

Public Behavior Policy

Policy:

Alameda County Library's mission is to offer opportunities for lifelong learning and enjoyment that support individual and community growth. The Library strives to offer welcoming spaces for the community to attend programs, study, browse collections, utilize technology, and use a wide range of library services.

Library members have the right to quality service in an atmosphere that is respectful, safe, and free of disturbances. Behavior that disrupts or obstructs others' use of the Library, threatens the safety of members or staff, or inhibits the ability for staff to perform their duties is strictly prohibited. The following Behavioral Guidelines are designed to ensure equitable community access to library services. Members who do not follow these guidelines may have their privileges suspended or revoked, as described below in the Enforcement Guidelines area of the policy.

Behavioral Guidelines:

The following is a non-exhaustive list of activities that may disrupt other members' use of the Library, threaten safety, or obstruct staff performing their duties:

- Engaging in any illegal activity on Library premises, including external areas of Library facilities.
- Overly loud or disturbing behavior, including, but not limited to, harassment of members or staff
- Offensive language or gestures, including staring.
- Disruptive use of cell phones or other personal devices.
- Monopolization of services, furnishings, equipment, or space, including blocking aisles, seats, computers, or access paths with one's body, personal belongings, or electronic cords.
- Monopolization of staff time and effort to the exclusion of other members.
- Defacing, destroying, monopolizing, misusing, or stealing materials, equipment, or property.
- Disorderly public intoxication.
- Smoking, including use of electronic cigarettes.
- Running and horseplay.
- Bringing wheeled vehicles, such as shopping carts, bicycles, skateboards, or scooters into the building. Wheelchairs and strollers for the conveyance of people are permitted. Libraries offer a limited number of bike locks for members to borrow.
- Sleeping can disrupt use of the Library. Staff may wake members who appear to be sleeping to determine if medical assistance is needed or when sleeping disrupts service.
- Bringing pets or animals (other than service animals) into the building.
- Panhandling or solicitation.
- Offensive, pervasive odor that reasonably interferes with others' use of the Library.
- Failure to follow the reasonable direction of a staff member.

Enforcement Guidelines:

Members who violate the Public Behavior Policy may be instructed to leave the Library for the duration of the day when staff deems their actions to be disruptive of others' use of the Library, threatening towards the safety of the public and staff, or if they obstruct staff from performing their duties.

Depending on the severity of the situation staff may provide a warning in lieu of expulsion, and instruct a member to leave the Library if the inappropriate behavior continues. Staff will document all violations of the Public Behavior Policy and enforcement actions.

When directing a member to leave the Library, staff will provide a copy of the Public Behavior Policy, will identify those elements of the policy the member has violated, and will inform the member that continued violations may result in longer suspension of privileges.

Upon return, an expelled member is expected to follow the Library's Public Behavior Policy. Illegal activity or continued, repeat violations will result in suspension of privileges for extended durations. Duration of suspension will be dependent upon the following factors:

- Extent of perceived danger to members and staff.
- Extent of disruptions. Repeat violations will lead to longer suspension times.
- Nature of impermissible activity, including the seriousness of any potentially criminal behavior.

Members will be informed in writing of suspensions that last longer than a day. Suspension letters will refer to the relevant factors when identifying the suspension length. Members may appeal a suspension within seven days of receiving a suspension by sending a written appeal to the County Librarian. Suspension letters will provide details of the procedure for appeal, including contact information.

Prior to receiving a response to an appeal, or until the suspension has expired, a suspended member may neither use nor enter the property of any of the Alameda County Libraries unless otherwise specified in writing. Suspended members entering Library property prior to the identified date of return are considered trespassers and Police will be contacted. Trespassers may be subject to arrest, per California Penal Code 602.1 (b):

CA Penal Code 602.1 (b) Any person who intentionally interferes with any lawful business carried on by the employees of a public agency open to the public, by obstructing or intimidating those attempting to carry on business, or those persons there to transact business with the public agency, and who refuses to leave the premises of the public agency after being requested to leave by the office manager or a supervisor of the public agency, or by a peace officer acting at the request of the office manager or a supervisor of the public agency, is guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment in a county jail for up to 90 days, or by a fine of up to four hundred dollars (\$400), or by both that imprisonment and fine.