

Oil Region Library Association

LIBRARY BEHAVIOR POLICY

Purpose:

The Oil Region Library Association (ORLA) has established this Behavior Policy to ensure that library facilities are safe, welcoming and provide equitable access to materials and services for all library users. Appropriate personal library conduct includes activities such as reading, studying, properly using library materials and computers in a manner which does not interfere with others who are using the public library in this fashion.

Overview and Definitions:

Appropriate behavior is expected of all users of the ORLA's facilities, as is associated with the normal use of a public library while in the building or on the grounds. Violations of the Behavior Policy will result in increasing levels of action, ranging from a staff issued warning, to asking the patron to leave the library for the remainder of the day, to the patron's temporary or permanent loss of all library privileges, to legal action including criminal prosecution. The level of action shall be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Behavior Rules:

Use of the library materials and services should not disturb other patrons. Library materials and services are available for educational as well as entertainment uses, and patrons should keep in mind that these resources are in the library to be shared by all. Inappropriate behavior is considered to be behavior which creates excessive noise levels or disturbances, interferes with other patrons' use of the library, and/or damages library property. Inappropriate behavior would include, but not be limited to, the following conduct or behaviors:

- Committing acts that violate library procedures or prevent any visitor or staff member from properly abiding by and enforcing library procedures
- Committing or attempting to commit any activity that would constitute a violation of any federal, state or local ordinance
- Loud talking, laughing, shouting, or using audio equipment or cell phones in a manner that disturbs or could disturb other patrons.
- Engaging in any behavior that the reasonable library user would find to be disruptive, harassing, or threatening in nature to library users or staff, including stalking, prolonged staring at, or following another person with the intent to annoy, or intentionally behaving in a manner that could reasonably be expected to annoy or disturb other patrons
- Engaging in any physically intimidating or assault-like behavior, including making any threats of violence or unlawful activities. The library will NOT tolerate threats or acts of violence. Any person engaging in such behaviors will be immediately ejected from the library
- Use of profane and/or abusive language
- Eating or Drinking near the Library computers, while using the library computers or in spaces designated as free from food/drink, unless attending a previously approved activity where food/beverages are served/permitted.

Approved by ORLA Library Board 6-13-18
Amended 6-17-20

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- Possessing, selling, distributing, consuming or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage or controlled substance unless express consent is given by library director or branch manager in the instance of a specific program or event
- Smoking or other use of tobacco including electronic cigarettes anywhere on our property
- Sleeping or napping
- Violating the library's rules for acceptable use of the internet and public computers (refer to Acceptable Use Policy)
- Engaging in any sexual contact, activities, or conduct
- Loitering at entrances, in lobbies, walkways, bookshelf areas, restrooms, parking lots or other non-study areas. Adults not accompanied by a child are not permitted to loiter in the children's area if the adult is not actively reading, studying, and/or using library materials from the children's area. For purposes of this policy, loitering is defined as staying in such an area for more than 15 minutes.
- Leaving children requiring supervision unattended (refer to Unattended Minor Policy) on library premises
- Selling, soliciting, surveying, distributing written materials, panhandling or canvassing for any political, charitable, business or religious purposes inside a library building, doorway or vestibule without expressed consent from library director or branch manager
- Entering a Library building without being fully clothed. Patrons must wear a covering of their upper bodies and footwear. Patrons whose hygiene is offensive so as to constitute a nuisance to other Library users may be required to leave the building
- Bringing in more than two carryall bags. No bag may be brought into the library that exceeds the size of a standard backpack, briefcase or canvas tote bag. Belongings such as bedding, sleeping bags and changes of clothing may not be brought into the library or stored inside the library without expressed consent from library director or branch manager
- Interfering with the safe and free passage of the library staff or patrons on the premises including, but not limited to the placement of objects in hallways, aisles, flooring, or elsewhere, in a manner that impedes the free passage of such persons about the library. Unattended items may be removed from the library premises if they reasonably appear to be abandoned or have been left unattended for 30 minutes or more
- Bringing any animal into the library except for service animals, animals for a scheduled library program or with special permission from a library director or branch manager
- Improperly using library restrooms or facilities for purposes such as bathing, shaving, laundering or changing clothes
- Possessing, selling, distributing, displaying, or using any dangerous weapon. A weapon shall include, but not be limited to, a knife, cutting tool, firearm, and any other tool instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury. Individual rights shall be respected for anyone with a valid Pennsylvania License to Carry Firearms.
- Interfere with the use of the Library by other patrons, or interfere with the performance of their duties by Library employees.
- Deface or mar Library materials. Patrons will not deface, mar or in any way destroy or damage the buildings, books, magazines, newspapers, recordings or other items of the Library collection, Library furnishings, walls, machines, vehicles, or other Library property. Violators will be subject to prosecution.
- Each patron will be responsible for fines, fees or other charges due in accordance with the Library's standard schedules. Failure to pay these fines will result in suspension of borrowing privileges.

