



## **Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield Code of Conduct**

### **Purpose**

The objective of the Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield is to provide a full range of library services to individuals of all ages. Library service will not be denied or abridged because of race, religion, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, national origin, belief, social, or political views. The objective of this policy is to ensure that PLJCS provides each community member with a welcoming, pleasant, and safe environment free from harassment, physical discomfort, danger, and psychological / emotional stress. The library intends to continue to provide services with a minimum of regulations and restrictions.

### **Overview and definitions**

Any behavior or activity on library grounds that is disruptive, hinders a person's ability to use the library or poses a threat to the safety and wellbeing of patrons or staff is strictly prohibited.

It is at the library staff's discretion to identify/determine if a patron is engaged in any prohibited or disruptive conduct. Prohibited conduct includes any illegal activity defined by County, State, or Federal law. In pursuit of this policy the Library Board of Trustees shall support the library staff in their efforts to maintain a welcoming, safe environment for all patrons. The following examples of disruptive or unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to:

### **Level I disruptions -**

- Soliciting, petitioning, and posting notices, fundraising, selling, canvassing or distributing any written material unless authorized by the Library Director.
- Using the library as a place to conduct business or sales.
- Loud talking, screaming, or using audio equipment or cell phones that disturbs or could disturb other patrons.
- Use of library telephones not authorized by library personnel.
- Congregating or loitering around the entrance/exits, stairways, or any other library property in a manner that blocks easy access to the library's facilities for patrons or staff.
- Drinks not in covered containers such as plastic bottles or cups with lids. No meals are allowed in public areas.
- Smoking on the property, which includes tobacco products or vaping.
- Sleeping in the library or on the grounds and/or occupying excessive space beyond that of a reasonable footprint.
- Failure to wear proper attire at all times in the library. Shirts and shoes are required. Babies that are being carried are exempt from the shoe requirement.
- Performing personal hygiene, including shaving, bathing, or washing clothes in restrooms.

- Bringing animals into the library building or on library property, other than service animals as defined by the American with Disabilities Act 35.136.
- The use of sports or recreational equipment on the property, including skateboarding or skating, is not allowed.
- Running, climbing, or jumping in the building.
- Misuse of library furnishings, materials, or equipment.
- Parking in the bookmobile driveway or library entrances is not allowed.
- Using cellphones in the computer lab.
- Wearing head gear or facial covering except for medical or religious reasons.
- Leaving personal items unattended on library grounds (The library is not responsible for the loss or theft of unattended items).
- Failure to exit the building at closing and/or not following directions from staff during an emergency.
- Entering into non-public areas, unless by invitation or approval of library personnel.

### **Level II disruptions -**

- Willfully annoying or harassing staff or patrons.
- Using obscene, abusive language, or engaging in inappropriate actions toward staff or patrons.
- Engaging in boisterous or disruptive behavior such as fighting or threatening to fight, pushing, shoving or throwing things.
- Staring at or intimidating patrons or library staff in a way that is disruptive or can reasonably be expected to disturb.
- Failure to follow the library's Computer and Internet Access Policy, such as displaying inappropriate materials.
- Parents/Legal Guardians leaving children under the age of 10 in the library unattended.
- Failure of parents/legal guardians to pick up their child(ren) before closing time. If the parent or guardian does not arrive within 15 minutes of closing, staff will notify the police.
- Removal of material from the library collection without authorization through established lending procedure.
- Engaging in any other behaviors deemed inappropriate by applicable laws.

### **Level III disruptions -**

- Threatening or committing acts of physical violence against staff or patrons.
- Carrying unauthorized weapons of any sort.
- Consuming alcohol, illegal substances, or being intoxicated within the library.
- Sexual activities.
- Unwelcomed interaction with minors.
- Leaving vulnerable individuals (i.e. individuals with a mental or physical impairment who are unable to protect themselves from abuse or exploitation or comprehend and comply with library policies) alone or unattended in the library.
- Theft or defacement of library property.

## Procedure

Library staff will deal with disruptive behavior according to the guidelines of this policy and may contact law enforcement whenever deemed appropriate.

- For Level I disruptions: The library patron will receive up to two verbal warnings. If the disruptive behavior continues, the patron may be asked to leave the library for the day, and an Incident Report will be submitted to record the event.
- For Level II disruptions: Based on the judgement of a staff member, the patron may be given a warning, may be ordered to leave the Library immediately for a stated amount of suspension, or the police may be called. An Incident Report will be submitted to record the event.
- For Level III disruptions or repeated violation of the rules may result in a patron being banned from the library and/or permanently denied services. Any person who fails to comply with a request from library staff shall be considered to be trespassing, and the staff person in charge will contact the police. The Library Director, or designee, is authorized to ban violators from the premises for a specified amount of time or permanently, depending on the severity of the violation. An Incident Report will be submitted to record the event

Incidents of unacceptable behavior may result in one or more of the following actions or disciplinary procedures:

- Oral warning
- Written warning
- Immediate dismissal or banning from the library

An individual excluded from the Library property may appeal in writing to the Library Director. Decisions of the Director may be appealed in writing to the Library Board.

In the event a person is banned from the library per this policy, the library director will:

- Notify the person in writing
- Notate the ban on the person's account, if applicable
- Notify staff members of result
- Notify other Johnston County Affiliated Libraries.