

Marshalltown Public Library Appropriate Behavior Policy

Approved 3-27-2007; Amended 10-08 & 1-11

Revised 2-18-2025

Marshalltown Public Library serves all members of a diverse community and strives to do so with tolerance, fairness, and respect. Library users are expected to respect the rights of other patrons and staff members. The Library Board of Trustees have set behavior standards intended to foster a safe, comfortable and welcoming environment.

The following behaviors are prohibited: (Examples of prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to, the following):

1. Consuming food or drink in open containers outside of a scheduled community meeting room, the library lobby, or outside on library grounds. Drinks in containers with lids or screw tops are permitted in all areas of the library.
2. Use of tobacco, vape, alcohol, illegal drugs, or other controlled substances in the library or anywhere on the library campus – the library, its grounds and parking lots are entirely “smoke-free.” by state law.
3. Impeding access to the building or an area of the building or blocking access to book stack aisles. Sitting or lying on the floor including the entryways, or lying on library furniture. Children and parents are allowed to sit on the floor on the area rugs and designated play areas in the youth department.
4. Using external volume on any device, including cell phones (including video calls or speakerphone), laptops, tablets, toys, or other electronics.
5. Prolonged or loud cell phone use. Library customers may speak on their cell phones in the library’s lobby or in a study room.
6. Conduct that disrupts or interferes with other patrons’ enjoyment of library facilities or programming, including disorderly, loud, or boisterous behavior, both inside the library and on library property.
7. Meeting in groups of more than 8 unrelated people outside of one of the library’s meeting rooms. Groups of more than 8 unrelated people are asked to schedule their visit to the library, whether to spend time in a meeting room, have a tour or program, or just general use. Smaller groups that are using space in a way that is disruptive to other patrons may be asked to utilize a meeting room space.
8. Profane, obscene, or abusive language, including racial or ethnic epithets.
9. Willfully annoying, harassing, or threatening another person. Harassment is defined as any action taken or situation created intentionally to produce psychological or physical discomfort, embarrassment, or ridicule. Harassment includes unwelcome contact, unwelcome physical advances, or conduct, both verbal and physical, of a nature that is intimidating, demeaning, hostile, offensive, or potentially dangerous.
10. Exposing patrons or staff to verbal or visual depictions or behavior that disrupts or interferes with another patrons’ enjoyment of library facilities and/or staffs’ ability to perform their jobs in a multi-age environment.
11. Prolonged sleeping
12. Disruptive physical activity including running, jumping, or climbing and use of roller skates, scooters, or skateboards inside the building, the building exterior, sidewalks, landscaping components or parking lots. Scooters and skateboards must be left at the Check-Out Desk. Bicycles must stay outside and may not impede building entrances.
13. Intentionally defacing or damaging library materials or property.
14. Removal of library materials without checking them out or concealing materials with the intent to do so.

15. Bringing animals into the library, with the exception of service animals and those allowed during authorized library programs.
16. Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey taking, soliciting, or selling, unless by prior authorization of the Library management team.
17. Picture taking or videotaping of library patrons unless authorized by the people involved or the parents or legal guardian if a minor is present. A photo session (including individuals, commercial photography, or media) taking place in the library building must be authorized by the library management team.
18. Entering the non-public or staff areas, unless a registered volunteer, or accompanied by a staff member or through authorization of a staff member.
19. Engaging in any behavior or activity that threatens or endangers the health or safety of others.
20. Personal hygiene, odor or scent that constitutes a nuisance to others or poses a health risk.
21. Distribution of leaflets or posting of notices in areas not authorized by the library management team.
22. Failure to vacate library property in a timely manner upon staff request, at closing, or in the event of an emergency.
23. Leave packages, backpacks, or personal belongings unattended. Personal property must be within sight of the owner. The library assumes no responsibility for belongings left unattended.
24. Adult patrons in the Youth Services area who are not retrieving youth materials or are unaccompanied by children. They will be asked to relocate to other areas of the library.
25. Using bathrooms for unreasonable or unintended purposes, such as bathing or laundering.
26. Behavior that interferes with the ability of other patrons or the public to use library facilities or obtain library services, or with library staff's performance of their duties.
27. Violation of any municipal, state or federal law or code.
28. If a person has been asked to leave the building or library grounds, returning will be considered trespass.

Patrons Age Seven and Younger Procedures:

See "Unattended Children and Disruptive Behavior," policy 4.17.

Patrons Age Eight and Older Procedures:

1. In situations of a less severe nature, the library patron will be informed of library Behavior Policy and asked to discontinue the behavior in violation of the policy.
2. Patrons who do not modify their behavior after one warning may be asked to leave the library grounds for the remainder of the day.
3. In the case of more extreme or severe behavior, the patron may be asked to immediately leave the grounds.

Police should be called if needed. Anytime someone is asked to leave the library it will be documented by staff involved in the incident binder at the Check-Out Desk.

Marshalltown Public Library Suspension of Library Privileges

Approved 3-27-07

Patrons who persist in prohibited behavior severe enough to be asked to leave the library premises or patrons who engage in illegal behavior on library premises may lose library privileges for periods of 30 days or longer. "Suspension" is defined as losing all library privileges (use of computers, materials, and access to the library building itself) for two days to one year. The length of the suspension shall depend upon the nature and seriousness of the offense, the extent of damage or disruption caused, any history of prior infractions of library policies, and other relevant circumstances. Determination of suspension is to be made by the Library Director, in conference with other library staff.

1. Whenever possible, any patron who has been evicted and whose library privileges have been suspended will be notified in writing the reason for the suspension, the time period of the suspension, and the appeals process. In the case of a minor, the Library Director may attempt to contact the child's parents or legal guardian by telephone or written notice.
2. Any patron whose library privileges have been suspended has the right to appeal the decision to the Library Director. A patron, or, in the case of a minor child, the patron's parent or legal guardian may appeal the suspension in writing. The written appeal should be sent or delivered to the Library Director. After submitting a written appeal, the patron, or patron's parent or legal guardian, may choose to schedule an appointment with the Library Director. Upon consideration of the written appeal, the Director may shorten, modify, or terminate the suspension of library privileges. The Director's decision will be delivered, in writing, to the patron or patron's parent or legal guardian. The suspension will remain in effect during the appeal process.
3. The Director's written determination may be appealed to the Marshalltown Public Library Board of Trustees. The written appeal should be directed to:

President,
Marshalltown Board of Trustees
105 W. Boone Street
Marshalltown, IA 50158

- The Board shall hold a hearing within 30 days of the receipt of the written appeal. The grievant shall be notified, in writing, at least 10 days before the hearing date. Failure to appear at the assigned hearing without prior notification to the Library Board President will result in the denial of the appeal. Within 30 days of the completion of the hearing, the Board shall issue a written decision either affirming or reversing the Director's determination regarding the appeal. The suspension will remain in effect during the appeal process. The Board's decision is the final determination in the appeal process.
4. Any person who is asked to leave the library for the day or whose library privileges have been suspended for two days or longer and who attempts to enter the library is considered trespassing. Such person or persons are subject to arrest and prosecution for trespassing.