

Section 1: Patron Behavior Policies

(Adopted by the Oak Park Public Library Board of Trustees on August 16, 2022 / Amended 8/20/2024)

1.1.1 Introduction

The Oak Park Public Library (the “Library”) is open for specific and designated civic, educational, and cultural uses, including reading, studying, writing, participating in scheduled Library programs, and using Library materials. In order to provide resources and services to all people who visit the Library facilities in an atmosphere of courtesy, respect, and excellent service, the Library Board has adopted this Patron Behavior Policy. The purpose of the Patron Behavior Policy (“Policy”) is to assist the Library in fulfilling its mission as a community resource enriching life, stimulating intellectual curiosity, fostering literacy, and encouraging an informed citizenry.

The following rules of conduct shall apply to all buildings and grounds controlled and operated by the Library (“Library facilities”) and to all persons entering in or on the premises, unless otherwise specified.

1.1.2 Rules for Facility Use

- A. Recreational Equipment and Personal Transport Devices. Use of sporting equipment, skateboards, rollerblades, roller skates, or other wheeled form of recreational equipment is not allowed in the Library. Library patrons must park bicycles or other recreational vehicles outside the library. Wheelchairs, scooters, and other power-driven mobility devices are permitted by those individuals with disabilities in accordance with Library rules, unless a particular type of device cannot be accommodated because of legitimate safety requirements.
- B. Safe and Clear Passage. No blocking of doors, aisles, entrances/exits, handicap parking spaces, ADA ramp, or walkway leading from ramp to entry door. All mentioned areas must remain obstacle-free. This includes standing, laying, or sitting, and prohibits the running of power cords across aisles or other areas that are used for walking.
- C. Animals. Animals are not permitted in the Library other than service animals (as defined by law) for those individuals with disabilities, those used in law enforcement or for Library programming.
- D. Staff Only Areas. Patrons shall not be permitted in any areas designated as “staff only” unless otherwise permitted by the Library Director.
- E. Personal Property. Personal property brought into the Library is subject to the following:
 - 1. The Library staff may limit the number of parcels carried into the Library. The Library may also limit the size of items, for example, the Library prohibits large items such as suitcases, duffle bags or large

plastic garbage bags. Items must be small enough to fit under a chair at the Library.

2. The Library is not responsible for personal belongings left unattended and Library staff is not permitted to guard or watch personal belongings.
 3. The Library does not guarantee storage for personal property.
 4. Personal possessions must not be left unattended or take up seating or space if needed by others.
- F. Food and Beverages. Food is not permitted in the library unless related to a library-sponsored program. Covered beverages are permitted when handled responsibly. Those handling beverages without care to potential damage of library property may be asked to remove the beverage.
- G. Unauthorized Use. Patrons must leave the Library promptly at closing time and may not be in the Library when it is not open to the public. The Library does not permit overnight parking in the Library's parking lot unless prearranged through the City of Oak Park for specific events. Further, any patron whose privileges to use the Library have been suspended may not enter the Library. Any patron whose privileges have been limited may not use the Library in any manner that conflicts with those limits placed on the patron by the Library Director, his or her designee, or the Library Board.
- H. Engaging in Proper Library Activities. Patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of the Library while in the building or on Library property. Patrons not engaged in reading, studying, writing, participating in scheduled Library programs, or using Library materials/equipment shall be required to leave the building and shall not remain on Library property. This prohibition includes sleeping on Library furniture or floor.

Further, the Library provides drinking fountains, electrical outlets, and bathrooms for use only while using the Library for activities associated with the use of the Library or for the general public on the condition that said usage does not cause disruption to other patrons or staff.

- I. Panhandling or Soliciting. Panhandling or soliciting Library staff or patrons for money, products, or services inside the Library or on Library property is prohibited. Sales of products or services that are incidental to Library programming may be permitted if approved in advance by the Library Director.
- J. Campaigning, Petitioning, Interviewing and Similar Activities. As a limited public forum, the Library reserves the right to regulate the time, place, and manner for campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing and soliciting on Library grounds as follows:

