SAFETY AND SECURITY POLICY

I. PURPOSE

This policy is designed to provide a safe and secure environment for patrons and library staff and protect library property. The library supports the rights of all individuals and is dedicated to free and equal access to information without discrimination, intimidation, threat of harm, or invasion of privacy.

II. POLICY

A. Overview. Patrons must be engaged in activities typically associated with the use of a public library while in the building and avoid conduct that disrupts others. This includes any individual or group activity which is unreasonably disturbing to other individuals lawfully using library facilities, materials, equipment and/or premises or is otherwise inconsistent with activities such as reading, studying, properly using library materials and other similar conduct typically associated with a public library.

   Whenever possible, staff will first inform individuals about applicable policies before enforcing them more strictly. Library Security Monitors ("Security") focus on ensuring a safe and welcoming environment.

B. Monitoring. The library monitors behavior using security tools, per Wis. Stat. § 43.30 and the Privacy Policy. The library reserves the right to inspect bags, briefcases, backpacks or other personal items.

C. Responses to Inappropriate Behavior. Responses will be proportionate to the severity of the behavior. See III. CLASSES OF BEHAVIOR AND RESPONSE.
   1. Eviction. Staff may evict patrons for the remainder of the day if they fail to comply with library policies. The library reserves the right to immediately evict a patron who poses a danger or threat to staff or other patrons.
   2. Restriction. The library director and assistant director are authorized to issue restrictions. The length will be based on the offense severity, prior violations, safety of staff and patrons, and legal considerations. If the library director or assistant director is unavailable, a supervisor may impose restrictions for up to 14 days. The Library Board retains the authority to impose restrictions directly when necessary.
      a. The patron and APD must be notified as soon as is practical of the restriction decision, including its duration. Notification may be delivered by library staff, police, or certified mail (return receipt requested).

    b. This policy addresses library-imposed restrictions but does not override penalties under federal, state, or local law.
3. Restitution. The library may assess restitution charges against individuals responsible for damage to library property or for leaving conditions that require special cleaning that exceeds routine cleaning.
    a. Cleaning charges will be assessed based on the actual time required and will be calculated at the rate charged to the library by its contracted cleaning service for special cleaning services.
    b. Property damage charges will be assessed at the cost of replacement, which may include the purchase of replacement items and associated installation costs.
    c. Individuals assessed restitution charges will be restricted from the library until payment is made in full or an agreed-upon payment plan is established.
    d. Restitution charges may be assessed in addition to any restriction imposed under the policy.
    e. Restitution charges under this section may be different from restitution amounts ordered by a court.

D. Juvenile Patrons. If a juvenile patron violates this policy, or any other rule or regulation, staff may contact their parent/guardian.
    1. Juveniles may be required to use the library with a responsible parent or guardian as an alternative to restriction.
    2. The juvenile's parent or guardian must be notified of the restriction via certified mail, or the notice may be delivered by APD. Failure to abide by the restriction may lead to restricting the juvenile from the library completely, and they may be cited for trespassing by APD.
    3. Juvenile patrons 16 and over may have privacy rights preventing disclosure and staff will consult with the City Attorney prior.

E. Restroom Use. Activities inconsistent with appropriate restroom use may result in eviction or restriction, depending on the severity. Inappropriate activities include bathing, washing clothes, using illicit drugs or alcohol, or engaging in sexual activity.

F. Use of Equipment. Patrons who violate library policies while using equipment may have their access restricted. Public computer access may be suspended for up to 30 days for policy violations, and serious offenses may result in full library restrictions or legal action. Misuse of computers or internet access may also lead to suspension, restriction, or prosecution.

G. Identification. Patrons violating library policies may be asked to provide identification. Refusal to provide ID may result in contacting APD depending on the seriousness of the violation.

H. Video Surveillance and Photography. Security cameras enhance safety by deterring policy violations, assisting staff in preventing incidents, and supporting the library in investigating and potential criminal activity on library property per Wis. Stat. §43.30(5).
    1. Video cameras may be in indoor or outdoor locations where individuals lack a reasonable expectation of privacy. Cameras will not be installed in areas of the library where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy such as private offices or restrooms.
    2. The City of Appleton ("City") may mount cameras on exterior library property that provide surveillance of public outdoor spaces. These cameras are not library cameras and are not covered by this policy.
    3. Video footage and photographs are used in accordance with the library's Privacy Policy and Records Retention Schedule.
    4. Cameras are not continuously monitored. Personal safety is the responsibility of the individual, and the City is not responsible for lost or stolen property.

I. Unattended Children. The library strives to provide a safe and welcoming environment for children and encourages their use of materials and services.
    1. Responsibility. Parents, guardians, or caregivers are responsible for the welfare and behavior of their children in the library. Staff cannot assume responsibility for unattended children's safety or comfort.
    2. Supervision.
        a. Children under 8 must be supervised at all times, including during library programs. Children 8+ may use the library independently if they behave appropriately.
        b. The City of Appleton and the library are not liable for unattended children. Parents, guardians, and caregivers accept the risks of leaving children unattended and release the City from claims.
    3. Response.
        a. Staff may notify parents, guardians, or authorities (e.g., APD) to ensure a child's safety or enforce library rules.
        b. Staff will make reasonable efforts to ensure children leave safely at closing. If a minor remains, at least two staff members will stay with them. After 15 minutes, staff will contact APD for assistance.

