

SAYREVILLE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY
2.4 RULES OF CONDUCT FOR LIBRARY VISITORS

I. Purpose:

The Sayreville Free Public Library is dedicated to providing quiet access to knowledge and information through reading, writing, studying and the proper use of the Library's computers and other materials. We have established this Behavior Policy/Code of Conduct to ensure that our patrons can use the library's facilities, materials, programs and services without being disturbed or impeded and to provide our patrons and staff with a safe, secure and comfortable environment.

II. Overview:

No individual may engage in inappropriate conduct on the premises of the Sayreville Free Public Library. Patrons shall be engaged in the normal activities associated with the use of a public library while on the premises at all times. Patrons not engaged in reading, writing, studying, properly using Library computers, materials or services, attending Library programs or engaging in other conduct normally associated with a public library will be asked to leave the property if their behavior is inappropriate

III. Definition of Inappropriate Conduct:

Inappropriate conduct includes any individual or group activity which disrupts the use of Library facilities, collections, services or programs by patrons or disrupts the ability of Library staff to perform their duties. Inappropriate conduct is not permitted at any time and any patron engaging in same shall cease such activity immediately upon request by Library personnel.

Inappropriate conduct shall include, but not be limited to, the following conduct or behavior:

- Committing or attempting to commit any activity that would constitute a crime or offense under Federal, State or municipal law, rule, regulation and/or ordinance;
- Possessing, displaying or using any dangerous weapon on Library property or using or threatening the use of any object in such a manner that it may be considered a weapon;
- Engaging in or threatening to engage in any fighting, striking, kicking, shoving, or other physically intimidating or assaultive behavior;
- Possessing, selling, distributing, consuming or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or illegal drug or controlled substance;
- Trespassing by entering or remaining on Library property after having been notified by an authorized individual not to do so, including entering or remaining on Library property after having been suspended;

- Refusing to follow the reasonable directions of Library staff, including failing to take shelter in an emergency as directed by staff;
 - Engaging in any behavior that a reasonable person would find to be disruptive, harassing or threatening to Library users or staff including stalking, prolonged staring at or following another with the intent to annoy them, or intentionally behaving in a manner that could reasonably be expected to annoy or disturb other patrons;
 - Ringing of and talking on cell phones inside the building (silent mode and texting are permitted) or using other personal electronic equipment at a volume which is disturbing to other patrons;
 - Engaging in excessive or disruptive conversations, talking loudly, making ongoing noise, running in the Library or throwing objects;
 - Blocking the entrance to the Library or using skateboards, rollerblades, skate shoes, scooters or hoverboards or on or around Library property;
 - Using loud, offensive, obscene or abusive language;
 - Engaging in any lewd or sexual contact, activity or conduct;
 - Smoking or using other tobacco products or electronic cigarettes;
 - Drinking or eating in the library (water in clear bottles is permitted);
 - Sleeping, dozing or napping on Library premises;
 - Improper or inappropriate attire (shirts and shoes are required);
 - Monopolizing Library resources or staff time;
 - Stealing Library materials, furniture, equipment or services;
 - Damaging or vandalizing Library property, including, but not limited to, restrooms, computers, furniture and walls; defacing or removing pages from books; or, destroying landscaping or other fixtures;
 - Moving furniture without the express consent of Library staff or using furniture in any manner that may damage the furniture, including placing feet on same;
 - Bringing any animal into the Library except service animals;
 - Leaving a child ten (10) years of age or younger unattended on Library premises;
 - Entering non-public areas of the Library without permission;
 - Taking Library materials into restrooms;
 - Vandalizing cars or other property/items in the Library parking lot or anywhere else on Library property, including the building and/or grounds;
 - Violating the Library's rules for acceptable use of the internet and the Library's public computers. A user accepts these rules before accessing the Internet through a Library computer. Copies of these rules will be made available by staff upon request;
 - Hanging around outside the Library building or inside the Library building after school lets out or during a school day with little to no purpose of using the Library facilities; and,
 - Engaging in any other activities that are inconsistent with those activities normally associated with the use of public library facilities, including reading, writing, studying and properly using computers and other library materials.
- This list is illustrative only in nature and shall not be deemed as the exclusive list of inappropriate conduct in the Library.

IV. Behavior and Supervision of Minors:

The Sayreville Free Public Library welcomes children. However, parents/caregivers are responsible for their child's safety and behavior while in the Library whether the parent/caregiver is present or not. Library employees cannot function as caregivers or babysitters. The Library is not equipped - nor is it the Library's role - to provide long- or shortterm childcare. The Library assumes neither responsibility nor liability for the actions, care, supervision or safety of minors. Children and minors are expected to follow the same rules of conduct as adult patrons at all times and are subject to the same consequences if the rules are violated. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to share these rules with their children who use the Library and set clear expectations regarding their responsibility to follow these rules. Parents or guardians will be held responsible for damage to Library items, materials, equipment or facilities caused by their minor child.

