



Library Behavior Policies

Section 4 – 1

General Policy on Conduct

The Orange County Public Library is a public facility that offers services to a wide range of citizens. The library has a responsibility to provide an environment that is safe and comfortable for every patron who is appropriately using its services and facilities. To ensure this environment, our library has devised guidelines for patron conduct which can be found in policies 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. Children and young people are expected to adhere to the same standards of behavior expected of adults. Parents, guardians or caregivers are responsible for the behavior of the children in their care while they are in the library.

General rules for the library system are:

Patrons and staff will be appropriately attired at all times which includes the wearing of shirts and shoes.

No smoking or use of tobacco products including e-cigarettes.

No food may be consumed in the public areas of the library except in the library meeting rooms. Covered beverages (e.g. water bottles with lids, covered cups with lids and straws such as those from McDonalds, coffee cups with lids) will be allowed in the libraries.

No illegal activities are permitted.

No children under age 9 may be left unattended by an adult in the library for any period of time (except when children over age 5 are attending a library program, then the adult may wait elsewhere in the library)

No animals other than those assisting the handicapped or law enforcement officials are permitted in the library except by special permission from the staff member in charge

Any conduct that disrupts the quiet atmosphere of the library or disturbs other patrons is prohibited.

Patrons are expected to use the facilities in an appropriate manner (not stand on furniture, deface materials, misuse equipment, etc.)

Failure to comply with the Library's established rules and regulations may result in expulsion from the facility for the day, for up to six months or in arrest. Persons refusing to leave when asked are subject to arrest under Virginia trespass laws.

Staff guidance – Virginia is an open carry state for firearms and they are allowed in libraries. Concealed carry and other rules are specified in **VA Code § 18.2-308 and § 18.2-287.4**, so refer there for additional information. Brandishing a weapon is illegal per **§ 18.2-282**

(Approved by the Library Board of Trustees 1/98, amended 5/2000; 5/2006;4/2008, 3/2009;3/2011;3/2014; 8/21017; 1/2019)

Policy on Unattended Children

Statement of Policy

Children age 5 and under must be accompanied by a parent, guardian or responsible older child of at least 13 years of age at all times when in the library, even when attending a library program. Children ages 6-9 may be left unattended at the library only during a scheduled library program providing that their parent or caregiver remains in the library during the program. While children ages 10 and over may use the library unattended, adult supervision is recommended for all elementary school children as they use the library, in accordance with Orange County Child Protective Services guidelines.

Parents assume the responsibility for their children's behavior in the library whether the child is accompanied or unaccompanied. There is no substitute for an accompanying parent. Library staff cannot control or be accountable for children who are left unattended at the library.

Appropriate library behavior (as explained in policies 4.1 and 4.3) is expected of all library patrons, regardless of age. Patrons of any age who display inappropriate or disruptive behavior may be asked to leave the library.

If a child under age 13 is left unattended at closing time, or if the library closes early due to an emergency, the library staff will attempt to reach the parents. If this is not possible, staff will contact the local law enforcement authorities and have them take charge of the child.

Rationale for policy

It is our desire to provide a positive library environment for everyone, including children. The public library, however, is just that, a public building. As such, anybody can come into it—law abiding or otherwise.

Library staff members have many duties to perform and they cannot monitor the behavior or whereabouts of individual patrons, including children. Library staff cannot and do not assume parental responsibilities for children who use our library.

There are risks to the child when he/she is left unattended at the public library. A child could be tempted to go off with a stranger. He/she could become ill. An emergency situation or early closing due to inclement weather could require evacuation of the building prior to our normal closing time. A child could be asked to leave the building due to disruptive behavior.

It is for the safety of each child that this policy has been adopted.

(Approved by Library Board of Trustees 1/98, amended 10/2001, 10/2002, 4/2003; 1/2019)

Vandalism and Improper Behavior

We want to ensure a safe and peaceful environment for all of our patrons. Thus, in instances of vandalism or improper behavior by patrons whether inside the library or on the library grounds, the Library reserves the right to call in the proper authorities and/or have the patron ejected. Persons may be banned formally from entering the library in the future in cases of vandalism or repeated problem behavior.

