**WEST POINT PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**OPERATIONS POLICY**

The Library, Museum, and Tourist Information Center staff strive to maintain a pleasant, safe, and productive environment for all library patrons. The following guidelines will be followed to ensure the public’s access to library facilities and materials, the safety of patrons and staff, and the protection of library materials, equipment, and facility.

The West Point Public Library Board Policy Prohibits conduct in the library that

1. Interferes with the rights of individuals to use library materials and services
2. Interferes with the ability of library staff to conduct library business, or
3. Threatens the secure and comfortable environment of the library.

Theft or mutilation of library property is a violation of state law. (Iowa code section 702.22, 716, & 808.12)

**OFFICES**

The library director will maintain an office and the Historical Society will maintain a collection room in this facility. Museum and Tourist information items will be housed at this facility.

**BUILDING SECURITY**

Keys for the facility will be in the possession of library staff members, the contracted cleaning person, and the President of the Historical Society. An additional key for the outside door and the door to the Ralph and Patricia Hoenig Community Room will be kept in the library to accommodate renters of the Community Room. This key will be given out only upon authorization from library personnel and completion of the West Point Library, Museum and Tourist Information Center Rental Agreement. See separate Community Room Policy for complete details. Keys for the museum display cases will be in the possession of the Historical Society President. The passwords for the security system will be known by library staff, the contracted cleaning person, and the President of the Historical Society. The library board will designate a person to be the initial contact if the alarm is activated.

**BUILDING TOURS AND RESERVATIONS**

Library and Museum tours may take place anytime during regular library hours. The facility may be toured outside regular hours by making a reservation with the library staff or Historical Society Member.

**FOOD, BEVERAGE, AND SMOKING**

In order to keep both library materials technology, and furnishings in good condition, it is necessary to prohibit food and beverages in the library, museum, and computer area. Food/drink is permitted in the kitchenette, staff work area, and the Ralph and Patricia Hoenig Community Room. Smoking, vaping, the use of tobacco products, and the consumption of alcohol are strictly prohibited in the Library.

**DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR**

Disruptive behavior is generally defined as “any patron behavior that interferes with the normal operation of the library or which interferes with another patron’s ability to use the library.” Disruptive behavior includes but is not limited to:

* Any behavior that endangers the safety or health of others.
* Violation of any local, state, or federal law.
	+ Smoking or vaping on library property (visit SmokeFreeIowa online for the full law).
	+ Vandalism or deliberate destruction of library materials.
	+ Theft of library materials or the personal property of other patrons and staff.
	+ Accessing internet sites that are prohibited by law.
	+ Consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages, or use or possession of controlled substances on library grounds, or being under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances.
* Deliberate disruption of library procedures.
* Refusal to follow reasonable direction from Library staff, such as leaving the library during normal closing procedures or following a suspension of Library privileges or refusing to evacuate during an emergency.
* Sleeping.
* Abusive, foul, or obscene language or gestures.
* Verbally or physically threatening or harassing other patrons, volunteers, and/or staff, such as stalking, staring, lurking, offensive touching, and obscene acts.
* Rough housing, rowdiness, running in the library, fighting, wrestling, or slamming doors.
* Solicitation of any kind or panhandling on library property.
* Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, or surveying patrons or staff in a manner that is disruptive to library activities.
* Monopolizing library resources or staff time.
* Use of the library telephone for personal business longer than five minutes.
* Loud talking, laughing, or using audio equipment or cell phones that disturbs or could disturb other patrons.
* Use of skateboards, roller blades, skate shoes, or scooters inside the library.
* Inappropriate dress, such as bare feet, no shirt, roller blades, bathing suits, etc.
* Loitering or excessive aimless/restless roaming. Loitering after closing.
* Using restrooms for unintended purposes, such as bathing, sexual activity, washing clothes, or extended periods.
* Carrying a weapon in the library or on library property (unless authorized by law).
* Poor hygiene that constitutes a nuisance.
* Pets or animals, unless they are part of a sponsored exhibit or program; or if the animal is a certified service animal. Proof of certification is required on subsequent visits.
* Trespassing in nonpublic areas.
* Other kinds of behavior deemed inappropriate in the opinion of the Director or designated staff members.

**UNATTENDED CHILDREN**

The Library Board and staff are concerned for the safety and welfare of children who use the library unattended by a parent or guardian. Children of any age should not be left at the library for an extended period of time. Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children while they are in the library and/or on library property.

* Parents are reminded that unexpected events can occur when children are left unattended.  The well-being of children left alone in a public building is a serious concern.  Although staff members attempt to ensure the safety of children in the building, their duties as providers of library services prevent them from supervising each child.  Library staff are not licensed to provide child-care.
* Parents or caregivers may not leave children under the age of 8 years unattended in the library.  A caregiver is defined as a parent, another adult, or an adolescent 13 years of age or older.  Children 8 years of age and older may be unaccompanied and must comply with library behavior policy.  If disruptive, a patron is reminded of this policy; if unacceptable behavior continues, the patron must leave the library property.
* During library programming for children, it is recommended that the caregiver remain on library premises.
* Persons using computers who bring young children along are responsible for making sure the children are well-behaved and well-supervised.
* If a child has special challenges related to physical or mental ability, inconsistent behavior patterns, emotional problems, lack of adequate attention span, or incomplete social skills – that child must be supervised at all times.
* Parents should be aware of library hours and make plans for transportation by closing time.  Patrons can wait on the bench outside of the library for transportation after the library closes.
* The West Point Public Library assumes no responsibility for children left unattended on library premises.  When the safety of an unattended child is in doubt, staff will contact the parents or caregivers.  If they are not readily available, staff will contact the West Point Police Department.

