

## **TOWN OF GAINESVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY, SILVER SPRINGS, NEW YORK**

### **SAFETY POLICY**

The Town of Gainesville Public Library ("the Library") is intended to protect the rights and safety of Library patrons, employees, volunteers, and contractors, as well as preserve and protect the Library's materials, facilities, and property. The Library strives to provide a safe space for people of all ages and backgrounds, to operate its premises safely, and to reduce the chance of harm.

The Library encourages and seek mutual respect among patrons, and between patrons and Library employees.

#### **Guidelines**

Library users must not engage in the following prohibited behaviors.

#### **Illegal Activities, including but not limited to:**

- Committing or attempting to commit any activity that constitutes a violation of any federal, state, or local statute or ordinance.
- Engaging sexual conduct or lewd behavior on Library premises. (New York Penal Law, &245: Offenses Against Public Sensibilities)
- Use of controlled substances on Library premises. (New York State Penal Law, &220: Controlled Substances Offenses)
- Smoking or vaping on Library premises or within 100 feet of a library entrance. (New York State Public Health Code, Section 1399-0)
- Drinking alcoholic beverages on Library premises except for in Library-sponsored programs approved by the Board of Trustees.

**This applies to all Library patrons, employees, volunteers, and contractors.**

#### **Harmful, Disruptive, or Destructive behavior, including but not limited to:**

- Engaging in conduct that disrupts or interferes with the normal operation of the Library, or disturbs employees and Library users. Such conduct includes:
  - The use of abusive or threatening language or gestures.
  - Loud or boisterous behavior.
  - Recording patrons or patron service areas during normal hours of operation. See the First Amendment Audit Response Policy.

Using Library materials, equipment, furniture, fixtures, or buildings in a destructive, abusive, or potentially damaging manner, in a manner likely to cause personal injury to any person, or in any other manner inconsistent with the customary use thereof.

- Interfering with the free passage of Library employees or patrons in or onto Library premises including, but not limited to, placing objects such as bicycles, strollers, shopping carts, or bags in such a manner as to impede free passage in or onto the premises. The Library also reserves the right to limit the size and number of items brought into the Library.
- Soliciting, distributing written materials or canvassing on Library premises for any purpose without express permission of the Library Director.
- Parking vehicles on Library premises or Handicap Parking area overnight.

**Other inappropriate behavior:**

- Use of any communication or entertainment devices at a volume that disturbs others, with or without headphones.
- Sleeping inside the Library or anywhere on Library property.
- Entering the Library with bare feet or bare chest.
- Use of the Library restroom for bathing, shaving, or washing hair.
- Disturbing other patrons because of offensive body odor.
- Unhygienic behavior such as spitting, clipping nails, or changing diapers in public areas.
- Wearing clothing items that reduce Library employees ability to identify a patron involved in a safety incident.

**Parents/Guardians/Children**

- Parents/guardians are responsible for the behavior of their children in the Library, whether or not the parent/guardian is present. Although Library employees attempt to ensure the safety of children in the Library, their duties as providers of Library services prevent them from being able to supervise each individual child. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians, and not that of employees, to supervise their children.
- Library employees are committed to:
  - Helping children find materials for educational and recreational pursuit;
  - Providing an environment that encourages study and exploration;
- Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that:
  - Children act in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Section 1;
  - Children's behavior does not present a safety hazard to themselves, other users, or Library property;
  - Children's behavior does not interfere with the use and enjoyment of the Library by others.

**Unattended Children**

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If it is determined that a child is lost or unattended, Library employees will attempt to locate the parent/guardian or responsible adult. They will ask the child for possible locations and attempt to locate. An employee will stay with the child, if a parent/guardian has not arrived within an hour, or if the Library is closing, the employee will call the police. Under no circumstances will a Library employee remove the child from the building nor take the child home.

The child will be turned over to the police in the event no parent/guardian/ arrives to pick the child up. An incident report giving name of the child and the name of the police officer responding will be completed and retained.

### **Disruptive Attended Children**

- Children who are disruptive will be asked by Library employees to correct the behavior.
- If the disruptive behavior continues, an employee will inform the parent/guardian that child is disturbing others.
- If the parent/guardian refuses or is unable to control the behavior of the child, the family will be asked to leave the Library.

### **Suspension of Privileges**

Library employees are authorized to suspend Library privileges of patrons for up to a week for violations of this policy, including banning patrons from entering the Library. The Director or his/her designee is authorized to suspend Library privileges of patrons for periods of time longer than a week based on the severity of the violation(s).

Employees must submit a signed and written Incident Report to the Director or his/her designee no later than the next business day whenever a patron's privileges have been suspended under this policy. The report will, at the least, include the name of the patron, the name of the parent/guardian if the patron is under 18 years of age, the description and date of the incident and the length of time of the patron's Library privileges have been suspended.

In the event that the name of the patron cannot be obtained, the Library may use a photograph of the patron to note and enforce the ban. In such instances, effort will be made to obtain the name of the patron in order to update the records related to the incident and banning.

Employees may verbally give notice for suspension of privileges up to a week in length. In the case of any suspensions, a letter noting the cause and length of the ban will be kept on file with the incident report and any other applicable document. If necessary, the Library reserves the right to forward these documents to the police or other parties.

If possible, based on the availability of a mailing address or email account, suspension of a patron's privileges longer than a week will be communicated to the person in writing by the Director or his/her designee. For patrons under the age of 18, written notice shall be sent to the patron's parent or guardian.

Suspension of patron access includes the denial of entry onto the Library's premises. Such entry will be considered trespass. The Library reserves the right to extend the length of the ban, call the police, and/or take appropriate legal action depending on the circumstances of entry onto the premises.