V. Inappropriate Use of Children's Area:

Adults and teens (age eleven (11) and older) are permitted in the children's area of the Library only when accompanying a child or when the adult or teen needs to retrieve materials from such collection. If the adult or teen is not accompanying a child, he or she needs to locate the material and then move to appropriate areas on the Library premises.

VI. Staff Response to Infractions:

Violation of patron conduct rules is misconduct that will result in expulsion from the Library and forfeiture of Library privileges. Minor violations of these rules will first result in Library staff educating the patron about the rules, issuing a warning, and requesting that the activity immediately cease. If, following such a request, the patron fails or refuses to comply or responds to the request in an abusive fashion, he or she will be required to leave the premises immediately for the balance of the day. If he or she fails to leave, the police will be summoned. Prior to the removal of a minor, Library staff shall give the minor an opportunity to contact a parent or guardian. The Library reserves the right to seek an immediate implementation of a suspension.

VII. Suspension Procedure:

After the staff or Library Director determine that a person has engaged in a severe or repeated misconduct and the Library Director or designee has determined that the individual involved should be suspended:

1. Staff will inform the Director in writing of the name (if provided) and description of the individual involved and a description of the underlying behavior. After consultation, **if** the

Director agrees with the reasons for the suspension, then the Director will initiate the suspension process.

2. The Director shall issue, or cause to be issued, a written suspension letter to the individual involved notifying the individual that s/he is suspended from the Library. The letter shall indicate the reasons for the ban and the time period of the ban. The Director shall also notify the banned individual of the process for appealing the suspension. Such letter will be sent via regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, to the individual's last known address, with a copy to the President, Library Board of Trustees, the Borough Administrator and the Chief of Police. A sample suspension letter, for reference only, is included in this Policy.

3. The suspended individual has the right to appeal the ban using the Appeal Procedure set forth below.

Alternative Suspension Procedure for Minors:

As an alternative to suspending a minor, the Library Director (or his/her designee) can restrict a minor (individual who is eighteen (18) years or younger) from independent use of the Library for a period of thirty (30) calendar days (first (1st) restriction) or ninety (90) calendar days (second (2nd) restriction). The minor whose library use is restricted may use the Library during the specified period only when he or she is accompanied by a responsible parent or guardian. The minor's parent or guardian must be notified of the restriction via regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, with a copy to the Borough Administrator and the Chief of Police. Failure to abide by the restriction will lead to banning the minor from the Library even with parental/guardian supervision. The minor's parent or guardian may appeal the restriction using the Appeal Procedure below.

Sample Banning Letter (for reference purposes only):

DATE: _____

TO: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Dear Sir or Madam:

On _____ (date) at approximately _____ (time) you were observed at the Sayreville Free Public Library. At that time you were

engaged in inappropriate conduct in violation of the Library's Behavior Policy/Code of Conduct. Specifically, your conduct included the following:

Because of the behavior listed above and/or your history of inappropriate conduct at the Library, you are hereby suspended from accessing the Library until the date listed below. If you enter the Library before the date listed below, the Sayreville Police Department will be called and you will subject to arrest for trespassing.

Within ten (10) calendar days of your receipt of this letter, you may file a written request addressed to the Library Director and the President, Library Board of Trustees, c/o Sayreville Free Public Library, 1050 Washington Road, Parlin, NJ 08859, to reconsider this ban. Your written request shall set forth your reasons for reconsideration of the suspension. The length of this suspension shall remain as stated in this document unless and until the Library Board of Trustees issues a written determination altering same.

SUSPENDED FROM LIBRARY FOR A PERIOD OF _____ DAYS.

DATE OF RETURN: _____

Signed,
SAYREVILLE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

By:

(Name and Title)

cc: President, Library Board of Trustees
Borough Administrator
Chief of Police

Appeal Procedure:

The Director's written determination may be appealed to the Library's Board of Trustees, if the individual aggrieved files a written letter of appeal within ten (10) calendar days after he/she receives the determination. Such letter shall be sent to the Library Director and the President of the Library's Board of Trustees, c/o Sayreville Free Public Library, 1050 Washington Road, Parlin, NJ 08859. The letter shall set forth the reason(s) why the Board of Trustees should reconsider the suspension. The Board shall consider the appeal at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting and render a decision thereafter. The affected individual may attend such meeting and address the Board during the public comments portion of the meeting or earlier, at the Board's discretion. The Board shall cause the suspended individual to be informed of the decision in writing via regular and certified mail, return receipt requested, with a copy to the Library Director, the Borough Administrator, and the Chief of Police.

Neither the Director nor any other member of the Library staff is a professional medical or legal expert. All actions undertaken pursuant to this Policy shall be subject to the reasonable judgment of the Director and Library staff.

The Sayreville Free Public Library will be consistent in enforcing this Behavior Policy/Code of Conduct to ensure the safety of patrons and staff and create an environment that is conducive to the proper use of Library materials, facilities, programs and services.

Individuals who require an accommodation of this Behavior Policy/Code of Conduct on medical, religious or other grounds may contact the Library Director.