J. Appeals.
    1. Restricted individuals may submit a written reconsideration request to the Library Director at Appleton Public Library, 200 N. Appleton Street, Appleton, WI 54911, stating their reasons and including a return address.
    2. The library director will respond to the reconsideration request in writing via certified mail within 14 business days. The restriction will remain in effect unless modified by the director's written decision.
    3. For restricted juveniles, the library director may allow access under the direct supervision of an approved parent or guardian, upon request.
    4. If the person wishes to contest the decision of the library director, they may appeal to the Library Board pursuant to the Bylaws.

5. Restricted individuals who enter the library before the return date on the "Restriction from Library" notice may have APD contacted and face trespassing charges under Appleton City Ordinance AC 10-26.

III. CLASSES OF BEHAVIOR AND RESPONSE

No policy can list all prohibited behaviors. Therefore, the guiding principle for acceptable behavior is: ***Everyone has the right to use the Appleton Public Library without being disturbed by others. Disruptive, unsafe, illegal or damaging behavior is not allowed.***

A. **Class 1 - Dangerous or Criminal Behavior.** Violations of federal, state, or city laws are prohibited in the library. These actions require staff to contact the APD and may result in an immediate restriction. Examples include, but are not limited to:
   1. Fighting or combative behavior,
   2. Exhibitionism,
   3. Any sexual behavior regardless of if it is unwelcome or consensual,
   4. Threats,
   5. Refusal to leave when asked,
   6. Physical abuse,
   7. Stalking,
   8. Possession of illegal drugs,
   9. Possessing firearms or weapons that threaten staff or public safety,
   10. Child pornography,
   11. Theft, including theft of library materials,
   12. Vandalism,
   13. Intentional entry into restricted areas of the building, or
   14. Tampering with any library security equipment.

B. **Class 2 - Potentially Serious Behavior.** Responses depend on the severity and may include a warning, contacting the APD, or a library restriction. Examples include, but are not limited to:
   1. Alcohol or drug intoxication,
   2. Possession of weapons that do not fall into Class 1,
   3. Possession of alcohol, except as part of an approved program,
   4. Verbal abuse of staff or other patrons,
   5. Loitering in a manner that interferes with others,
   6. Excessively emotional, hostile, threatening or uncontrolled behavior,
   7. Use of loud profanity, obscenity or obscene gestures,
   8. Panhandling,
   9. Using another person's card without permission,
   10. Leaving bags and other personal items unattended, or
   11. Harassing and intrusive behavior, including staring at, stalking or following staff or patrons with the intent to annoy or harass, violating privacy, or interfering with staff performance of duties or patrons' use of the library.

C. **Class 3 - Disruptive and Nuisance Behaviors.** Responses depend on the severity and may range from tolerance to a warning. Severe or repeated offenses may result in eviction, contacting the APD, or a library restriction. Examples include, but are not limited to:
    1. Bodily hygiene which is so offensive that it is a nuisance to patrons and staff,
    2. Loudness,
    3. Interfering with staff duties by monopolizing their time, engaging in prolonged or inappropriate conversations, making personal comments, or refusing to comply with staff requests,
    4. Inappropriate public displays of affection,
    5. Blocking the library entry, sidewalk in front of the building or otherwise interfering with free passage of APL staff or users,
    6. Loud profanity or obscenity in front of the building or in the parking lot,
    7. Patrons may bring up to three bags or personal items, each no larger than 32x18x15 inches,
        a. Exceptions include musical instruments and items for library programs or events,
    8. Bringing bicycles inside the library; riding or using scooters, skateboards, or other wheeled equipment on library property. Wheelchairs, strollers, and mobility aids are always allowed.
    9. Bringing or storing bedrolls, pillows, sleeping bags, shopping carts, and garbage bags,
    10. Sleeping, napping or dozing in or on library premises,
    11. Unhygienic behavior such as spitting or changing diapers in public areas,
    12. Bathing, shaving, washing hair or washing clothing,
    13. Using cellphones or other devices at a volume that disturbs others, whether with or without headphones,
    14. Violating the Smoking and Tobacco Use Policy,
    15. Entering the library without clothing that covers the upper and lower torso, or failing to wear shoes. Exceptions apply to non-walking infants.
    16. Failing to clean up personal trash,
    17. Having visible pests on one's person, belongings or library materials,
    18. Rearranging or misusing furniture beyond its intended design or capacity, or
    19. Other violations of library policies.

Transparency: ChatGPT 4o, an AI language tool, was used in the 12/2024 policy update to ensure clarity, consistency, and user-friendliness. The final content was reviewed and approved by library staff.

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