

# **River Falls Public Library**

## **Safety and Rules Policy**

Approved: March 6, 2017

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No person shall engage in inappropriate conduct on the premises of the Public Library or when participating in Public library programs.

Inappropriate conduct shall include any individual or group activity which is disruptive to other persons lawfully using Library premises or otherwise inconsistent with activities such as reading, studying, proper use of library materials, and other similar conduct normally associated with a public library. Library users are required to observe the Rules governing the use of the River Falls Public Library.

### **Rules Governing the Use of the River Falls Public Library**

The following actions are prohibited on library property:

- Annoying, harassing, or threatening another person
- Physical, sexual or verbal abuse of other library users or of library staff
- Carrying weapons of any type unless authorized by law
- Stealing, defacing, or destroying library property
- Interfering with free passage of others
- Behaving in a disorderly, loud, or disruptive manner
- Playing audio equipment loudly enough to disturb others
- Selling products or services
- Petitioning, canvassing or soliciting inside the library (see Petitioning/Canvassing/Soliciting policy)
- Interfering with others' use of the library through poor personal hygiene
- Leaving young children or vulnerable adults unsupervised or unattended
- Bringing animals or vehicles into the library except as required for young children or persons with disabilities
- Use of skateboards, rollerblades, scooters, hoverboards, bikes, or personal transportation devices
- Remaining inside the library when it is not open to the public

Library Staff shall:

Detain any individual who intentionally takes and carries away, transfers, conceals, or retains possession of any library material beyond the last station for borrowing.

Request identification from anyone applying for a library card.

Restrict the length of time an individual may use library equipment when others are waiting to use it.

Support of Staff Member Action:

Library staff who have acted on their best judgment in confronting a person will be supported by their supervisor, the person in charge, and the administration. Any staff member who observes or receives complaints of inappropriate behavior may:

- Handle the problem directly with the patron. Staff should use their judgment as to whether the situation requires assistance from another staff member.
- Contact the supervisor in charge if the situation is of a nature that staff member chooses not to confront patron.
- At any time contact police if the patron is not responding to staff requests to conform to the Library Rules.
- Immediately telephone the police if the situation is an emergency medical situation, or of an aggressive, violent, or escalating nature.

In all cases the supervisor should be notified as soon as possible when the staff member confronts a library user who violates the Library Rules. The supervisor will be responsible for notifying the administration if necessary.

### **Incident Reports**

Incident reports must be filed in all cases when it was necessary to call for outside help and in other situations in which the administration and staff should be informed because of possible repercussions. Copies of all reports are kept in the Library Director's office, and maybe sent to Administration at City Hall and/or kept at the Circulation, Reference and Children Service desks, depending on the nature of the incident. A log of incident reports, patrons banned and problem patrons will be available for staff and police to review in case of repeat offenders. A calendar will be used to keep track of dates of offenses and the time period a patron is banned. In addition to written reports, staff members are encouraged to talk through upsetting incidents to share their knowledge of possible problems with other staff who might be involved.

### **INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT - MINOR OFFENSES**

The following shall be deemed "inappropriate" and considered to be minor offenses:

- Sleeping
- Excessive and disruptive conversations and/or cell phone use
- Monopolizing unreasonable numbers of library materials at any given time
- Selling or engaging in any other commercial activity
- Violating Internet and computer policies (such as knowing display of obscene graphics or graphics that may be harmful to minors, using the library network to download illegal or copyright protected files, or gaining unauthorized access to resources)
- Excessive staring at patrons or staff
- Preventing staff from normal, reasonable clean-up or reshelving activities, especially 10 minutes before closing
- Being in a state of intoxication
- Smoking, vaping, and tobacco use
- Bringing any animal into the library, with the exception of service animals which assist the disabled
- Other activities (not listed as Major Offenses) which are inconsistent with activities such as reading, studying, use of library materials, and other similar conduct normally associated with the use of public library facilities

### **TREATMENT OF MINOR OFFENSES:**

- One warning for first infraction of any offense.
- Second infraction within 30 days - removal from the library premise for one (1) day. Parents of children under 18 will be notified in writing when their child commits a second infraction and has been removed from the library.
- Third infraction within 60 days or continuous repeat infractions may result in banning from the library premises for not less than **one (1) week** and not more than six (6) months.