Failure to comply with the Library's established rules and regulations may result in expulsion from the facility for the day, for up to six months or in arrest. Persons refusing to leave when asked are subject to arrest under Virginia trespass laws.

For the following infractions:

Staff members will warn customers of improper conduct two times before ejecting them.

Examples of problem behavior include, but are not limited to,

Loud noises which are disruptive to others: talking, singing, playing audio or computer equipment or using telephones so that others can hear them

Running, skateboarding or moving in a way dangerous to the patron or others.

Climbing on or otherwise improperly using furniture or fixtures.

Deliberately disorganizing library materials.

Interfering with the employees' performance of their duties

Smoking or use of e-cigarettes

Eating or drinking in public areas of the library, excluding the meeting room.

Harassing other patrons by staring at them or following them.

Photographing, recording or shooting video of library customers without their written consent and consent of library staff. (see Policy 4.3a for further information)

Misuse of the restrooms

Strongly offensive body odor which results in complaints to staff.

Selling items on library property except by permission of the staff member in charge.

(Exceptions would include author book sales for programs sponsored by the library or a library support group such as the Friends or Library Foundation)

Loitering

(Examples include sleeping, not using any library services including Wi-Fi or materials)

For the infractions listed below:

Customers engaging in the following behaviors or in any behavior prohibited by statute will be asked to leave immediately and the appropriate authorities will be contacted:

- 1) Attempts to improperly use computer equipment or access computer files not available for public use
- 2) Defacing, destroying or damaging library property or other incidences of criminal mischief.
- 3) Use of obscene, suggestive, profane or abusive language which results in complaints.
- 4) Engaging in soliciting or panhandling.
- 5) Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs; and/or possessing drug paraphernalia.
- 6) Carrying or brandishing weapons (***except as permitted by VA Code § 18.2-308***)
- 7) Improper touching of any staff member or patron
- 8) Breaking any local, state or federal law
- 9) Stealing library materials

In the event of repeat occurrences: Patrons will be banned for a period of 1 month after the 2nd offense and banned for 6 months if a 3rd offense occurs.

(Approved by the Library Board of Trustees 6/98, amended 4/2000, 3/2003, 5/2006, 3/2011, 1/2019)

Communications Policy

It is the policy of the Orange County Public Library to provide accurate information to the public, including and via the media, on its policies, procedures, services and programs and to ensure that the best possible image of the library is presented to the public.

Goals

- Increase public support, awareness, and use of the Library
- Increase visibility for library services & programs (PR)
- Increase the value of services to residents so they want to use them and support them (marketing)
- Provide some transparency for the citizens as to the operations of our department

Identity and Usage

It is important that communication refer to the Library in a consistent manner. The name of the library system is the Orange County Public Library. All branches and facilities are by definition 'Orange County Public Libraries.' The branch names are the Wilderness Branch Library and the Gordonsville Branch Library. The Orange location may be referred to as either the Main Library or the Orange County Public Library.

Logo

The Orange County Public Library has an official Orange County endorsed logo designed by the Economic Development Department. While the logo is appropriate to use on publicity, its use is not mandatory. For communications issued through the Orange County administration office, the official Orange County logo will be used in lieu of the library logo at their discretion. No other logos are to be used in the place of the official logos. Approval of a new logo requires approval by the County Administrator and the Library Board of Trustees.

Authority and Responsibility

The Library Director is ultimately responsible for the library communications activity. With the intent of providing effective, responsive, and consistent communications to our community, primary spokesperson for the library are the Library Director, Library Department Managers, and the Orange County Administration Office's designated public information officer (s). However, all staff, as well as friends and trustees can have a positive impact on the success of library publicity and image. Members of the staff are permitted to speak about the library on behalf of the library to members of the media, but must limit themselves to areas of their expertise. They should also bear in mind their obligation to present the library in the best possible light. Interviews with staff members are permitted as long as the supervisor is informed and it does not interfere with library duties. The County Administrator or Acting County Administrator should be consulted before any interview if possible.

All material written or prepared by library staff shall be reviewed for appropriateness, accuracy, completeness and eye-appeal by the library director or his/her designee before being released to the public or media. This includes printed material such as flyers, bookmarks, newspaper articles and press releases and the library's web presence, such as the official webpage or social media presence (Facebook , Twitter, Instagram or blogs.)

