

Kent County Public Library Rules of Conduct Policy

Policy: Kent County Public Library is designed to be a safe and comfortable place for all members of the public to use. Patrons are expected to observe the rights of other patrons and staff members and to refrain from willfully annoying, harassing, or threatening other people. Behaviors that interfere with normal operation of the library; restrict another patron's ability to use the library; or result in vandalism or destruction of library property will be addressed in order to protect the safety and well-being of patrons and staff and to protect the library's materials and facilities.

KCPL has a zero tolerance towards high risk behavior that creates unsafe situations for patrons or staff and/or violates local, state, or federal laws. Staff should immediately alert a senior staff member and the police should be called to address high risk behavior.

Concerns about the behavior of library patrons should be brought to the attention of KCPL staff members who will assess and address the situation, as needed, in accordance with their training and this policy.

It must be emphasized that there are situations which may make staff or patrons uncomfortable, but which involve no violation of law or policy. These situations should be tolerated with good humor and courtesy.

During a public health crisis it may be necessary to modify operations to provide maximum safety for staff and patrons. Patrons may be given access to the building in a limited capacity. These restrictions will depend on recommendations from governmental agencies, health professionals and organizations

By Order of the Governor of Maryland : any business, organization, establishment, or facility in the State of Maryland may require its customers over the age of two, visitors over the age of two, and/or staff to wear Face Coverings. A business, organization, establishment, or facility that elects to do so shall post signage at each entrance advising customers, visitors, and/or staff about such requirement.

Symptomatic patron: Alert person in charge who will evaluate the situation. Patron may be asked to leave the building. If they don't comply, situation will be reported to law enforcement for action they deem appropriate. The incident will

be also be reported to the Kent County Health Department and guidance sought on next steps to be taken.

Date Revised: June 10, 2020

Signature: 

Definitions: “Disruptive Behavior” – Any actions that consciously or unconsciously violate or restrict the abilities of others to use the library or interfere with normal operation of the library.

“Harassment” – Any actions intentionally taken to produce psychological or physical discomfort, embarrassment, or ridicule.

“High Risk Behavior” – Any actions that in the view of the Library Supervisor on duty may be a violation of law or create or create a situation that is volatile and/or potentially dangerous to self or others.

Procedures:

The goal of addressing disruptive behavior is to make patrons aware of how their behaviors are impacting others and gently encourage them to make different choices. Staff should be calm and professional when approaching patrons and use non-judgmental language when explaining why a behavior is disruptive. Staff may offer a written copy of the behavior policy, if needed, and should offer to answer any questions patrons may have.

KCPL utilizes an incremental approach to address *disruptive behavior*. The following guidelines help to ensure that all staff members are able to apply this policy consistently and equitably:

- First Warning – Staff will approach the patron, explain that the behavior is problematic (e.g., interfering with library operations, impacting other patrons, etc.), and ask that the patron stop the behavior.
- Second Warning – Staff will approach the patron, reiterate the request that the patron stop the behavior, and explain that if the patron continues with the behavior they will be asked to leave the library for the rest of the day.

- Request to Leave – If the behavior continues, staff members will notify the person in charge who will approach and inform the patron that they must leave the library property for the remainder of the day. If possible, two staff members should be present at this request.

If the patron refuses to leave when asked or exhibits high risk behaviors at any point, staff should disengage from the patron, alert a senior staff member, and/or call the police.

An incident report will be completed anytime a patron is asked to leave library property due to disruptive or high risk behavior. The Executive Director will inform the Board of Trustees that an incident report has been filed.

When police are contacted, an incident report should be completed by the senior staff member who interacted with the police. Depending on the situation, additional incident reports may be requested from staff who observed the initial behavior.

Banning Patrons from Library Property

Patrons who repeatedly engage in disruptive behavior may be banned from library property for varying lengths of time at the discretion of the Library Director.

Patrons who engage in high risk behavior will be banned from library property either temporarily or permanently depending on the nature of the behavior.

When a patron is banned from the library, the patron will receive a verbal notice. In addition, a certified letter from the Library Director explaining the ban will be sent to document the offense and make the parameters of the ban clear. In the event that a minor is banned, the letter will be sent to the minor's parent or legal guardian. The Board of Trustees will also be informed and the President of the Board will be consulted before the letter is sent.

If the certified letter is not able to be delivered, the patron will receive a copy of the letter if they enter the property after the ban and the police will be notified.