

## PATRON CODE OF CONDUCT

The Gnadenhutzen Public Library encourages the use of our Library for learning, enrichment, entertainment and the legitimate use of Library resources and services by everyone in our community. In order to preserve that opportunity for all members of our community, we ask patrons to be respectful and courteous when interacting with each other and staff; and to behave in a manner that does not interfere or disrupt other patrons or staff.

Any behavior that disrupts the orderly use of the Library is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, any behavior that interferes with:

- The use of Library property, materials and services by other patrons
- The ability of Library employees to conduct Library business
- The safety of Library patrons and employees
- The safety of Library materials, facilities, or property.

**Examples of prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to:**

- Leaving unsupervised or unattended children who are unable to care for themselves
- Making unreasonable noise including, but not limited to, loud talking, singing, other loud or disruptive noise, or noise from a cell phone or audio/visual equipment usage
- Using profane, obscene, or abusive language
- Making racial, ethnic, religious, gender, or sexual orientation epithets
- Harassing patrons or staff, including without limitation deliberate or repeated language or behavior that is intimidating, hostile, and/or offensive, or that adversely impacts staff work performance or patron use of the Library
- Intentionally damaging, destroying, or stealing property belonging to the Library, another patron, or staff
- Running or engaging in horseplay
- Lying down or sleeping, including giving the appearance of sleeping
- Littering
- Abusing or improperly using furniture, equipment, or materials
- Soliciting and/or panhandling Library patrons or staff, including but not limited to soliciting money and/or donations, and/or selling or attempting to sell merchandise to Library patrons or staff
- Posting or distributing literature without permission
- Gambling
- Blocking entrance to and exit from the building, monopolizing/obstructing space, seating tables, or equipment to the exclusion of others.
- Trespassing, violating an eviction, entering library property when banned, or remaining on Library property after having been restricted or directed to leave
- Fighting, challenging someone to fight, physical abuse, or assault
- Engaging in or soliciting a sexual act, or indecent exposure
- Vandalizing Library facilities or equipment
- Being under the influence, possessing alcohol or drugs, selling drugs or alcoholic beverages
- Bathing, shaving, or washing clothes on the premises
- Bringing unauthorized/unapproved animals other than service animals to the library
- Smoking, using tobacco, or using electronic nicotine delivery systems or similar products, such as e-cigarettes, in the library or within 50 feet of the public entrance

- Using roller blades, roller skates, skateboards, spiked shoes, cleats, or other sports equipment in the Library or on Library property
- Entering unauthorized workspaces or work areas or other non-public areas
- Taking photographs and/or recording videos of Library staff or patrons without their permission
- Possessing weapons of any kind, either concealed or in plain view, in the Library, unless the person in possession of the weapon is a law enforcement officer
- Violating the Library's Internet and Electronic Resources policy, or otherwise misusing computers
- Violating other Library policies and/or guidelines
- Violating federal, state, and/or local law
- Engaging in other acts disruptive to patrons and staff

In addition, patrons must comply with all federal, state, and local laws. Suspected illegal activity will be reported to the police. Violations of law may result in a patron being expelled from the Library, arrested, prosecuted, and/or other legal action, as appropriate. The examples listed above are not a complete list of violations, but instead are intended to provide guidance. The Director and other Library staff are authorized to determine what constitutes disruptive behavior.

### **STUDY/MEETING ROOM**

The Library's quiet study room/meeting room is used by staff permission only. Meeting room use must be approved, at least, 48 hours in advance and is available on a first-to-request basis.

### **EATING AND DRINKING IN THE LIBRARY**

The Library permits light snacks and beverages. For purposes of this policy, beverages are defined as any nonalcoholic beverage, such as water, coffee, tea, soft drinks, juice or milk. All beverages must have a no-spill lid. In addition, a light refreshment is considered an edible item that may be served between meals. Examples – small bags of chips, doughnuts, sweet rolls, or pieces of fruit.

Snacks and beverages should be enjoyed responsibly, remembering to recycle or discard wrappers, bottles, and trash and to leave a clean area for other patrons when you leave. If a patron is disruptive while enjoying a snack or beverage, the Library staff may direct the patron to refrain from eating and drinking inside the Library or on Library property. Library patrons may also be asked to remove the item from the Library or Library property. The Director and other Library staff are authorized to determine what constitutes disruptive behavior and appropriate disciplinary action if needed.

### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

The Library is not responsible for lost or stolen items. The Library recommends that patrons not leave personal belongings unattended.

This Patron Code of Conduct applies to all patrons, including those 17 or younger, as well as adult patrons over 18.

## **OUTREACH SERVICES**

Library patrons receiving outreach services are subject to this Code of Conduct. In addition, if any situation arises, in which a Library outreach employee feels that a particular environment or situation is unsafe; the Library may immediately discontinue that outreach service. (Individuals will have the opportunity to request a review of this decision. See Appeal Process below.)

## **EMERGENCIES**

In the event of an emergency, patrons shall comply with instructions from Library personnel. It is illegal to carry weapons of any kind, either concealed or in plain view, in the building unless the person in possession of the weapon is a law enforcement officer.

## **VIOLATIONS**

The Board of Trustees authorizes the Director, and other Library staff to enforce this Patron Code of Conduct consistent with this policy. The rules of public behavior will be prominently posted in the Library and will be made available electronically. Patrons who violate this Code of Conduct will be given a copy of this policy. A violation may result in a patron's expulsion from the Library, restriction from the Library, suspension of Library privileges, and/or arrest and criminal prosecution or other legal action, as appropriate. When necessary the Library will work with law enforcement authorities to prosecute actions for criminal behavior against the Library, its patrons, and staff. Although the Library reserves the right to require anyone violating the Code of Conduct to leave Library property immediately, the Library generally will follow these steps when a violation occurs:

- 1) Library staff will verbally bring to an individual's attention any act or omission that violates this Patron Code of Conduct or related Library policies and ask the individual to change his or her behavior to conform to the rules.
- 2) If such change does not occur, Library staff will direct the individual violating this Patron Code of Conduct (or related Library policies) to leave Library property including both the building and the premises.
- 3) In some situations, a violation may result in an individual being directed to leave Library property without the patron having been given a verbal warning under Step 1. For example, when a patron's presence poses a continuing danger to persons, or property or an ongoing threat. (Fighting is an example of such dangerous behavior.) Or if the behavior is severely disruptive or frequent.
- 4) Failure to leave Library property (which includes both the building and the premises) when directed may result in intervention by the police and/or security officers and a possible charge of criminal trespass per Section 2911.21 of the Ohio Revised Code.
- 5) Individuals who violate this Code of Conduct may be restricted from the Library for varying periods of time, depending on the severity or frequency of the violation. If restricted for more than one day, the Library will give written notice of the violation and restriction, either in

person at the time of violation or by mail if possible. With respect to juveniles, any such notice of restriction will be sent to the juvenile's parent or guardian.

6) Individuals who have been so restricted will be required to meet and discuss the violation with the Director before being readmitted to the Library, with juveniles being required to bring a parent or guardian to any such conference.

The Director, other Library staff, and/or security officers, at their discretion, may call the police for assistance as needed. The Library reserves the right to enforce this Code of Conduct consistent with safety, health, legal, and other relevant considerations.

In addition, patrons must comply with all federal, state, and local laws. Suspected illegal activity will be reported to the police. Violations of law may result in a patron being expelled from the Library, arrested, prosecuted, and/or other legal action, as appropriate.

### **APPEAL PROCESS**

A patron who has been expelled or restricted from the Library, or whose Library privileges have been suspended, will have the right to a review of this decision by a Panel of three, consisting of the Library Director, a Staff Member and one Board Member. To schedule a review, a patron should contact the Director at 740-254-9224, or in writing at PO Box 216, Gnadenhutzen, OH 44629 within five weekdays from the date of the notice of restriction or other action and request a meeting to discuss the restriction or other action. The Panel will schedule a meeting in order to review the restriction or other action. Juveniles who have requested a review are required to bring a parent or guardian to the meeting with the Panel. Pending the review/appeal process, restrictions or other Library actions will remain in effect.

After this review, a patron may appeal the decision of the Panel to the Board of Trustees. To appeal this decision, a patron must submit, within five weekdays from the date of the decision, a written statement explaining why the decision of the Panel should be overturned, with any supporting documentation or evidence to be considered. This appeal must be submitted via mail to the Board of Trustees at: PO Box 216, Gnadenhutzen, OH, 44683. The Board of Trustees will promptly schedule and resolve the appeal.