



Library Rules of Conduct Policy

[Revision Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees, 1/23/2023]

The Library is a resource for all members of the community and its purpose is to provide information services, programs and educational, informational, and recreational materials to the public. Any behavior that disrupts the Library's ability to provide a safe and welcoming environment for the public and a supportive workplace for library employees shall be grounds for immediate action. Follow-up may include requesting person(s) to leave the Library; barring future services, including admission (temporarily or permanently); and calling the police.

Prohibited behaviors in the Library may include but are not limited to the following:

- Vandalizing or misusing furniture, equipment, or materials
- Harassment of any kind toward other library users and library staff
- Causing a public disturbance, which includes, but is not limited to, use of abusive or obscene language; talking loudly; or making excessive noise
- Viewing obscene content on library computers or personal devices; or other violations of the Computer Use Policy
- Disobeying the direction of a library staff member
- Leaving children unattended [Library employees are not responsible for unattended children]
- Blocking entrances, exits, aisles, walkways, or stairways
- Monopolizing Library space or resources including moving furniture
- Bringing bicycles (or any wheeled transport that cannot be folded and/or safely stored away) inside the Library
- Bringing large, oversized, or bulky sets of personal belongings that cannot be safely stored away
- Bringing personal items judged to be unsanitary, pose a health or safety risk, or disruptive to library operations
- Using rollerblades, scooters, or skateboards on Library property**
- Using the restroom inappropriately, such as bathing or laundering
- Strong pervasive odors
- Sleeping [as a safety precaution, staff will awaken persons sleeping on Library property*]
- Soliciting or panhandling
- Smoking on Library property*
- Bringing animals other than service animals inside the Library
- Not setting cell phones or devices on silent mode; and speaking on cell phones or devices in spaces other than designated "phone zones"
- Consuming food and beverages (other than liquid in a container with lid) outside of designated eating zones at the Library.
- Leaving personal items unattended [the Library is not responsible for personal belongings lost or stolen on Library property*]
- Entering the Library without wearing shoes or a shirt.

To prevent the theft of Library materials, state law authorizes the detention for a reasonable period of any person using these facilities when there is probable cause to believe that the person being detained is unlawfully removing Library materials from the premises. Staff has legal authority to conduct a limited and reasonable search of purses, bags, parcels, briefcases and other packages if a patron does not voluntarily surrender unlawfully removed Library materials. (CA Penal Code 490.5)

* Library property includes outdoor areas adjacent to the Library building.

** If brought inside the library, scooters and skateboards must be carried; scooters must be in the folded position.

Enforcement of Violations

To ensure a safe and welcoming environment for the public and a supportive workplace for library employees, violations of the Rules of Conduct are enforced by Library employees with assistance by the San Mateo Police Department. Suspensions are determined by the type of infraction and are issued by the City Librarian. Library patrons whose library privileges are suspended cannot use any of the San Mateo libraries while serving a suspension. The City Librarian reserves the right to make individualized determinations as to the appropriate level of enforcement.

Level One: Library staff will document instances of minor violations. Staff may direct patron to leave the library if verbal warnings are not heeded within the same day; and patron will not be allowed to enter until the following day. A written warning will be issued by the Deputy City Librarian if misconduct continues over a period of time. A suspension (banning) letter will be issued by the City Librarian if the written warning is not heeded.

<i>Level One: Minor Violations--examples may include but are not limited to the following:</i>	<i>Follow-Up if verbal warnings are not heeded</i>	<i>Suspension Period if written warning is not heeded</i>
Leaving personal items unattended; being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs; blocking entrances, exits, aisles, walkways, or stairways; sleeping; speaking on cell phone in areas not designated as phone zones; bringing animals other than service animals; entering without wearing shoes/shirt; using rollerblades, scooters, skateboards on Library property; leaving children unattended (which will involve contacting PD to follow up with parents or guardians).	Written warning	Minimum 7 days but may be longer; the suspension period is contingent on the advisement from law enforcement officials and City Attorney

Level Two: Library staff will document instances of behavioral misconduct. Staff will issue verbal warnings. Staff may direct patron to leave the library if verbal warnings are not heeded within the same day; and patron will not be allowed to enter until the following day. A written warning will be issued by the Deputy City Librarian if misconduct continues over a period of time. A suspension (banning) letter will be issued by the City Librarian if the written warning is not heeded.

<i>Level Two: Violations stemming from behavioral misconduct--examples may include but are not limited to the following:</i>	<i>Follow-Up if verbal warnings are not heeded</i>	<i>Suspension Period if written warning is not heeded</i>
Harassment of any kind toward other users or staff; viewing obscene content on library or personal computers/devices; soliciting or panhandling; using the restrooms inappropriately such as bathing and laundering; monopolizing library space and resources; use of profanity or threatening language likely to provoke others; disobeying the direction of library staff.	Written warning	Minimum 3 months suspension period but may be longer; suspension period is contingent on the advisement from law enforcement officials and City Attorney

Level Three: Library staff will summon the San Mateo Police Dept. in response to criminal activity in the Library. A suspension (banning) letter will be issued by the City Librarian to the patron at the time of the arrest. The suspension period will be contingent on the nature of the violation; and the Library will consult with law enforcement officials and the City Attorney's office. Because of the egregious nature of criminal activity, the Library will not issue a warning letter.

<i>Level Three: Violations stemming from criminal activity in the Library--examples may include but are not limited to the following:</i>	<i>Suspension Period</i>
Theft of library materials or theft of belongings of other users or staff; vandalism of library property or personal belongings of other users or staff (enforcement of vandalism will require paying restitution for the damaged items); possession and/or use of alcohol or illegal drugs; engaging in physical altercations such as fighting.	Minimum 1 year suspension but may be longer including the possibility of permanent banning; suspension period is contingent on the advisement from law enforcement officials and City Attorney