



Patron Conduct Policy

Approved October 14, 2019

Updated January 12, 2026

PURPOSE:

The Harlan Community Library strives to provide a safe, comfortable environment that is conducive to the use of library facilities, resources and equipment either by individuals or small groups. The library is designed for the use of all members of the public. Patrons are expected to observe the rights of other patrons and staff members and to use the library for its intended purposes.

SCOPE: It shall apply to all people visiting the library or attending library-sponsored programs.

POLICY:

Our policy intends to:

- Protect the right of patrons to use Library property, materials, and services;
- Protect the rights of employees and volunteers to conduct business without interference;
- Preserve Library materials and facilities from harm; and
- Ensure the safety of Library patrons, employees, and volunteers.

Library employees will bring to an individual's attention any behavior that disrupts the enjoyment of library services. Employees will work with patrons to change disruptive behavior. Employees are empowered to apply an escalating level of service reductions should the behavior continue. Employees are expected to contact and involve law enforcement as appropriate to stop illegal acts or curtail repeated behavior.

Example behavior that interferes with the rights of others:

- Leaving children under age 6 unattended.
- Any unreasonable noise.
- Profane, obscene or abusive language; racial or ethnic epithets.
- Any harassment or intimidation of staff or customers, including entering staff-only areas.
- Intentional damage, destruction, or theft of library property, including introduction of pests or insects.
- Disruptive physical activity – running, skating, roller blading, ball playing, cycling.
- Camping, sleeping, or the use of bed rolls.
- Any misuse of food.
- Abuse or improper use of furniture, equipment or materials.
- Gambling, panhandling, or soliciting money.
- Monopolizing or obstructing space, passageways, furniture, fixtures or equipment or blocking access to the library or any part of the library.
- Fighting, challenging someone to fight, or physical abuse or assault.
- Possessing weapons of any kind, concealed or openly visible, on Library premises with the exception of those allowed specifically under Iowa law.
- Engaging in or soliciting a sexual act. Indecent exposure.

- Improper dress, including bare feet and no shirt.
- Distributing or posting unauthorized literature.
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Bathing, shaving or washing clothes.
- Any possession of animals, other than service animals.
- Offensive body odor.

Enforcement

Enforcement of these guidelines will be progressive depending on the severity of the violation. Library staff may take any of the following actions, depending upon the severity of the misconduct, which will be determined by the staff on duty at the time.

- In most cases, persons who fail to comply with the Patron Conduct Policy will be given two warnings to change their disruptive behavior. People who do not comply after two warnings will be asked to leave the library for the rest of the day. The patron may return the following day.
- In the event of misconduct that is considered extreme by the library staff, the patron will be ordered to leave the building immediately and local police may be called.
- Patrons who behave inappropriately on a regular basis or who engage in unlawful activities while on Library property may have all or part of their library privileges revoked or risk being barred from the library for a period of time, as well as face the possibility of legal charges. This level of action will be determined by the library director.

Appeal

A patron may appeal a decision of the Director to the Board of Trustees who will review the circumstances of the case and confirm, cancel or change the director's decision. The board may suspend a patron's library privileges indefinitely.