### **INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT- MAJOR OFFENSES**

Any persons violating the following rules will be immediately removed from the building. The patron may be banned for a period up to 6 months at the discretion of the Library Director, depending on the nature and the seriousness of the offense which required removal, the extent of damage or disruption caused, any history of prior infractions of library policies and other relevant circumstances.

- Stealing
- Defacing or damaging library property
- Abusive, indecent, profane, or intoxicated conversation and/or behavior
- Committing any crime, misdemeanor, or violation of a municipal ordinance, not covered under MINOR OFFENSES, on the premises of the library; entering non-public areas of library

## BANNING PROCEDURE:

After staff consultation regarding a single major event or repeated behavioral problems, and it is determined that the person should be banned:

- a) Supervisor in charge will make a recommendation to the Director detailing the reasons for the proposed banning;
- b) Director will consult with supervisor and provide written decision;
- c) The written decision shall set forth the period during which the patron shall be banned from the library and shall specify the reasons for the determination. The patron may be banned for a period from **one (1)** week to six (6) months at the discretion of the Library Director, depending on the nature and the seriousness of the offense which required removal, the extent of damage or disruption caused, any history of prior infractions of library policies and other relevant circumstances.
- d) The patron and all staff will be notified in writing of the reasons for and length of the banning. A copy will also be sent to the police and to the Library Board President.
- e) The Director may review or reconsider the decision upon written request of the patron and may shorten or terminate the banning period if information submitted by the patron warrants such modification. The Director will respond in writing and notify the individual and the staff of the appeals process.

## REPEAT OFFENDERS

Any person who enters or remains on library premises after having been notified by an authorized individual not to do so, and any person who enters or remains on the library premises during the period in which he or she has been banned from the library, will be subject to arrest and prosecution for trespassing.

After the banning period has elapsed, the patron may re-apply for readmission through administrative channels. However, he or she will need to be prepared to show evidence that the offending behavior will not re-occur. In the absence of valid documentation (from a social worker, doctor, or police) application may be denied.

In the event that a person is granted readmission and then exhibits any of the behaviors described earlier, they will be denied access with no further possibility of reinstatement.

## SPECIFICS TO LIBRARY RULES

### **Unattended Minors**

Children five years of age and under must be closely accompanied at all times by an older responsible person. The child's parent or legal guardian will be contacted if the child is left unattended. The library reserves the right to turn over to the proper authorities minors (under age 18) left unattended for extended periods of time or left after 15 minutes after library hours. The supervisor on duty may stay an additional 15 minutes at their discretion.

### **Inappropriate Use of Children's Services**

If an adult in Children's Services is not involved in appropriate use of children's library materials and is observed by staff to be spending an unnecessary and unusual amount of time in Children's Services, such person shall be asked to use other areas of the library. If the person does not comply or repeats, consequences will follow those under "TREATMENT OF MAJOR OFFENSES/ INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR."

### **Inappropriate Personal Hygiene**

Patrons whose bodily hygiene is so offensive as to constitute a nuisance to other persons shall be required to leave the building. When the problem is corrected, patrons may re-enter the library.

### **Theft and Vandalism / Illegal Activities**

The police will be called when a patron attempts to steal or maliciously destroy library and/or personal property (belonging to staff and/or patrons). The library will prosecute anyone who steals or maliciously destroys library

property. When other illegal activities (e.g, indecent exposure) are committed by a patron, the library will prosecute.

### **Emergency Situations**

An emergency situation can be defined as any situation in which a person's actions present an imminent danger to the life or safety of him/herself, others or to library property. Such incidents may include assault and other crimes of violence, or the threat or attempt to commit such crimes. The police will be called immediately if such behavior should occur.

### **Emergency Medical Situations**

If the person is conscious, staff will offer help and try to get identification and keep other people away. Staff will call 911 and meet rescue squad to direct them to person. An obviously unwell person who wishes to leave the library cannot be stopped by a staff member.

### **Inclement Weather**

In case of inclement weather, such as tornadoes or severe storms, staff will alert the public over the PA system and direct them to the lower level. The Circulation desk will close. In case of unattended children, staff assumes "loco parentis," and directs them to shelter. No one will be allowed to remain in the main library. Adults who do not wish to take shelter, may leave the building or stay in the lobby at their own risk.

### **Fire**

Staff will follow fire safety procedures. (See Attachment). In case of false alarm, person will call 911 and report such activity. Fire department staff will de-activate the alarm.

### **Petitioning/Soliciting/Canvassing**

*(see Petitioning/Soliciting/Canvassing Policy)*