



Cortland Free Library

Books are just the beginning!

Policy Category: Public Space

Policy Title: Patron Code of Conduct

Need for Policy: Cortland Free Library strives to provide a welcoming, safe environment for all library patrons, which includes everyone who walks through our doors, inclusive of those individuals as defined under [New York State Human Rights Law Section 296](#). To this end, staff will intervene in situations at the Library that present danger to the safety of persons or property, interfere with the rights of others, constitute disturbing or inappropriate uses of the Library and/or that involve illegal acts.

Policy:

These rules have been adopted for the comfort and safety of all those using library materials and services. They will be courteously and firmly enforced by the library staff. We ask your cooperation in maintaining a pleasant atmosphere, conducive to the effective use of library materials and services. **As such, please note the following:**

- a. Food is generally allowed in the Library, *except near the computers*. Please dispose of trash, crumbs and debris properly. Covered drinks are also allowed.
- b. We love animals, but only the following are permitted in the Library: (1) service animals who require accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act; (2) emotional support animals (ESAs) whose owners can produce an official letter; (3) animals who are included in library programs. *See: Animals in the Library policy.*
- c. Be mindful of and keep personal belongings close to you, as library staff cannot accept responsibility for your possessions.
- d. Dress appropriately for a public space, including shoes and shirts.
- e. If you fall asleep in the Library, you may be woken up by staff to check on your well-being. Sleeping lying down is not permitted nor is putting your feet up on furniture.
- f. When using a computer or WiFi, please follow the [Computer Use and Wireless Access policies](#).
- g. The Library's Youth Services Room (Lower Level) is designed for children 12 and younger, and the Teen Space (Southwest corner of the Main Reading Room) is designed for ages 13 to 18. Adults may visit Youth Services and/or the Teen Space when accompanying children and teens, when accessing the collection on their behalf, or to

benefit a child. Otherwise, adult patrons must use designated adult spaces (the remainder of the Main Reading Room, Art Gallery, Periodicals Room, etc.).

- h. Children and youth under the age of 18 who are left at the Library for 15 minutes past closing may be reported to the police (*see: Safe Child and Youth Policy*).

Please practice respectful behavior when visiting the Library. Certain activities, whether intentional or inadvertent, are not acceptable at the Library, including any actions that are unsafe or interfere with the rights of others, physical abuse, abusive or threatening language and misuse of library furnishings and equipment. Engaging in these activities may result in a loss of library privileges, and those engaging in such activities may be asked to leave the Library. We ask that all patrons refrain from engaging in the following behaviors during their library visits:

- a. Making unreasonable noise (e.g., speaking loudly, singing, snoring, using a cell phone on speaker, listening to music at a volume noticed by others).
- b. Provoking arguments, fighting and arranging fights on or off premises.
- c. Harassing other patrons and/or staff (deliberate or repeated behavior that is intimidating, offensive and/or hostile) in a manner that impacts patron use of the Library and/or staff work performance.
- d. Entering staff-only areas or workspaces (unless accompanied by a staff member for a reason related to a reference question, program, meeting, etc).
- e. Taking photographs and/or recording videos of library staff or patrons without their permission.
- f. Using profane, obscene or abusive language, including but not limited to that which is related to someone's identity such as race, sexual orientation, gender, age, etc.
- g. Possessing weapons or other items deemed dangerous by library staff.
- h. Using, selling or being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol) while on library property.
- i. Smoking and use of tobacco products or substitutes.
- j. Gambling, panhandling and soliciting (including but not limited to money, handbills, and coupons, unless authorized by library administration or designee).
- k. Obstructing and/or monopolizing sidewalks or entrances to the Library, passageways and other spaces within the library, including seating, tables or equipment to the exclusion of others.
- l. Bathing, shaving and/or washing clothes on the premises.
- m. Committing theft, vandalism, engaging in lewd behavior, indecent exposure, or other illegal acts which are subject to prosecution.
- n. Using rollerblades, roller skates, skateboards, and scooters (except when carried). Bicycles must be stored in bicycle racks provided outside the Library. Other items with wheels such as strollers, wheelchairs, and walkers are allowed when used for their intended purpose. Shopping carts are prohibited, except those that may be provided by the Library.

- o. Camping in library facilities or on library grounds. (Camping refers to the use of library property for living or accommodation purposes.)
- p. Leaving children unattended or insufficiently supervised by siblings or caregivers, which results in acts disruptive to patrons.
- q. Failure or refusal to leave the Library at the request of staff or after closing hours as set by the Board of Trustees.
- r. Engaging in any activity that violates federal, state, local or any other applicable law or Library policy.

If you witness a breach of our Code of Conduct, please do not attempt to enforce library policy yourself. Please inform a staff member immediately and allow library staff to address these situations. We will do our best to come to a quick resolution.

Library staff are required to bring to an individual's attention any act or omission which is not in line with the Code of Conduct and related library policies. Library patrons will be asked to change their behavior to align with the rules. If such a change is not evident or forthcoming, they may be asked to leave the library building and library property. If a patron is asked to leave and does not do so, police may be called in for assistance.

Depending on the nature of the infraction, patrons who have been asked to leave the building may be barred from returning to the Library for varying periods of time at the discretion of the Library Director. The Board President will be notified of any such action.

Patrons who have been barred from returning may be required to discuss the violation with the Library Director before being welcomed back to the Library. For children and youth under the age of 18, a conversation with the parent(s) or caregiver(s) to discuss future conditions of library attendance may be required.

A patron whose privileges have been denied may request, in writing, to have the decision reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

Approved: April 19, 2023

Updated: August 21, 2023

Please note that this replaces the Acceptable Patron Behavior Policy.

With thanks to the Worthington Libraries in Ohio and Tompkins County Public Library in Ithaca, from whom some of the above language was borrowed.