1. Inside: Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, and canvassing are prohibited inside the Library building unless related to a Library-sponsored program.
 2. Outside: Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, and canvassing outside the Library building but on Library property are subject to the following requirements:
 - a. Persons or groups must identify themselves upon arrival to the most senior staff member on duty.
 - b. Use of the Library property does not indicate the Library's opposition or endorsement of the candidate or issue that is the subject of the petition, interview, campaign or discussion.
 - c. Permitted areas for campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, and canvassing outside of the Library building shall be limited to areas 25 feet from all entrances.
 - e. Permitted times will be limited to the operating hours of the Library.
 - f. Petitions may not be posted at the Library or left on Library property.
 - g. Campaign material and related literature is subject to the Literature Display and Dissemination Policy.
- K. Sales. Selling merchandise on Library property without prior permission from the Library Director is prohibited.
- L. Distributions; Postings. Distributing or posting printed materials/literature on Library property not in accordance with the Literature Display and Dissemination Policy is prohibited.
- M. Restrooms/Drinking Fountain. Misuse of restrooms, including laundering, sleeping, shaving, excessive personal grooming, hair cutting or trimming, bathing, and sexual activity is prohibited. Unless a parent or guardian is assisting a child or a patron is assisting a person with a disability, there shall only be one person to a stall or family/handicap accessible bathroom. Bathrooms are limited to those actively using sinks, stalls, urinals, diaper changing station, or any use necessary for medical or disability reasons. Library materials may not be taken into restrooms. Using the drinking fountain for any purpose aside from drinking or filling a water bottle is prohibited.
- N. Library Policies. Patrons must adhere to all Library Policies.
- O. Identification. Patrons must provide identification to Library staff when requested.

- P. Tables or Structures on Library Property. No person may use or set up a table, stand, sign or similar structure on Library property. This does not apply to Library-sponsored or co-sponsored events.
- Q. Computer Use. Patrons must abide by established time limitations and all other provisions of the Library Internet Use Policy. Patrons shall not load or install any programs or software on Library computers.
- R. Equipment. Library staff computers are for staff use only.
- S. Authorized Lending. Library materials may only be removed from the premises with authorization through established lending procedures.
- T. Use of Chairs, Tables and Computers. Only four (4) people may be seated at a table and no additional people may stand around one (1) table. Furniture may not be moved without authorization. No person may sit on tables. People must be properly seated in chairs individually (unless with small children) and no feet are permitted on the tables, chairs or against the walls. Only one (1) person may be seated at each computer, unless person is being tutored or assisted
- U. Youth Play Space. The youth play space (see attached map) is solely for the use of children and the caregivers who accompanied them. Adults who are not accompanying a child may browse or actively retrieve materials from the collection but may not remain or be seated in the youth play space. In the interests of protecting children, any patron may be asked to leave the youth play space area if they are not using the space for its intended purpose or are in violation of this policy.

1.1.3 Rules for Personal Conduct and Considerate Use

- A. Interference with Staff. Patrons may not interfere with the staff's performance of duties in the Library or on Library property. This includes engaging in conversation or behavior that monopolizes or forces the attention of staff for an inappropriate period of time.
- B. Loud Noise. Producing or allowing any loud, unreasonable, or disturbing noises that interfere with other patrons' use of the Library or which can be reasonably expected to disturb other persons or have the intent of annoying other persons, including yelling, cheering, talking (with others or in monologues) or noises from electronic, entertainment, and communication devices, such as cell phones, tablets, headphones, and radio, is prohibited. Patrons may use headphones or earbuds but at a volume that cannot be heard by other Library patrons or staff.

Adults may read aloud to children in the Youth Area, provided that they are reading in a voice that would not reasonably disturb others.

- C. Phones. Any phone-related noise that appears to disturb others or which can be reasonably expected to disturb others is prohibited. Those patrons desiring to use phones to place or receive calls must use the phones outside of the Library building or in the Library's vestibule. Phones shall be placed on silent or vibrate mode upon entering the Library.
- D. Disturbance. Gathering socially in a disruptive manner, horseplay, rough housing, using sporting equipment, tumbling, or other active behavior that may cause or reasonably expect to cause a disturbance to others is prohibited.
- E. Odor. Offensive odor, including but not limited to body odor due to poor personal hygiene, overpowering perfume or cologne, or odors from items brought into the Library, that causes a nuisance is prohibited. (For example, if the patron's odor interferes with staff or other patrons' use of the Library, the patron violates this Policy).
- F. Shirts and Shoes. Shirts and shoes are required for health reasons and must be always worn inside the Library and on Library property.
- G. Face Coverings. For identification purposes, a mask, hood, or device by which any portion of the face is so hidden, concealed, or covered as to conceal the wearer's identity is prohibited on Library Property, except for persons wearing a head covering or veils according to religious or cultural beliefs or customs.

1.1.4 Rules for Safety and Security

- A. Violations of Law. Committing or attempting to commit an activity in violation of federal, state, or local law, ordinance, or regulation (including but not limited to assault, indecent exposure, larceny, removing Library material from the property without authorization through the approved lending procedures, vandalism or copyright infringement) is prohibited.
- B. Weapons. Carrying guns, pistols, or other weapons, except as specifically permitted and exempt from local regulation by law, is prohibited.
- C. Alcohol; Drugs. Possessing, selling, distributing, or consuming any alcoholic or intoxicating beverage, illegal drug, or drug paraphernalia is prohibited; provided that alcohol may be permitted at certain Library-sponsored events if specifically approved by the Library in accordance with local and state guidelines. Persons noticeably under the influence of any controlled substance or alcoholic or intoxicating liquor are not allowed on Library property.
- D. Smoking; Tobacco or Marijuana Use. Smoking, using e-cigarettes, vaping, electronic nicotine delivery systems or chewing tobacco is prohibited on Library property. Using, smoking or possessing marijuana on Library property is also prohibited.

