

TITLE: Patron Conduct in the Library		
COMMITTEE: Internal	Passed:	Review Period: Every 5 years
Topic: Patron Behaviour	Amended:	Date of Next Review: 04/01/2023

Patron Conduct in the Library

The Ponoka Jubilee Library Board is committed to minimizing the risk of abuse and aggressive behaviour against our staff and patrons and mitigating inappropriate behaviour in the Library.

The Ponoka Jubilee Library offers a safe and caring environment for its staff and patrons. Abuse of any kind will not be tolerated.

The **'Patron Conduct in the Library'** Policy is designed to help all our staff who may encounter abuse, aggression, inappropriate behaviour, or violence in the course of their duties.

Definitions

We define abusive, aggressive or inappropriate behaviour as any behaviour which is disruptive or produces damaging or hurtful effects, both physically and/or emotionally.

This definition includes but is not limited to:

- verbal abuse
- bullying, shouting or swearing
- assault
- sexual harassment
- uttering threats
- discrimination of any kind
- smell that is highly offensive

Disruptive and/or inappropriate conduct requires staff involvement when it interferes with other persons' use of the Library and/or when it could result in injury to self or others. Violations of library rules and expectations may result in restriction of library privileges, including suspension from library facilities and services. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, violations may result in prosecution.

Young children may be unintentionally disruptive. It is important that staff support the caregiver in dealing with the situation.

There is no all-encompassing approach for dealing with disruptive or inappropriate conduct; a usual course of action should be:

The staff member approaches the individual(s) and requests that they stop the disruptive conduct, explains why the specific conduct is disruptive or inappropriate, and informs them of what conduct is acceptable. If the behaviour persists, the individual(s) may be asked to leave the Library. Generally, for minor incidents, one statement is made before the individual(s) are required to leave. For minor incidents, patrons are encouraged to return at a later time.

Staff are required to complete a Ponoka Jubilee Library Incident Report and discuss the incident with the Library manager when serious instances of disruptive or inappropriate patron conduct has occurred.

Food and Beverages

Consumption of food and non-alcoholic beverages is permitted in the public areas of the Library, with the exception of computer use areas, provided so doing does not result in any damage to library materials, furnishings or equipment.

Harassment

Harassment may include both active and passive threats or advances to staff or other individuals. Outright harassment is against the law and is not tolerated. The individual(s) are informed that their conduct is not acceptable and are asked to leave. It is important that the situation be shared with the manager, as a follow-up conversation and/or suspension may be warranted. Following reports of harassment, staff are required to complete an incident report to be submitted to the Library Manager for consideration.

If the RCMP are involved, Library staff may be asked to complete a witness statement and cooperate as necessary.

Verbal Abuse

Individuals may become verbally aggressive or abusive for a variety of reasons. When dealing with an aggressive or abusive individual, the staff member is encouraged to:

- Remain calm as a strategy to diffuse the high emotional state of the customer.
- Explain in a calm, business-like manner that the conduct is inappropriate.
- If the individual(s) does not respond to the staff member's explanation, the next level of authority is called upon or an avenue of appeal is explained. Business cards of the Library Manager and Assistant Manager will be made available.
- If the communication is by telephone, the staff member calmly explains to the individual that the telephone call is being terminated and quietly hangs up the receiver.
- Seek staff support as needed and complete an incident report.

Vandalism

The following are guidelines are to be used when dealing with cases of vandalism, attempted theft or theft of library materials.

Vandalism occurs when individual(s) are observed damaging library property (including facilities, materials and equipment). Vandalism can range from minor (e.g. damage to a book) to major (e.g. destruction of library equipment).

In cases where there is proof of minor vandalism to library property, replacement charges are either collected from the individual immediately or posted to the card holder's account. It is important that staff share the situation with the manager should follow-up action be warranted (conversation with the individual, possible suspension).

In other cases of vandalism, the staff member completes an incident report and the manager makes a recommendation for suspension. For serious cases, Ponoka RCMP will be contacted by the manager.

Related Documents:

Ponoka Jubilee Library Incident Report

Child Conduct and Safety in the Library Policy