacceptable conduct shall be required to leave the facility.

#### **Unacceptable Conduct**

Unacceptable conduct includes both disruptive and illegal behavior.

Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Playing audio equipment so that others can hear it.
- Sleeping, consuming food, drinking alcoholic beverages, using illegal drugs, smoking, using tobacco or tobacco products. Customers may, however, drink non-alcoholic beverages in the library, providing the containers are covered or capped securely and kept away from the computers.
- Having bodily hygiene so offensive that it constitutes a nuisance.
- Entering or being in the building without being fully clothed, which includes, but is not limited to, wearing a shirt and shoes.
- Bringing an animal into the building, excepting that a service dog may be brought into the building by a person with a disability who uses such dog for guidance.
- Soliciting for sale or selling of any item, article, service, food or product of any kind whatsoever; distributing any leaflet or similar item or posting any notice, except in accordance with library policy; or circulating petitions or surveying by non-library groups.
- Using library telephones, excepting pay telephones, without prior authority of library personnel in accordance with library policy.

- Rearranging any library furniture or moving library equipment from one location to another, except for the lounge chairs in the east reading area on the second floor, which may be repositioned within that area.
- Remaining in the facility after its regular closing hours.
- Blocking or in any way interfering with the free movement of patrons or staff.
- Begging or panhandling, fighting, running, horseplay, throwing objects, or playing in or on the elevator.
- Misuse of the public restrooms.
- Placing feet on tables and chairs.
- Lengthy conversations, speaking or laughing loudly, or using obscene or abusive language.
- Non-compliance with the Safe Child Policy.

Illegal behavior includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Harassment or intimidation of patrons or staff.
- Interfering with the use of the library by other patrons or interfering with library staff in the performance of their duties.
- Attempting to remove any library property from the building without authorization through established lending procedures.
- Intentionally destroying, damaging, or defacing library materials, furnishings, equipment, or any part of the facility or fixtures.
- Engaging in disorderly conduct or other conduct in violation of state or federal law or the *City of Racine Municipal Code*, including conduct applicable to released sex offenders.
- Carrying or being in possession or control of a weapon.
- Lewd or lascivious behavior.
- Battery.

### **Responding to Disruptive Conduct**

In the event disruptive conduct occurs, the Racine Public Library staff or the security officer on duty may take the following actions, as appropriate to the situation:

- (a) **Level I – Warning**  
Advise the violator that his/her conduct is unacceptable conduct and request that the person comply with library policy. Warn the person that if his/her behavior does not comply with library policy, he/she will be directed to leave the facility.
- (b) **Level II- Evicted for the day**  
If the person fails to comply with library policy after being warned, staff or the security officer shall order the person to leave the building for the rest of the day. If a person does not obey an order to leave the building, staff or the security officer shall request assistance from the Racine Police Department to remove the person from the building. A Level II eviction applies to warnings given the same day as the eviction.
- (c) **Level III-Suspension of library privileges for one week**

Repeated incidents of disruptive behavior will result in a one-week suspension of library privileges. If a person is engaging in disruptive behavior and has already received a Level II suspension within the past 30 days, they will receive a one-week suspension of library privileges

- d) Level IV-Suspension of library privileges for six months  
If a person who has been readmitted to the library after being suspended for one week repeats disruptive behavior, this will result in a six-month suspension.

### **Responding to Illegal Conduct**

If the unacceptable conduct constitutes a violation of criminal law or the City of Racine Municipal Code, staff or the security officer shall immediately request police assistance. Illegal conduct may result in the suspension of library privileges for one year.

### **Documenting Unacceptable Conduct**

The security staff is authorized to photograph people who violate this policy, and to request identification.

### **Suspension of Library Privileges**

The security staff are authorized to give Level II suspensions to patrons after the appropriate number of warnings are given as outlined in the Problem Behavior Procedures. For Level III and IV suspensions, the staff or the security officer must report the facts to the Library Director, who shall examine the facts in the report and, if they warrant a suspension action, he/she shall authorize the action after notifying the patron of the pending action and his/her right to state his/her position in writing within 24 hours of the notice.

If the Library Director will be absent from the library for a week or more, any department head shall have the authority to impose a Level III suspension of privileges for one week, following the same procedure outlined above.

This policy on patron behavior in the library supersedes all of the Racine Public Library's previous policies on patron behavior, excepting the Safe Child Policy. This policy is supplemented by a guide to the staff and the security personnel called *Problem Behavior Procedures*, which, as an integral part of this policy, must be observed by all involved. This policy is also supplemented by the Safe Child Policy, adopted by the board January 20, 2000.

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