

STANDARDS FOR PATRON CONDUCT

The Mercer County Library System is supported by a dedicated Library tax paid by the residents of seven municipalities within Mercer County. These include East Windsor, Ewing, Hightstown, Hopewell, Lawrence, Robbinsville and West Windsor. Our Library patrons expect each of our facilities to be clean, comfortable and safe places for selecting materials, reading, researching, studying, writing, and attending programs and meetings. To this end, the Library is responsible for establishing rules of conduct to protect the rights and safety of Library patrons, volunteers, and staff, and for preserving and protecting the Library's materials, facilities, and grounds. In addition, the Library has a strong commitment to intellectual freedom and to freedom of access to information.

Through encouraging respect and civility, we hope to build community, while developing an incomparable Library experience for all.

All patrons are expected to observe and maintain a standard of acceptable behavior, as set forth below and to respect the rights of other patrons and library staff.

The following behaviors are not permitted in the library and are set forth as reasonable rules and regulations for patron conduct:

- Food and drink are not permitted near the PCs at any time.
 - Covered beverages and light, dry snacks are permitted in most areas of the library.
 - Please note that noisy, messy and strong smelling foods are prohibited.
 - It is expected that patrons will throw away trash and leave an area clean.
- Smoking (NJSA 2C:3D-38 Smoking in a public place)
- Improper attire, including bare feet or chests.
- Consumption of alcohol or use of illegal substances
- Intoxication (NJSA 2C:33-2 Disorderly Conduct)
- Carrying a weapon into the library unless otherwise authorized by law. Any patron authorized to carry a weapon must notify library staff upon entry that he/she is carrying a weapon into the library. (NJSA 2C:39-5)
- Bringing animals into the library unless they are being trained by a recognized companion-animal training agency or school or are accompanying a person with vision, hearing, or mobility impairment as a companion-animal or unless they are part of a preapproved educational program being sponsored by the library. (NJSA 10:5-29 Blind or partially Blind person accompanied by a guide dog)
- Misusing the restrooms (i.e. using as a laundry or washing facility). (NJSA 2C:33-12 Maintaining a nuisance)
- Personal hygiene shall conform to the standard of the community for public places. This will include the repair or cleanliness of garments. Patrons whose bodily hygiene is offensive so as to cause a nuisance to others shall be required to leave the building. Patrons are expected to wear appropriate clothing while using library facilities, including shirts and shoes.
- Failure to observe the indications for supervision and/or accompaniment of children within the library as set forth in Section 11, "Parental/Guardian Supervisory Responsibilities."
- Talking loudly, making noise or engaging in disruptive behavior, including the use of loud or offensively coarse or abusive language.

- Playing of audio equipment so that others can hear it.
- Interfering with another person's use of the library or with the library personnel's performance of their duties.
- Running or standing on furniture. Skateboarding, jumping, and throwing objects, playing on steps or in entrances. Riding scooters or bikes on the steps, ramps or in entrances is also not permitted.
- Panhandling or soliciting.
- Damaging library property, including, but not limited to, damaging restrooms, defacing furniture and walls, damaging computer equipment, removing pages from books, destroying landscaping or outdoor fixtures. (NJSA 2C: 17-3 Criminal mischief)
- Stealing library materials. (NJSA 2C:20-12,13,14 Theft of Library Materials)
- Threatening or physically harming staff or patrons.
- Striking, kicking, shoving or other offensive touching or threats to do so. (NJSA 2C:33-4 Harassment)
- Other behavior that is deemed inappropriate or disruptive by the Library Staff. (Revised 5/2014)

Library privileges may be terminated for repeated violation of any of the above standards and immediately for the following reasons: damaging or vandalizing library property; stealing library materials; threatening or physically harming staff or patrons.

Acts of assault, harassment, criminal mischief, child abandonment, theft, threatening or physically harming staff or patrons, behaving in a disorderly manner, public communication of obscenity, criminal trespass, loitering and vandalism, or other misdemeanors or criminal offenses not otherwise specified herein, shall render any person so acting liable to criminal prosecution to the fullest extent of the law.

ENFORCEMENT OF RULES

Enforcement of Library rules will be conducted in a fair and reasonable manner. Library staff and/or law enforcement officials will intervene to stop prohibited activities and behaviors. Failure to comply with the Library's established rules, regulations, and policies could result in removal from the premises and exclusion from the Library for a period of one day to one year, or in arrest or prosecution. Violations could also result in the restriction and/or termination of Library privileges, including the use of Library computers and other equipment.

REVIEW OF POLICY

Individual patrons have the right to request an administrative review of an exclusion order.