

DENNIS P. MCHUGH PIERMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY
PATRON CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

*Approved by the Board of Trustees on 9/8/2010, revised 11/2/2011, revised 7/10/2019, revised 7/14/2021,
revised 7/15/2026*

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Patron Code of Conduct Policy (“Policy”) is to ensure that all persons (“Patrons”) using Library facilities, services, resources, programs, and property may do so in a safe, orderly, equitable, and welcoming environment.

The Library is a limited public forum for reading, learning, research and lawful library activities including the receipt and communication of information, ideas, and knowledge. The Library reserves the right to establish reasonable rules governing conduct on Library property and during Library-sponsored activities.

II. Scope

This Policy applies to all Patrons during all hours of operation and during any authorized after-hours use of:

1. Library-owned property.
- 2.
3. Digital and online Library environments.
4. Off-site events or programs sponsored by the Library.

III. Patron Responsibilities

Patrons shall:

1. Comply with all Library policies, procedures, and posted regulations.
2. Respect the rights of other Patrons and Staff to use and work in Library facilities without disruption, intimidation, harassment, or interference.
3. Attire properly by covering torsos reasonably and wearing shoes at all times.
4. Use Library facilities, materials, equipment, and resources in a lawful and reasonable manner.

5. Refrain from talking on cell phones or conducting audio or video conferences (such as Zoom, Whats App) in public areas unless the Library conference room is properly reserved by the Patrons for such purposes.
6. Report any concerns to the Library Staff, which will be documented and kept confidential, and follow instructions provided by Library Staff.
7. Maintain personal hygiene and bodily conditions consistent with the safe and comfortable use of the Library by other Patrons without interference of health or sanitation concerns. Patrons whose bodily hygiene is disruptive to others may be asked to leave the Library.

IV. Prohibited Conduct

The following conduct is prohibited on Library property or at Library-sponsored events to ensure a safe, orderly, and comfortable environment in which all Library Patrons and Staff are able to use the Library's resources most effectively. Library Staff has the authority to make a determination of a prohibited conduct depending on a specific situation and potential threat to the safety of the Patrons and issue instructions to the Patrons.

The examples below of Prohibited Conduct are illustrative and not all-encompassing or exhaustive. Violations of the rules may result in suspension of Library privileges and/or referral to law enforcement. **(See Section VII below)**

List of Prohibited Conduct

1. Disruptive or Unsafe Behavior, such as:
 - a. Behavior that unreasonably disrupts Library operations or interferes with another person's use and enjoyment of the Library.
 - b. Loud, abusive, threatening, obscene, or discriminatory language or gestures.
 - c. Harassment, intimidation, stalking, staring, or unwanted physical contact.
 - d. Fighting or threatening physical violence.
 - e. Conduct that creates unsafe conditions or public disturbances.
 - f. Running, horseplay, or reckless conduct.
 - g. Refusal to comply with reasonable Staff directives.
2. Illegal Conduct, such as:
 - a. Theft, vandalism, or destruction of Library property.
 - b. Possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs or controlled substances.
 - c. Public intoxication or impairment affecting safe or orderly conduct.

- d. Possession or use of weapons in violation of applicable laws.
- e. Sexual misconduct, indecent exposure, or lewd behavior.
- f. Trespassing or unauthorized entry into restricted areas.

3. Misuse of Library Facilities or Property, such as:

- a. Damaging, defacing, altering, or improperly moving or removing Library property.
- b. Tampering with Library equipment, security devices, networks, or computer systems.
- c. Using furniture, fixtures, or spaces in a manner inconsistent with their intended purposes.
- d. Blocking entrances, exits, aisles, stairways, or access points.
- e. Bringing bicycles, carts, or large personal belongings into public areas of the Library, including the porch.
- f. Biking, skateboarding, rollerblading, rollerskating, or scooter riding on the Library's front porch or ramp.
- g. Using the Library as sleeping accommodations, resulting in disturbing other Patrons or Library Staff and Volunteers. A sleeping Patron may be awakened by Library Staff due to concern for the Patron's health or well-being.
- h. Occupying seating or floor space in a manner that interferes with Library operations or public access.
- i. Storing unattended personal property for an extended period of time. Unattended personal property may be reported to the local police department at the discretion of the Staff. The Library assumes no responsibility for unattended items. Items left in the Library may be kept in the lost and found for 10 days and then disposed of.
- j. Taking Library materials into the restrooms.
- k. Using the restrooms for activities such as bathing, shaving, hair trimming, and laundering.
- l. Failing to maintain personal hygiene to the extent that it creates a health or safety risk or materially interferes with others' use of the Library.

