

# Somerset County Library System – Policy Manual

## **CHAPTER IV - OPERATION OF THE LIBRARY SYSTEM**

### **B. Conduct in the Library**

- A. The Somerset County Library System of New Jersey (SCLSNJ) endeavors to provide a safe, inviting and comfortable environment in library buildings and on library grounds in which all persons are able to make use of library resources and services. To maintain this objective fairly and consistently, SCLSNJ has established a policy governing the conduct of all library users. This policy prohibits any activity that violates or restricts the rights of others to use the library, causes damage to library property, disrupts the normal functioning of the library whether or not the disruption is intentional, or elevates the library staff's concern about the safety and well-being of a child, teen or adult.
- B. Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to, the following:
- a. Talking loudly or engaging in other noisy activities;
  - b. Interfering with another person's use of the library;
  - c. Using obscene or hate language;
  - d. Talking on cellular phones or using personal electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, laptops, and tablets that are not muted or have an audible volume, or otherwise being disturbing to others;
  - e. Using library-owned equipment in a manner that is disturbing to others;
  - f. Eating or drinking (except for light snacks and drinks in covered containers), and improperly disposing of remaining items;
  - g. Bringing animals into the library, except service animals;
  - h. Wearing improper attire (patrons must wear shoes, and, as appropriate, pants, shorts, skirts, blouses, shirts, dresses, etc.);
  - i. Engaging in inappropriate displays of affection;
  - j. Running inside the library building;
  - k. Using library furnishings in a manner for which they are not intended, such as sitting on tables or placing feet on furniture;
  - l. Sleeping;
  - m. Soliciting or panhandling;
  - n. Having offensive body hygiene that constitutes a nuisance to others, or that may cause damage to library property;
  - o. Bathing or doing laundry;
  - p. Violating any municipal, state, or federal law, including laws on assault, harassment, disorderly conduct, and reckless endangerment.
- C. Anyone engaged in any of the above activities or other activities that library staff deems to be unsafe or inappropriate will, after warning by library personnel or security officers and failure to heed such warning, be asked to leave the library for the remainder of the

day. Persons who refuse to leave the library will be subject to arrest and prosecution for criminal trespass. Persons engaged in activities in violation of municipal, state, or federal laws will be subject to arrest and prosecution.

- D. Use of the library may be suspended for damaging library property, stealing library materials, or threatening or physically harming staff and/or patrons.
- E. Use of the library may also be suspended due to a pattern of violating the guidelines stated in this policy.
- F. The decision to suspend use of the library and the term of the suspension will be determined by the Director of Public Services after consultation with the department and/or branch manager where the offense occurred. The individual whose use of the library has been suspended may appeal to the County Library Administrator to amend the decision or to reinstate his/her privileges.
- G. All provisions of this policy shall be enforced in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.
- H. Personal Property:
  - a. SCLSNJ is not responsible for personal property. Library users are advised to keep all personal property with them at all times.
  - b. SCLSNJ does not take responsibility for identifying or contacting the owners of lost property. Personal items left by library users who are not present are subject to disposal.
  - c. SCLSNJ reserves the right to limit the amount of personal property that any individual may bring into the library building or on to library grounds at one time. SCLSNJ may contact local authorities to report unattended backpacks, bags or other items that have been left in the building or on library grounds.

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