



## Patron Behavior Policy

Watauga Public Library has established this Behavior Policy to ensure that Library facilities are safe, welcoming, and provide equitable access to materials and services for all Library users.

Any activity that interferes with the rights of other patrons to use the Library, disrupts the normal functioning of the Library, could result in physical, emotional, or mental injury to oneself or others, or could result in damage to the facilities, equipment, or materials is considered disruptive and unacceptable behavior.

The Library reserves the right to require anyone who engages in disruptive behavior to leave the premises, the right to restrict privileges for a specified period of time, and the right to ban the individual from the Library for a specified period of time or permanently. Library staff may ask a patron to leave the premises with or without prior warning, depending upon the seriousness of the violation of these guidelines for behavior. In most cases, a staff member will notify the individual that he or she is in violation of the standards of conduct and will provide one verbal warning. Unlawful activities will be reported immediately to the police.

### **Disruptive behavior includes but is not limited to the following:**

- Abuse of Library Equipment, Furniture, and or Materials. Includes but is not limited to placing feet on tables and chairs, standing on furniture, mutilating or defacing books, media, or periodicals, and mistreating equipment or computers. Texas Penal Code 28.04.
- Abusive or Obscene Language or Gestures. Includes language or gestures that convey a sexually explicit message or are conveyed in a coarse or crude manner and any language that verbally abuses another individual, including staff and public, will not be tolerated.
- Animals. Only service animals, service animal trainees, assistance animals and animals that are part of a Library-sponsored program are permitted in the Library. Companion animals are pets and are excluded from Library facilities. Animals may not be left unattended outside the premises.
- Bedrolls, camping gear, storage bags, and shopping carts. These items will not be permitted in the Library. The Library reserves the right to search any container, which might contain Library materials.
- Bikes, Rollerblades, Skateboards, Skateshoes, and Scooters. Must not be ridden anywhere in the Library. Scooters do not refer to electric scooters used by the disabled. Bringing bicycles into the Library or parking bicycles in a manner that interferes with the free

passage of others is prohibited. Patrons can carry their skateboards into the Library, but they must be placed where no one will trip over the skateboard. Skateshoes are not to be used in the Library.

- **Boisterous Behavior.** Running, shouting, screaming, roughhousing, loud talking, and pushing will not be allowed.
- **Cell Phones or electronic devices.** The use of these devices can be disruptive to other customers. Phones should be placed on vibrate; conversations should not be conducted in public areas. It is permissible for calls to be taken/made in the Library foyer.
- **Children left at the Library past closing.** Children left past closing will be placed with the Police for their safety.
- **Closing.** Leave the Library at the designated closing time.
- **Eating and Drinking.** Use covered containers when bringing beverages into library building and comply with posted "No Food" and "No Drink" zones. No intoxicating beverages are permitted in Public Libraries. Individuals who are believed to be under the influence of narcotics or alcohol or who display disorderly conduct shall be requested to leave Library premises. Texas Penal Code 49.02. This section does not apply to breast feeding or bottle-feeding an infant (Tex. Health Code Ann. § 165.002).
- **Entering Unauthorized (Staff) Areas.** The public is not allowed access to non-public areas of the Library without specific permission.
- **Excessive Displays of Affection.** Includes any sexual conduct or physical contact deemed inappropriate for a public place.
- **Fighting.** Includes any type of fighting, whether real or pretend. Texas Penal Code 42.01.
- **Harassing behavior.** Harassing behavior to staff or public will not be tolerated.
- **Hygiene.** Maintain bodily hygiene in a manner that does not constitute a nuisance to other persons.
- **Illegal Behavior.** Acts which are subject to prosecution under criminal or civil codes of law are prohibited.
- **Improper attire.** Wear appropriate attire, including shirts, and shoes. No wet clothes or bathing suits are allowed. This applies to patrons of all ages.
- **Internet.** Internet users are expected to use the public computers responsibly, especially in avoiding images or text which may be offensive to others nearby or harmful to minors. See the Internet Acceptable Use Policy posted at all stations.

- Library Card. It is against Library policy to use someone else's Library card with or without their knowledge.
- Loitering. Defined as a person who wanders around the Library without apparent legitimate reason and disturbs other patrons.
- Loud crying children. Loud and prolonged crying or tantrums are disruptive. Please bring the child back when she/he is calm.
- Personal belongings. Attend to personal belongings. The Library is not responsible for personal belongings left in or on Library/City Property.
- Restrooms. Use restrooms only for their intended purpose. Bathing is prohibited.
- Sleeping. Pertains to habitual sleeping or those who are sprawled on furniture in a manner that is disturbing other patrons. See also Loitering.
- Smoking. The library is a non-smoking facility. This includes e-cigarettes and use of other tobacco products is also prohibited. Texas Penal Code 28.04.
- Solicitation. Includes selling anything for personal gain or a charitable cause, begging, panhandling, or circulating petitions among other patrons and staff members. This includes leaving stacks of non-Library related materials on tables, shelves, in books, etc. with the purpose of business advertising.
- Theft. Wrongfully takes, obtains, or withholds Library property. Texas Penal Code 31.03.
- Threats of Violence. All threats of violence (whether an imminent threat or a threat of future violence) and/or endangering behavior towards Library staff, patrons, or others are prohibited. Any threats, behavior or acts, which may appear to be a danger to life or safety to one or others, are also prohibited. All threats, behavior, or acts described will be reported to the Police.
- Unattended Children. Abandoning and leaving unsupervised children. Children ages eight and under shall not be left unattended in the Library. Texas Penal Code 22.041(c).
- Voyeurism and Peeping. Lewd behavior such as indecent exposure, voyeurism, sexual advances, etc. will be reported to the Police. Texas Penal Code 42.01.
- Weapons. The Library will comply with the Texas Open Carry Law:
  1. It is illegal for the general public to carry a handgun, whether concealed or not, in a public place unless they have a special license to carry (Texas Penal Code 46.02).
  2. Individuals who have a Concealed Handgun License (CHL) to carry a concealed handgun may openly carry the weapon using a shoulder or belt holster at the library.
  3. It is illegal to brandish a firearm in any way that might be interpreted as threatening (Texas Penal Code 42.01).
  4. Staff may not ask a patron who has a holstered weapon to see their CHL permit.

5. Staff should contact law enforcement personnel if a person carrying a handgun exhibits alarming behaviors.

## **Library Response to Violations of Behavioral Policy**

Any person who violates the behavior policy will be handled in a professional and courteous manner by staff, but the degree of the violation will determine the response.

Staff is instructed to call 9-1-1 immediately in response to any behavior that is deemed dangerous. Staff will call the police for any behavior that is a violation of federal, state or local ordinances. Staff will call the police if a person or group of persons is asked to leave the library and they refuse to leave and/or become difficult with the staff member.

For most other inappropriate behavior, one warning will be given. Continued violations will result in the patron being asked to leave the library for the day. A serious violation or repeated violations, or a violation where the police are called, may result in longer exclusions from the library up to permanent banning from the library.

An individual who is banned from the library may be criminally charged with trespassing under Texas Penal Code 30.05 if they return to the library property during the term of the ban.

Approved by Library Board 12/02/1993  
Revised by Library Board 07/18/1996  
Revised by Library Board 11/21/1996  
Revised by Library Board 01/16/1997  
Revised by Library Board 09/11/2008  
Approved by City Council 10/27/2008  
Revised by Library Board 09/29/2011  
Approved by City Council 10/24/2011  
Revised by Library Board 11/13/2014  
Approved by City Council 12/15/2014  
Revised by Library Board 09/13/2018  
Approved by City Council 10/22/2018