

Appropriate Use of Library Policy*Effective Date: 8/05**Reviewed & Revised: 5/24***Page 1 of 3***Policy No: 2.6*

Policy

The Ela Area Public Library strives to provide a welcoming, comfortable, and safe space for the community and staff. We expect individuals and groups using the library to treat all people and property with respect. Behavior that disrupts or interferes with the normal operation of the library, causes safety concerns, or disturbs library visitors or staff is not allowed.

This policy applies to visitors on all library property, including the library building and grounds, the online environment, and during phone calls with library staff.

Procedure

Guidelines throughout the library and on library property include but are not limited to the following:

Common Courtesy

Kindness and respect for others is critical in a shared, public space. Visitors are asked to follow these guidelines:

- Shoes and appropriate clothing must be worn in the library
- Skateboards, roller blades, and other moving sports equipment are not permitted
- Strong perfumes and other powerful scents, including food items, should be avoided out of consideration for others
- Inadequate hygiene that interferes with other patrons' use of the library will result in the patron being asked to leave and return when the issue is corrected. Restrooms are not to be used for bathing or shaving
- Unaccompanied adults may be asked to leave spaces designated for children and teens
- Cell phones should not be used in areas where visitors and staff can be disturbed, especially in quiet study spaces
- Study, conference, and meeting rooms can be reserved in advance for group meetings. Shared public areas are not intended for or conducive to larger meetings, which may disturb other patrons
- Visitors are expected to follow reasonable requests and directions given by a library staff member

Harassment

Harassing library staff or visitors, including verbal, sexual, or physical harassment or abuse, is not permitted. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Use of threatening language, gestures, or physical acts
- Interference with a visitor's entry into the library

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- Staring at or following an individual or invading another's personal space in a manner that can reasonably be expected to disturb them
- Exposing others to sexual content on the internet (see Policy 2.17, Technology Use Policy)

Illegal Behavior

The library does not tolerate any action or behavior that would violate any federal, state, or local criminal statute or ordinance. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Fighting, threatening others, or provoking violence
- Carrying firearms and/or dangerous weapons of any type
- Damaging or stealing library property or the property of others
- Possessing, consuming, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs

Food and Drink

Covered non-alcoholic drinks and small snacks are permitted throughout the library, except near computers and in the digital medial labs. Meals may be eaten at the tables near the vending machines or on patios.

Items Left Unattended

Personal items are not to be left unattended or with staff. The library is not responsible for these items and may report them to law enforcement.

Leaflets and Notices

Distributing leaflets and posting notices is not permitted unless permission has been given by the Executive Director or Head of Programs and Publicity. For more information, see Policy 1.5, Display, Exhibits, and Charitable Collection Policy.

Public Forum

The sidewalks outside the library are a limited public forum. For more information, please see Policy 1.5, Display, Exhibits, and Charitable Collections Policy.

Selling, Soliciting, and Loitering

Selling, soliciting, and loitering are not permitted on library property.

Service Animals

Working service animals (trained dogs and miniature horses) as defined by Title II of the Americans with disabilities Act are allowed in the library when assisting a library visitor. Other animals, including comfort animals, are not permitted except those authorized by the Executive Director.

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Smoking

Smoking or vaping is not permitted in the library building or on patios, within 15 feet of building entrances and air intakes, or at or near outdoor programs.

Study Rooms

Visitors aged twelve and over may reserve and use the Study Rooms upstairs. The Room to Read in the Children's Department may be used by those 12 and under.

Unattended Children

Children 10 years of age or under must be directly supervised by a parent or responsible caregiver, high school age or older. Parents are responsible for their children whether or not the parent is present. For more information, please see Policy 2.7, Unsupervised Children Policy and Procedure.

Vulnerable Persons

The library is concerned for the safety of those who cannot provide for their own care due to a mental, emotional, or physical disability. A caregiver 18 years of age or older must be present and responsible for monitoring and assisting vulnerable patrons during their library visits. The library cannot assume responsibility for the care and supervision of any patrons who require monitoring and assistance or cannot follow library rules or be safe without a caregiver.

Vulnerable persons who can understand and follow the Appropriate library Use Policy are welcome to visit the library unattended. For emergency situations, they should have the contact information of someone who can come and assist them.

Enforcement

It is not possible for this policy to list every possible scenario or behavior. The library reserves the right to determine whether any person is in violation of this policy.

Enforcement may include separating visitors, contacting parents of minors, asking for police assistance, or other responses appropriate to the situation. Serious or repeated misconduct may lead to restrictions, such as being required to leave library property and/or the loss of library privileges.

All staff members are authorized to call 911 when an unsafe, uncertain or illegal situation arises.