# PROCEDURES

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Staff should be aware of what is happening in the library at all times. While the staff cannot be everywhere and see everything, staff should react quickly to patron behavior. To do this, staff should:

* Be aware of patrons in the building.
* Staff can approach patrons who appear to need assistance or may become disruptive and ask if they need help finding something.
* Be visible to patrons. Many times, disruptive behavior is deterred by a staff member being visible.

Dealing with disruptive behavior:

1. Remain friendly and calm in addressing the patron situation. Identify yourself as a library employee.
2. Do not touch the patron.
3. Discuss the issue with the patron away from other patrons in the library if possible.
4. The staff member can give a copy of the library’s written policy to the patron if needed.
5. If the patron refuses to leave the library after being asked to so, or becomes abusive or aggressive, the staff member should call the police department and ask the patron to be escorted from the library premises.
6. Any incident of policy violation must be documented.
	1. Fill out an incident report form. Fill in the information to the best of your ability:
		1. Date & time of incident
		2. Name of the patron
		3. Witnesses
		4. What happened
		5. What you did to resolve the issue
	2. Turn the incident report in to the Library Director.
	3. The Library Director will review the incident and share with the board.

UNATTENDED CHILDREN

* If a child 7 years and younger is without parental or caregiver supervision:
	+ Library staff will first try to locate the parents or caregiver in the building.
	+ If the parents or caregivers cannot be found, library staff will attempt to call a caregiver. If a caregiver cannot be reached, contact the police department and stay with the child until the police arrive.
* Approximately 30 minutes before closing, library staff will investigate if there are any patrons under the age of 18 in the building without a ride home. If so, the minor should make every effort to contact the parent/guardian.
	+ Staff shall wait 10 minutes after closing time for parents/guardians to pick up their child. After 10 minutes, the police will be contacted. Staff will remain with the child until the police arrive.
	+ Staff shall fill out an incident report on their next working day, describing the situation.
	+ The Parental Notification Letter will be sent to the parent or guardian. See Appendix A.
* Staff should not, under any circumstances, take the child out of the building or take the child home.

**ENFORCEMENT**

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

The safety of the patrons and the staff is paramount. If the staff feels unsafe in approaching a patron about disruptive behavior, the staff member can ask for assistance from another staff member, or call the police for help.

**Warning** – A patron may receive up to 2 warnings for their disruptive behavior. If the behavior is not curbed after the first warning, a second one may be issued. A second warning does not have to be issued. If a first warning was ignored or did not curb patron’s behavior, the staff member can immediately proceed to the next step – asking the patron to leave.

* Warnings should include the consequences of not changing behavior.
* Any warnings issued to a patron then needs to be communicated to the other staff currently working.
* Children should, in most cases, receive 2 warnings. The second warning should include the consequences of being asked to leave for the rest of the day.
* Staff need to keep an eye on patrons who have received a warning to make sure the behavior is not repeated.

**Banned** – A patron may be banned from the library for any length of time, due to their behavior in the library. The length of a ban may be determined by the Library Director. Staff can ban a patron immediately if the disruptive behavior is severe enough.

* Theft or vandalism should be met with an immediate banning from the library. The police should be called immediately upon discovering the patron’s conduct. The patron will be banned for a least 1 year and can only appeal this decision by writing the Library Director or the Library Board.
* After receiving two (2) warnings, a patron should be banned from the library. In these instances, the banning should be shorter, either for the day, the week, or the month.
* This is up to staff discretion and based upon the behavior of the patron.
* Any illegal behavior, including harassing or threatening violence upon a patron or a staff member. These behaviors shall be taken seriously and the staff should call the police immediately. Patrons will be banned for at least 1 year and can only appeal this decision by writing the Library Director.
* Any other instance the staff feel is warranted to ban a patron.
* Staff should call the police at any time they feel uncomfortable, uneasy, or feel there may be an issue with addressing a patron’s behavior.
* Any time a patron is banned from the library, an incident report should be filled out and turned in to the Library Director.

**Calling the Police** – Staff should never hesitate in calling the police if they feel their safety or the safety of the patrons is at risk. Staff should feel comfortable calling 911 or the non-emergency number.

* When calling, make sure to identify yourself and where you are calling from.
* Explain to the dispatcher the situation happening in the library.
* Start by saying “We need an officer in the library immediately”.

Drafted and Approved December 14, 2021

Library Board President

Appendix A

PARENT NOTIFICATION LETTER

 Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

The West Point Public Library has recently experienced an incident involving your child \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, where he/she was on library grounds without adequate supervision. A copy of the library’s Patron Behavior Policy is enclosed for your attention. We ask you review the policy and make every effort to follow it.

In the event your child is left at the library after closing, the police will be notified and will take custody of your child. We have also enclosed the library’s hours of operation.

We do not wish to suspend library privileges for you or your family, but the safety of children as well as the proper operation of the library is our first responsibility. If you have any questions regarding this policy or its enforcement, please contact the Library Director.

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Dara Sanders, Director