4. Consumptions of Food, Beverage, Tobacco and Cannabis Products, and Animals

- a. Consumption of non-alcoholic beverages is permitted in the Library with the exception of areas near Library computers or other electrical equipment. In order to prevent damage to Library materials and for the safety of other Patrons, a lid must be securely kept on all cups/containers holding beverages.
- b. Use of tobacco or cannabis products including e-cigarettes is prohibited throughout the Library building and on Library property, within 100 feet of entrances and exits per NYS Public Health Law 1399.
- c. Consumption of food is prohibited in all public areas of the Library, with the exception of Library-approved events, meetings, and programs.
- d. Consumption of alcohol is prohibited unless approved by the Library for authorized events.
- e. Animals are prohibited except service animals as defined by applicable law.

5. Solicitation and Commercial Activities

Unless expressly authorized by the Library Director or designee, Patrons shall not:

- a. Solicit money, donations, signatures, or memberships.
- b. Sell goods or services.
- c. Distribute literature or post notices.
- d. Conduct commercial activity, demonstrations, or organized campaigns.
- e. Petition or distribute written materials or canvass for political, charitable, or religious purposes.

6. Technology and Internet Use

Patrons are not permitted to:

- a. Have unauthorized access to computer systems or networks.
- b. Disable, damage, or circumvent security measures.
- c. Violate copyright, licensing, or intellectual property laws.
- d. View or display unlawful contents.
- e. Videotape or photograph Library premises, Library Staff, or members of the public using Library spaces in scenarios that conflict with the rules as outlined in the Library's Photography and Video/Audio Policy (see the policy for further details)..

V. Minors and Vulnerable Individuals

1. Parents, guardians, and caregivers are solely responsible for the supervision, safety, and conduct of minors and vulnerable individuals in their care. Children age 11 and under must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or other responsible caregiver.
2. The Library does not assume custodial responsibility for unattended persons.
3. Please refer to the Library's Policy on Use of the Library by Children for complete details.

VI. Enforcement Authority

1. The Library Director may designate authority to Staff to interpret and enforce this Policy to ensure a safe, orderly, equitable, and welcoming environment for all Patrons.
2. Patrons observing violations of this policy and experiencing threats to their safety and enjoyment of the Library may file a verbal or written complaint using a form provided by

the Library Staff. The Staff will keep a record of such complaints while maintaining confidentiality of the Patrons.

3. Designated Library Staff may take reasonable action necessary to maintain order, safety, and proper use of Library facilities, including providing verbal reminders of the Library rules, directing Patrons to cease prohibited conduct or leave Library property and contacting emergency responders or law enforcement when appropriate.

4. Failure to comply with this Policy or with Staff directives may result in suspension or revocation of Library privileges and/or removal from Library property. Suspensions and exclusions may be issued by the Library Director or authorized designee. Such suspensions will be kept confidential by the Library Staff.

VII. Exclusion and Suspension Procedures

Violations of this Policy may result in any of the following actions, depending on the severity and frequency of the conduct:

1. Verbal warning.
2. Immediate removal from Library property.
3. Suspension of Library privileges for a specified period.
4. Long-term or permanent exclusion from Library property.
5. Referral to law enforcement or other governmental authorities.

VIII. Appeals

1. A Patron subject to suspension or exclusion exceeding 30 days may submit a written appeal to the Board of Trustees within 5 business days of notice of the action.
2. The Board shall hold a hearing within 30 days after the appeal has been filed. The appellant shall be notified at least 10 days before the hearing. Within 10 days of the completion of the hearing, the Board shall notify the appellant of their decision.
3. The decision of the Board shall constitute the Library's final administrative determination.

IX. Compliance with Law

This Policy shall be interpreted and applied consistent with:

1. The United States Constitution;
2. Applicable State constitutions;
3. Federal, NY State, and local civil rights laws;
4. Disability access laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
5. All relevant and applicable New York Public Library statutes and regulations.

If any provision of this Policy is determined invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.