- E. Incendiary devices and paraphernalia. The use of incendiary devices, such as candles, matches, lighters, gunpowder containing items, or petroleum-based accelerants (i.e. gasoline, lighter fluid) are prohibited inside the Library.
- F. Abusive or Threatening Behavior. Spitting, pushing/shoving, throwing items, provoking a fight, using obscene or threatening language/gestures, inappropriate personal comments, sexual advances, or physical and/or verbal harassment toward staff or other patrons on library property is prohibited.
- G. Harassment. Staring, photographing, video recording, audio recording, following, stalking, harassing, arguing with, threatening, talking or behaving in a manner (1) which can reasonably be expected to disturb Library users or staff while such staff or patrons are in the Library or on Library property; (2) that interferes with the Library patrons' use of the Library or the ability of the staff person to do his or her job; (3) would create or may result in a hostile work environment for Library staff; and/or (4) that violates Michigan law is prohibited.
- H. Care of Library Property. Patrons must not deface, vandalize, damage or improperly use or improperly remove Library materials, equipment, furniture, building structures or building fixtures. Patrons shall not cause damage by returning books containing bedbugs or bringing bedbugs into the Library. Patrons shall be responsible to reimburse the Library for costs incurred by the Library for violating this provision.

1.1.5 Violation and Appeal

The Library Director or the Director's designee may restrict access to Library facilities with immediate dismissal of the patron from the premises, by suspending the patron's access to Library facilities for a set period of time, or by denying access to specific services and/or programs pursuant to this Policy. When necessary, the local police may be called to intervene.

- A. Incident Reports. Library staff shall record in writing in the form of an Incident Report any violation of this Policy that resulted in a suspension of Library privileges. By the end of the day on which the incident occurred, an Incident Report shall be written and forwarded to the Library Director for logging and review. The report should include physical descriptions in addition to the name of the patron. A copy of the suspension of privileges letter should be attached, if applicable.

- B. Violation of Sections 1.1.2 and 1.1.3: The Library shall handle violations from these sections of the policy as follows:
1. *Initial Violation:* Library patrons observed violating this Policy will be asked to cease the violation with a verbal request.
 2. *Second Violation in Same Day:* If the patron does not comply with the request, the patron will be asked to leave the building for the day. If he or she refuses to leave or returns in the same day, identification may be requested, and/or the police may be called.
 3. *Subsequent Violations on a Different Day:* Identification will be requested so that the Library Director or the Library Director's authorized designee may further limit or suspend the patron's Library privileges if infractions continue. Such limitation or revocation shall be in writing specifying the nature of the violation. Subsequent violations of the same rule shall result in additional suspensions of increasing length.
- C. Violations of Section 1.1.4. Violations involving verbal abuse, violence, threatening behaviors, sexual harassment, vandalism, drug sale or use or attempted drug sale or use, intoxication, theft or attempted theft, physical harassment, sexual misconduct or any behavior that threatens the safety and security of staff and/or patrons shall be handled as follows:
1. *Initial Violation:* The police may be called immediately. Identification will be requested. If the conduct constitutes a violation of local, state, or federal law, arrest or criminal prosecution may ensue. Violations of this nature will result in an immediate minimum two-week suspension of Library privileges in order to give the Library sufficient time to investigate the incident. After the investigation is completed, the Library Director or his/her designee may add additional time to the initial limitation or suspension period.
 2. *Subsequent Violations:* The police will be called immediately. If the conduct constitutes a violation of local, state, or federal law, arrest or criminal prosecution may ensue. The Library Director or the Library Director's authorized designee may further limit or suspend the patron's Library privileges in escalating responses, which will be documented in writing. Subsequent violations of the same rule will result in additional suspensions of increasing duration.
- D. Reinstatement. The patron whose privileges have been limited or suspended shall attend a meeting with the Library Director or the Library Director's designee to review the Library Patron Behavior Policy before their privileges may be reinstated. The Library Director may impose conditions for the reinstatement.

1.1.6 Right of Appeal

Patrons may appeal (1) a decision to limit or suspend privileges or (2) the conditions placed on reinstatement by sending a written appeal to the Library Board within ten (10) business days of the date of the decision. The Board shall hear the appeal at the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting.

Address the written appeal as follows:

Library Board of Trustees
Oak Park Public Library
14200 Oak Park Blvd.
Oak Park, MI 48237

Youth Play Area shown shaded in yellow.