County Policy

Library staff must also comply with Orange County Policy on Acceptable Use of Communications and Technology 3.11 and Password Policy 3.11A posted on the County website.

Distribution

OCPL will not limit the media or formats used to publicize and market itself. The most appropriate media shall be chosen for each purpose or event.

The most common channels of communication announcing upcoming library programs will likely be the local media outlets, such newspaper and radio, the OCPL webpage and social media sites, and print flyers and bookmarks. For teens or younger adult population, social media or blogs should definitely be used. The intended audience and intent will drive the media and distribution.

OCPL will typically distribute information or materials only for its own programs and purposes and those of its partners' allied programs.

However, the library is a valuable member of the community and, as such it is a source of information. Hence, OCPL branches serve as a distribution point for a limited number of brochures and flyers for the community. The brochures and flyers can be about community services, such as mental health or abuse hotlines, cultural or educational opportunities, or charitable fundraisers. These materials may be placed in specified places in each branch, such as bulletin boards. Only material pertaining to library events or partners may be placed on the service desks at the library branches. No commercial for-profit brochures or flyers may be posted in either library.

Photography & Filming

Permission must be obtained from the library administration before anyone may conduct any filming or photography inside the building. Library patrons have the expectation of a certain degree of anonymity and privacy. Library staff shall also inform the public if the media will be filming or recording an event.

Individuals with small portable or wearable media devices must respect the privacy of groups and individuals using the library.

Making or recording photographs or videos (live shots/streaming or stills) of identifiable individuals or groups is prohibited without explicit, written permission of all individuals.

Library staff should also inform the public if they are taking photographs or recording in another media. Staff photographing individuals or small groups shall ask for permission and a media release form signed by the identifiable persons in the photograph.

Library security cameras are used for the purpose of enforcing the County's password policy, providing a deterrent to crime and providing evidence for law enforcement should a crime occur or be reported to have occurred. Library security camera footage is managed by the Orange County Department of Information Technology. The Orange County Attorney must be contacted by library staff regarding any request to access security footage and will direct the I.T. department as to providing access. The I.T. Department can independently access the footage for enforcement of County policies 3.11 and 3.11A for library and County staff.

Signage

Directional signs should be consistent within each library location. A standard color scheme and font will be devised and maintained for each location. For example the Main Library signage uses a charcoal grey backdrop with Arial MT Rounded font in a very light grey. Wilderness Branch uses a black backdrop and white lettering in the Ravi font. Display signage can be creative but should endeavor to be highly readable. Staff should take care not to clutter the library with signs. All signs shall be typeset, not handwritten, except in an emergency.

Social Media

OCPL uses social media as a way to inform and engage the public in discussions of books, materials, services and programs. The library recognizes and respects differences of opinion. Comments, posts and messages from patrons are welcome. Posted comments are the opinion of the author only and publication of a comment does not imply agreement or endorsement by the staff or board of the library.

Comments containing any of the following will be removed:

- Obscene or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults or threatening language
- Potential libelous statements
- Plagiarized material
- Private, personal information published without permission
- Comments totally unrelated to the content of the forum

- Hyperlinks to material that are not directly related to the discussion
- Commercial promotions or political activity
- Spam
- Anything violating County policy 3.11 Acceptable Use of Technology and Communications Equipment

The public are cautioned not to put personal information on any forum or in any post. By posting, the user agrees to hold the library, employees, and officers free from any liability. The library reserves the right to monitor content and modify or remove any content as it deems appropriate. The library is also not obligated to take any such action and will not be responsible for any content posted by any individual.

If any user does not agree to the terms of this policy, they are not to use the service.

Library staff shall make a clear distinction between professional and personal use of social media. Because of the immediacy of the media, less administrative oversight and editing are exercised; so staff is also warned to have their posts reviewed for accuracy, both grammatical and informatory. County policy 3.11 further defines expectations for employees in using social media.

(Adopted 01/2019)

Solicitation of Funds in the Library

No group or agency other than the Friends of the Orange County Public Library, the Wilderness Friends of the Library, the Gordonsville Friends of the Library, The Orange County Library Foundation, the Library Board of Trustees or its representatives may solicit funds or sell items within the library.

(Approved by the Library Board of Trustees 6/98)