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- Materials removed from the Library must be checked out on a valid Library card.

Library Response to Violations of Behavior Policy:

Any person who violates the behavior policy will be handled in a professional and courteous manner by staff, but the degree of the violation will determine the response. Staff is instructed to call 9-1-1 immediately in response to any behavior that is deemed dangerous. Staff will call the police for any behavior that is in violation of federal, state or local ordinances. Staff will call the police if a person or group of persons is asked to leave the library and they refuse to leave and/or become difficult with the staff member. For most other inappropriate behavior, one warning will be given. Continued violations will result in patron being asked to leave the library for the day. A serious violation or repeated violations, or a violation where the police are called, may result in longer exclusions from the library up to permanent banning from the library. An individual who is banned from the library may be criminally charged with trespassing if they return to library property during the term of the ban. Any individual who is banned (asked to leave for more than the day of the infraction(s)) and whose library privileges have been revoked, may request to have the decision reviewed by the ORLA Executive Director. The request must be made in writing and submitted to the Executive Director of the Oil Region Library Association, 2 Central Ave., Oil City, PA 16301, within 10 days of the alleged offense.

Banning Procedure:

After staff determine that a person has engaged in severe or repeat misconduct and staff has determined that the individual involved should be banned:

- Staff will issue, or cause to be issued, a written ban letter to the individual involved notifying the individual that they are banned from all ORLA locations which also includes details on the process for appealing the ban. The letter shall indicate the reasons for the ban and the time period of the ban.
- Staff will email the Executive Director with a description of the underlying behavior, the name and description of the banned individual and the length of the ban.
- After consultation, if the Executive Director agrees with the reasons for the ban and the length of the ban, then the Executive Director shall notify all other Staff so that they are aware.
- If, after review and consultation with involved staff, the Executive Director deems it appropriate to rescind or modify the terms of the ban, the Executive Director shall notify the banned individual in writing, and all staff, in writing, about the decision to rescind or modify the ban and specify the reasons for the rescission or modification.
- The Executive Director will review and may reconsider the decision to ban an individual upon written request of the individual and may shorten or terminate the banning period if information submitted by the individual warrants such modification.
- The Executive Director may consult with private Council before issuing the response to the banned individual. Until such time as staff banning letter has been reviewed and/or modified by the Executive Director or reversed on appeal, the individual may not use the library.

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Appeal Procedure:

The staff's written determination may be appealed to the ORLA Executive Director, if the individual aggrieved files a written notice of appeal within 10 days after he/she receives the determination. The Executive Director shall hold a hearing within 30 days after the notice has been filed. The appellant shall be notified at least 10 days before the hearing. At the hearing, the appellant may present evidence, and may call and examine witnesses and cross-examine witnesses of the other party. The Executive Director shall conduct the hearing. Within 30 days of the completion of the hearing, the Executive Director shall issue a written decision stating the reasons therefore. The decision shall be a final determination for the purposes of judicial review.