

## **Sevier County Public Library System Rules of Conduct Policy**

These rules of conduct are for the comfort, safety and protection of all library customers and library staff. Library staff will firmly and courteously enforce these rules. We ask your cooperation in maintaining an environment conducive to enjoyable use of the Library for all.

Dangerous, destructive or illegal conduct, including but not limited to the following, will not be tolerated and immediate suspension with possible further action to follow will occur:

- Physical abuse or assault
- Fighting or challenging to fight
- Making violent and threatening statements
- Engaging in or soliciting any sexual act
- Damaging or destroying library property

Any customer displaying any of these behaviors will be instructed to leave the library immediately. Police will be called and appropriate legal action will follow. In addition, based on the severity of the situation, a suspension of library privileges for up to one year will be applied without advanced warning or prior suspension.

The following behaviors are also prohibited:

- Using harassing or insulting language
- Leaving children under the age of eight (8) unattended by a parent or authorized adult
- Blocking library entrances or exits, with bicycles, strollers, etc., or leaving animals unattended on Library property
- Participating in any activity in the library or at public entrances/exits which interferes with any person's comfort or safety
- Entering library with animals other than service animals authorized by law
- Entering library with bicycles (collapsible bicycles excepted if in a folded state)
- Riding skates, roller shoes, scooters, skateboards, or other similar devices
- Tobacco of any kind, inside or outside of the facility, or on library property, including e-cigarettes and smokeless tobacco
- Eating except for student's café snacks on first floor and adults café snacks in any area but History Center, or drinking except for a nonalcoholic beverage in a container with a secure lid
- Possessing, consuming, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Lying on the floor or sleeping
- Unreasonable use of rest rooms, including laundering, bathing, and shaving
- Exuding offensive, pervasive odors, including pervasive fragrances caused by perfume or other scented products, which constitute a nuisance to other patrons or staff
- Failing to wear shirt/top, pants/skirt, and shoes
- Disturbing or annoying anyone with loud and/or unreasonable noise, including but not limited to using electronic equipment or mobile telephones at a volume that disturbs others
- Carrying weapons of any type (Law Enforcement Personnel may carry weapons)
- Petitioning, soliciting or selling merchandise or services without written permission from the Director of Library Services
- Personally monopolizing Library space, seating, tables, or equipment to the exclusion of other patrons or staff

- Fraudulent use of another's Library card and/or number for any purpose, including using another's Library card to reserve or use Library computers
- Refusal to follow reasonable direction from Library staff, including but not limited to leaving the Library during normal closing procedures or during an emergency evacuation

Any customers displaying these behaviors will be addressed in the following manner:

- **FIRST VIOLATION:** Initial warning, given copy of Library Rules of Conduct and privileges suspended for that day
- **SECOND VIOLATION:** Library privileges suspended for a week
- **THIRD VIOLATION:** Library privileges suspended for up to one year
- **FOURTH VIOLATION:** Patron could be banned permanently from all library use, or if a minor, until age 18

If you observe anyone violating any of these rules of conduct, please inform a library staff member.

### **Patron Suspension Policy**

In order to provide and maintain a comfortable and safe environment for all customers and library staff, the Board of Library Trustees has approved the Sevier County Public Library System Rules of Conduct. Violation or repetitive violation of any of the rules of conduct may warrant a suspension of library privileges. Suspension of library privileges will result in removal from, and denial of access to all Sevier County Public Library System services and facilities for a designated period of time.

### **Suspension Procedures**

In order to be fair and equitable in the application of the Sevier County Public Library System Rules of Conduct and to provide documentation of the enforcement of these rules, authorized library staff members including the SCPLS Director, SCPLS Assistant Director, SCPLS Building Coordinator, Building Manager, or library staff member designated as "in charge" of a library facility shall apply the following procedures:

Authorized library staff will instruct anyone displaying these behaviors to leave the library facility immediately. Police may be called and additional legal action may occur, as appropriate. In addition, based on the severity of the situation, a suspension of library privileges for up to one year will be applied. Library staff will notify Library Administration immediately, where a determination of the appropriate suspension period and procedures will be assigned by the SCPLS Director or SCPLS Assistant Director of Library Services.

### **Unattended Children in the Library**

#### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this administrative regulation is to establish policies and procedures for identification of and handling unattended children in the Library.

#### **II. POLICY**

The Sevier County Public Library System welcomes children of all ages. Library staff strives to provide a safe and appropriate environment for all Library users. Our libraries, however, are public buildings. Any public place may be dangerous for a child who is left unattended even for brief periods of time. In addition, Library facilities are neither designed nor licensed to provide childcare. A child left alone at the Library without a responsible caregiver may become bored, fatigued or frightened and this may lead to behavior that disrupts the Library services that staff provides to them and/or others.

Parents and other caregivers are solely responsible for the welfare and the behavior of children using the Library. Additionally, children under the age of eight must be supervised by a responsible caregiver at all

times while they are in the Library. If a child under the age of eight is found to be unattended in any area of the Library (or an unattended child eight or older is found frightened, crying, or otherwise in distress), staff will attempt to locate the child's caregiver. If Library staff cannot find the child's parent or caregiver, the Sevier County Sheriff's Department or the City of Sevierville Police will be notified and asked to assume care of the child.

### III. PROCEDURES

Children found unattended during Library public hours

An unattended child found frightened or crying, or any unattended children under age eight (8), in the Library should be approached and reassured by a staff member. Staff interacting with the child should ask the child his/her name and the name and whereabouts of his/her parent/caregiver(s). At least one other staff member should be informed that an unattended child is being assisted. When Children's staff is available, the unattended child should be brought to the Children's area of the Library.

1. If the parent/caregiver is in the building, staff will:

- Locate the parent/caregiver
- Upon reuniting the child with the parent/caregiver, express the Library's concern for the welfare of children and explain the Library's policy regarding unattended children.

2. If the parent/caregiver is not in the building, staff will:

- Contact the manager/supervisor in charge of the building
- With the child's help, obtain the parent/caregiver's name and telephone number
- Stay with the child until parent/caregiver can be located.
- Call Sevier County Sheriff's Department or the City of Sevierville Police Department and ask that they assume responsibility for the child if the parent/caregiver cannot be located or does not respond to the phone request within 30 minutes.

#### **After Hours Children Left Unattended**

Our policy for parents regarding children not picked up at closing is as follows in the paragraph below. Staff are instructed to have everyone leave the facility at closing time, including students/children. If parents/guardians are not here to pick students up at that time, the police are to be called immediately and told that there is currently a child without a ride present. Then when closing procedures are finished, staff are to leave the premises allowing law enforcement, as they see fit, to take care of picking up or staying with that child until the parent/guardian arrives.

*Thank you for sharing your children with us and allowing them to visit the library. Please be aware that once the library closes, all doors are locked, and all visitors will be required to leave the facility. There will be no staff here to supervise children under the age of 18 that have been left at the library. They will be outside, in whatever weather or temperature, waiting on the adult responsible for them to pick them up. Please be prompt in picking your children up and do not leave them alone on library property. We will have to inform the police at closing time if any children are here without a ride.*