

Library Behavior

The establishment of a set of guidelines for behavior in the library is necessary to insure a safe and comfortable environment that promotes the use of the library's resources and at the same time protects the public, staff, materials, and equipment. In order to allow each patron of the Worth County Library to use its facilities to the fullest extent, the Library Board of Trustees has established the following standards defining acceptable behavior for those who visit and use the library [O.C.G.A. § 20-5-43]. Visitors to the library are expected to be engaged in activities associated with the use of public libraries while in the library. Visitors who choose to violate these standards for behavior may be subject to a restriction or loss of library privileges.

The following actions, as well as any other behavior that disrupts the public use of the library, are prohibited.

- Engaging in any action that would be a violation, misdemeanor, or felony under local, state, or federal criminal laws or ordinances.
- Engaging in any action which violates established library policies.
- Harassing, threatening, or intimidating other patrons or library staff [O.C.G.A. § 16-11-39]. This includes, but is not limited to, physical or verbal abuse, including obscene or derogatory language or gestures; interference with another patron's use of the library; interference with library staff's performance of duties [Title 7, Civil Rights Act; OSHA Directive CPL 02-01-052].
- Engaging in disruptive or abusive behavior (which includes, but is not limited to, loitering, fighting, running, throwing objects, soliciting, or inappropriate displays of affection) that interferes with the normal operation of the library or that disturbs library patrons or staff [O.C.G.A. § 16-5-20].
- Sexual acts, obscene language, inappropriate bodily exposure, or any other sexual misconduct [O.C.G.A. § 16-6-8].
- Disobeying the reasonable direction of a library staff member.
- Knowingly destroying, damaging, defacing or removing any library property, including computer equipment [O.C.G.A. § 20-5-52], or personal property of library patrons or staff [O.C.G.A. § 16-8-2].
- Any loud, unreasonable, distracting, or disturbing noises created by persons, electronic devices, or cell phones. This includes persistent crying of children.
- Entering unauthorized areas of the building or grounds or remaining in the building or on the grounds after closing hours.
- Overnight camping on library property.
- Inappropriate use of restrooms.
- Blocking any building entrance or walkway.
- Climbing on library equipment, furnishings, railings, or landscaping.
- Unauthorized use of parking lot.
- Littering.

Other restrictions include:

- All library materials must be properly checked out [O.C.G.A. § 20-5-54]. Personal items are subject to inspection to ensure compliance with library policy.
- Appropriate clothing, including shirt and shoes, is required on all library property.
- Personal items should not be left unattended. Library staff is not responsible for monitoring personal items of patrons.
- Leashed, controlled, and trained service dogs are permitted [Americans with Disabilities Act]. All other animals, including comfort companions, are prohibited in the library.
- The library building [O.C.G.A. § 31-12A-4], parking areas and grounds, is tobacco and electronic smoke-free [Pro Children Act of 1994, reauthorized under No Child Left Behind Act of 2001].
- Food and drinks are not allowed inside the library.
- Patrons will be asked to leave the library if their bodily hygiene or scent is so offensive as to constitute a nuisance to other patrons.
- Consistent behavior and policy violations that demand constant attention of staff and/or disrupt service to library patrons will not be permitted.
- Children under the age of 10 and adults who require supervision must be accompanied and actively supervised by a responsible caregiver at all times while in the library.

All library employees and volunteers are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. [O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5].

Persons violating these rules will be first warned by library staff at the time of the offense. If the conduct continues, the offender will be instructed to leave the library for the day. Library staff may expel the offender without a warning in situations of serious, threatening, or malicious behavior. Offenders who refuse to leave the library premises will be subject to arrest and prosecution for criminal trespass. [O.C.G.A. § 16-7-21].