

Library Behavior Policy

In order to provide patrons with equal access to Howard County Library's collections and services and to achieve the most out of the Library's facilities, the Howard County Commissioner's Court has adopted these rules governing the use of the Library.

Patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of a public library while in the building. Patrons not engaged in reading, studying, using the library materials or participating in library programs or events may be asked to leave the building.

The following are **not permitted** in the Library and surrounding areas:

- Eating or drinking.
- Smoking.
- Sleeping.
- Playing audio equipment so that others can hear it.
- Bringing animals into the library, except when needed to assist a person with a disability.
- Misusing a restroom (e.g., as a laundry or bathing facility).
- Leaving a child unattended (i.e., without adult supervision) in the library.
- Solicitation of contributions, signatures or panhandling
- Conducting surveys without the permission of Director.
- Photography on the library premises without the permission of the Director and those being photographed.
- Talking loudly, making noises or engaging in other disruptive conduct.
- Interfering with another person's use of the Library or with library personnel's performance of their duties.
- Patrons whose overwhelming odor that constitutes a nuisance to other library patrons or staff and thereby interferes with the rights of others to use the Library will be asked to leave. They may not return until situation is rectified.
- Patrons without shoes or shirts.
- Persons with large backpacks, duffle bags, suitcases, etc.
- Be in the Library, without the permission of authorized Library staff, before or after Library operating hours.
- Threatening, harassing, staring at or physically harming library patrons or staff.
- Carrying a weapon, unless authorized by law. Any patron authorized to carry a weapon must notify library staff.
- Steal, damage or alter any property of the Library (with exception of normal wear and tear), including, without limitation, any computer equipment, systems, software or programs.

Activities in the Library are also governed by local, state and federal statutes regulating conduct in public places. These regulations prohibit:

- intoxication
- assault
- criminal mischief
- disorderly conduct
- harassment
- drug paraphernalia
- public indecency

Any patrons violating the Library's rules or local, state or federal regulations may be required to leave the premises. Police assistance may be utilized if deemed advisable by the Library staff.

Persistent violations of the Library's rules may result in the suspension of library privileges, including the right to use the facilities and/or borrow materials. Such suspension may be enacted by the Director. An appeal may be made to the Commissioner's Court of Howard County.