



## Safety Policy

The Geneva Public Library's Safety Policy is intended to protect the rights and safety of Library users, protect the rights and safety of staff members, and preserve and protect the Library's materials, facilities, and property. The Library strives to provide a safe space for people of all ages and backgrounds, to operate its premises safely, and to reduce the chance of harm.

The Library encourages and seeks mutual respect among patrons, and between patrons and Library staff.

### 1. Guidelines

Library users must not engage in the following prohibited behaviors.

#### 1.1 Illegal Activities, including but not limited to:

- Committing or attempting to commit any activity that constitutes a violation of any federal, state or local statute or ordinance.
- Engaging in sexual conduct or lewd behavior on Library premises, as defined under New York Penal Law. (New York State Penal Code, Section 245 Public lewdness)
- Use of controlled substances on Library premises. (New York State Penal Code, Section 220)
- Smoking or other use of tobacco on Library premises. (New York State Public Health Code, Section 1399)
- Drinking alcoholic beverages on Library premises except for in Library sponsored programs approved by the Board of Trustees.

#### 1.2 Harmful, Disruptive, or Destructive behavior, including but not limited to:

- Engaging in conduct that disrupts or interferes with the normal operation of the Library, or disturbs staff and Library users. Such conduct includes:
  - The use of abusive or threatening language or gestures.
  - Loud or boisterous behavior or talking, on a cell phone or otherwise.
- Using Library materials, equipment, furniture, fixtures or buildings in a destructive, abusive or potentially damaging manner, in a manner likely to cause personal injury to any person, or in any other manner inconsistent with the customary use thereof.
- Disobeying the reasonable direction of Library staff members.
- Soliciting, petitioning or distributing written materials or canvassing on Library premises for any purpose without express permission of the Library staff.
- Interfering with the free passage of Library staff members or users in or onto Library premises including, but not limited to, placing objects such as bicycles, strollers, shopping carts or bags in such a manner as to impede free passage in or onto the premises. The Library also reserves the right to limit the size and number of items brought into the Library.
- Parking vehicles on Library premises for purposes other than library use. Vehicles parked in violation of this rule may be towed at the owner's expense.

#### 1.3 Other inappropriate behavior:

- Use of any communication or entertainment devices at a volume that disturbs others, with or without headphones.
- Sleeping inside the Library or anywhere on Library property.
- Entering the Library with bare feet or bare chest.
- Use of Library restrooms for bathing, shaving, or washing hair.
- Disturbing other patrons because of offensive body odor.
- Unhygienic behavior such as spitting, clipping nails, or changing diapers in public areas.
- Wearing hoods, or other clothing items specifically communicated to a patron by Library staff, that reduce the Library's ability to identify a patron involved in a safety incident.

The Library may act, in accordance with the [Suspension of Access Policy](#), to remove individuals who become either a threat to themselves or to others, become disruptive to Library services, or appear to be engaged in unlawful behavior. Library staff members may ask a Library user to leave the premises with or without prior warning, depending upon the seriousness of the violation. Criminal violations may result in prosecution under state and/or federal law.

Violations of these policies and rules by Library staff are subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

## 2. Youth Safety

Youth (ages 0-17) are not allowed at the Library while school is in session, unless they are accompanied by a parent, guardian, or school-appointed tutor. Library staff reserve the right to ask individuals to provide photo ID to verify proof of age.

Children under the age of nine must always be accompanied by a responsible adult while in the Library, unless the children are participating in a Library program and the parent/guardian has spoken with the Youth Services Librarian or Youth Services Assistant. Parents and guardians may designate a responsible adult to act as their representative for a child while in the Library.

Parents/guardians are responsible for the behavior of their children in the Library, whether or not the parent/guardian is present. Although Library staff attempt to ensure the safety of children in the Library, their duties as providers of Library services prevent them from being able to supervise each individual child. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians, and not that of the Library staff, to supervise their children.

Library staff are committed to:

- Helping children find materials for educational and recreational pursuits;
- Providing an environment that encourages study and exploration;
- Planning programs that inform and enrich.

Parents/guardians and guardians are responsible for ensuring that:

- Children act in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Section 1;
- Children's behavior does not present a safety hazard to themselves, other users, or Library property;
- Children's behavior does not interfere with the use and enjoyment of the Library by others.

## 3. Safety Procedures

### 3.1 Unattended Children Under Age 9

If it is determined that a child is lost or unattended, a staff member will attempt to locate the

parent/guardian or responsible adult through the following steps:

1. Ask the child where their parent/guardian is and attempt to locate the parent/guardian in the building.
2. If the parent/guardian is not found in the building, a Library staff member will stay with the child until a parent/guardian arrives at the Library.
3. If the parent/guardian has not arrived within an hour, or if the Library is closing, the person in charge will call the police.
4. Under no circumstances will a Library staff member take a child out of the Library building. If the Library has been closed, then two staff members will wait with the child inside the Library building. No staff member will take the child home.

### **3.2 Disruptive Attended Children**

1. Children who are disruptive will be asked by Library staff to correct the behavior.
2. If the disruptive behavior continues, a staff member will inform the parent/guardian that their child is disturbing others.
3. If the parent/guardian refuses or is unable to control the behavior of the child, the family will be asked to leave the Library.

## **4. Suspension of Privileges for Health and Safety Reasons**

It is the responsibility of the Library to maintain a healthy and clean environment for all Library users and to protect our funders' investment in Library collections, equipment, and property. In order to fulfill this responsibility, the Library may restrict a user's ability to borrow materials and/or to visit Library facilities when such use may jeopardize the health and cleanliness of Library facilities, collections, and users.

Examples of situations where borrowing of materials may be suspended include, but are not limited to:

- Evidence that items on loan to a customer may have been returned with insects that are known to be damaging to Library materials, e.g. roaches, termites, silverfish, and some types of beetles
- Evidence that items on loan to a customer may have been returned with insects that can result in pest infestations in Library facilities, e.g. bed bugs, ants, or roaches
- Evidence that items on loan to customers may have been returned with fungi that can be damaging to Library materials, e.g. black mold

Examples of situations where access to Library facilities may be suspended include, but not be limited to:

- Patrons or patron possessions have bed bugs, fleas, or lice
- Patrons with clothing that is stained with urine or feces

Should it become necessary to suspend the borrowing privileges of a patron in order to protect Library collections, notification of the suspension will be made by the Library Director or his/her designee.

Suspensions from the building will be made in accordance with the Library's [Suspension of Patron Access Policy](#). Access to facilities and borrowing will be restored when the suspended patron demonstrates that the situation that caused the loss of privileges has been remediated.

For reinstatement requests relating to suspensions due to pest infestation, decisions will be made based upon evidence showing that the address in question has been inspected with no sign of infestation or that the residence has been treated. Confirming information may include copies of receipts for treatment, a letter from a licensed pest control company or a written statement from the owner or property manager of a multi-family rental residence. In some circumstances, proof of a change of residential address may also be accepted.

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