

Somers Public Library

Patron Code of Conduct Policy



April 4, 2022

Policy Statement

The Somers Public Library encourages reading and lifetime learning and serves the needs of the entire community by providing free access to a diversity of ideas and information through a variety of materials, services and experiences. To fulfill this mission, rules have been established regarding proper behavior necessary to maintain this environment. This policy protects the rights and safety of those using the library and library staff. It also preserves and protects library materials, equipment and facilities.

The following types of behavior are prohibited in the library:

- Any behavior that endangers the safety or health of others
- Violation of any local, state or federal laws
- Vandalism or deliberate destruction of library materials, equipment or facilities
- Theft of library materials or equipment, and personal belongings of other patrons or staff
- Use of abusive or intimidating language or gestures to patrons and staff
- Behavior that is willfully annoying, harassing, or threatening to another person
- Soliciting of any kind, asking for signatures on petitions, conducting surveys, etc.
- Creating a disturbance by making noise, talking loudly, playing music, etc. which could reasonably be expected to disturb others
- Use of skateboards, scooters, roller blades, etc. on library property
- Inappropriate dress such as wearing no shoes, no shirt, excessively revealing or wet clothing
- Loitering on the premises
- Smoking, vaping, use of alcohol (see [Town policy on Consumption or Possession of Alcoholic Beverages](#)) or illegal substances
- Poor hygiene that constitutes a nuisance
- Gambling
- Rearranging furniture or inappropriate use of furniture
- Bringing animals into the library with the exception of service animals, and those contracted by staff for specific library programs.
- Using the restrooms for bathing, grooming, laundry or anything for which they are not intended
- Littering
- Leaving personal items unattended
- Blocking aisles, exits or entrances
- Running, pushing, shoving or throwing objects
- Entering areas designated as "staff only" without permission
- Other kinds of behavior deemed inappropriate in the opinion of the Library Director or designated staff members.

Procedures

- In the case of a minor disruption, the library patron will receive a verbal warning. The staff will explain rules and may offer alternative forms of behavior. If the behavior continues, the patron may be asked to leave the library for the remainder of the day.
- In the case of any misconduct that, in judgment of a staff member is extreme, the library patron will be ordered to leave the library immediately and the police may be called.
- All warnings and offenses will be documented.
- Upon the occurrence of extreme disruptive behavior, the Library Director may deny the offender use of the library and its services for a minimum of thirty days.

- Those who have been barred from library use as outlined above, must meet with the Library Director before being readmitted. Minors (under the age of eighteen) will be required to bring a parent or guardian to such a conference.

Safety of Children

- Any person under the age of twelve shall be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or caregiver over the age of 18, who will be responsible for the child's behavior in the library (see [Connecticut General Statutes Section 53-21a Leaving child unsupervised in place of public accommodation](#)).
- The Children's Area is reserved for use by children, their caregivers, and adults interested in children's materials. Adults not accompanying children may not loiter in the Children's Area
- The Teen Area is reserved for use by teens (ages 12 to 17), their caregivers, and adults interested in teen materials. Adults not accompanying a teen may not loiter in the Teen Area

The staff of the Somers Public Library is concerned about the safety and the wellbeing of all of our patrons. However, with this in mind, the library is a public building available to anyone. Due to the many responsibilities of the staff, monitoring each child's behavior and location is not possible. The staff does not and will not take over parental responsibilities for children when they come into the library. It should not be assumed that young children are safe when left unattended in the library. The staff has no way to know if young children or teens are leaving the building with parents or strangers. If a problem arises with children of any age, or if the library is closing and we are unable to locate a parent, guardian or caregiver, the police will be called.

Additional

- Sports equipment (lacrosse gear, etc.) must be placed outside the staff work room next to the Teen Room
- Unattended items (such as bags, backpacks or laptops) may be regarded as suspicious and removed.
- Bicycles ridden to the library should be placed in the bicycle rack and locked. They may not be brought into the building, left on the sidewalks leading to the building, in the parking lot, on the lawn, etc.
- Items left behind will be placed in lost and found for at least thirty days, at which point they may be discarded or donated to an appropriate organization.
- The library is not responsible for any lost or stolen personal items
- In the case of a medical emergency, the Town of Somers emergency personnel will be requested and attempts will be made to notify parents, guardians, or caregivers

Food and Drink

Light, pre-packaged snacks that are not damaging to the collections or distracting to others are permitted except in the areas specified below. No outside delivery of food is permitted. Beverages in bottles that can be closed (screw top) or other spill resistant containers such as travel mugs and sports bottles are permitted. Exceptions will be made during library programs where food and beverage consumption is encouraged. The Somers Public Library is not responsible for any food allergy reactions that may occur from an individual coming in contact with food items/residue consumed in the Library.

Food or beverages of any kind are not permitted in the following areas:

- The Conference Room
- Computer workstations
- Near printers and photocopiers
- Near any media equipment

Special Needs Exception

The Somers Public Library recognizes that there may be special circumstances regarding behavior of a disabled or special needs patron. If a complaint of disturbance is brought to staff attention, staff is not allowed to disclose if a disability or diagnosis is or is not the cause of disturbance. The staff will act accordingly to assess the situation and take any necessary actions needed to ensure that the situation is resolved promptly. The Somers Public Library encourages designated guardians/counselors/caregivers to disclose to the library staff if there is a “special need diagnosis” in order to be covered under the Special Needs Exception rule. Designated guardians/counselors/caregivers have the right to not disclose if there is a special needs diagnosis; however, staff is required to implement the Code of Conduct guidelines (see above) when no diagnosis is communicated.

Governance

The Library Board of Trustees is responsible for determining the rules of behavior necessary to protect the rights of individuals to use library materials and services, to protect the rights of library employees to conduct library business without interference, and to preserve library materials and facilities. This policy may be amended at any time at the discretion of the Library Board of Trustees.

Adopted, Board of Directors, 11/18/91

Amended: 10/6/97; 11/05/01; 9/10/18; 4/4/22