

PHOENIXVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY POLICY MANUAL

BEHAVIOR

Policy Statement

The Phoenixville Public Library welcomes and encourages the use of its facilities and resources by the public. Library customers are encouraged to assist staff in maintaining a safe environment with equal access to all.

Library Guidelines for Public Behavior

Customers shall not interfere with the use of the Library by other customers, or interfere with Library employees' performance of their duties. Such interference can include noisy, rowdy, boisterous, aggressive, or and disruptive behavior.

Cell phone use is acceptable if it does not interfere with others' use of the library. Customers are asked to observe cell phone courtesy in the library: low voice, short conversation, low ringer.

Sleeping in the library is considered interference with others' use of the library if the sleeping individual is snoring, reclining, or using seating intended for more than one person.

Soliciting in the library is prohibited.

Nonalcoholic beverages and snack foods are permitted in the Library, except in the Computer Centers. The use of tobacco products in the Library is prohibited.

Any materials removed from the Library must be checked out on a valid library card. This does not pertain to free handouts.

Library materials may not be taken into the restrooms.

Customers must wear shoes and shirts in the Library. ~~Shirts and shoes are required.~~

Animals assisting Library users with disabilities are permitted in the Library. Other animals may not be brought inside.

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The Phoenixville Public Library assumes no responsibility for the personal belongings of customers while using the library.

Staff reserves the right to inspect any bags, briefcases, or purses.

Failure to follow these guidelines may result in expulsion from the Library by staff and/or denial of privileges by the Executive Library Director. Any customer whose privileges have been denied may have the decision reviewed by the Library Board of Trustees.

~~Staff reserves the right to inspect any bags, briefcases, or purses.~~

General Information/Introduction

The following information should assist staff in understanding the purposes of the policy and the spirit in which it is to be implemented. The Phoenixville Public Library Board and staff have endorsed the following guidelines, based upon constitutional principles, in developing and approving a policy for library behavior.

Taken from the American Library Association's *Proposed Guidelines for the Development of Policies Regarding User Behavior and Library Usage*.

- Regulation of customer behavior must be approached within the framework of the law including local and state statutes and constitutional standards under the First and Fourteenth Amendments, as referring to due process and equal treatment under the law.
- Public library service is based on the First Amendment right of free expression. Public libraries are recognized as limited public forums for access to information and may be held to a higher standard of constitutional review than may be required of other public services and facilities.
- The government has a significant interest in maintaining a library environment that is conducive to all users' exercise of their constitutionally protected right to receive information. This interest authorizes publicly supported libraries to maintain a safe and healthy environment in which library users and staff can be free from harassment, intimidation, and threats to their safety and well-being.

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Restrictions

- Should apply only to those activities that materially interfere with the public's right of access to library facilities, the safety of users and staff and the protection of library resources and facilities;
- Should be based upon actual behavior and not upon arbitrary distinctions between individuals and classes of individuals;
- Should not restrict access to the library by persons who merely inspire anger, annoyance, or negative subjective reactions; and
- Must be enforced evenhandedly.

Implementation

It is the policy of the Phoenixville Public Library to treat all Library customers equally, fairly, and respectfully and assume that all persons have a legitimate reason for being in the Library. However, there are circumstances, when handling difficult situations, which call for a reasoned but firm response. At such times, staff must use common sense and a positive attitude. Although the following guidelines do offer steps toward resolution in a number of circumstances, staff members need to understand the intent of these procedures as well as the specific recommendations. All staff have a responsibility to be aware of potential problems and alert the Person In Charge (PIC) ~~person-in-charge~~ and/or other staff when they sense a potential problem, as well as an actual problem.

Basic Staff Guidelines

Determine whether the condition is life-threatening. If so, call 911 immediately.

If staff witnesses or is informed of a crime, immediately notify other staff and/or the PIC ~~person-in-charge~~ to call 911.

If staff observes unusual behavior, they are to report their observations to other staff and/or the PIC ~~person-in-charge~~.

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Record all incidents (behavior problems or other unusual occurrences) in the Incident Report Log.

General Staff Guidelines

1. Always attempt to handle the problem positively. Inform customers of the guideline(s) and ask for compliance. Customers may, in fact, be unaware that their behavior is disturbing others or is against Library guidelines.
2. When positive techniques fail, staff or the ~~PIC~~person-in-charge may issue a warning to the customer.

First Warning: Warnings should be delivered in a neutral voice, should restate the guideline and offer the consequences if the behavior does not stop. Consequences might be asking one or more individuals to leave the Library.

In some situations having other staff and/or the ~~PIC~~person-in-charge present while staff delivers the warning may reinforce the seriousness of the situation to the customer.

When appropriate, warnings and/or discussion of problems should take place out of range of other customers, but not in an isolated place.

Staff is not to argue, reason with, or communicate any option to the difficult customers other than the following, and staff is to share the following statement with them the first time (use it as a guide):

“In this library you are expected to be quiet. You can read, study, or do research. Your behavior is not appropriate and you are disturbing the staff and other customers. You can stay here and be quiet or you can leave. Please cooperate with us. If I have to come over again, I will ask you to leave.”

3. Applying the consequences: When Library customers fail to heed the First Warning, the consequences stated should be applied. If the consequence is having a customer leave, staff and/or the ~~PIC~~person-in-charge will escort him/her to the door. Do not touch the customer. If separating a noisy group, stand by while they comply.

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- a) If staff does go over to customers a second time, they should advise them as follows (absolutely no exceptions):
“I have given you your warning. You’re not playing by the rules. I’m asking you to leave and not to come back today. If you do not leave the Library property or if you do come back, the police may arrest you for trespassing and could issue you a citation that could cost you up to \$300.00 plus court costs.”
- b) If at all possible, have another staff member go to the phone and call 911 before going to the customers to ask them to leave. When the police arrive, follow up with them.

Customer refuses to leave: When Library customers have been asked to leave the building and refuse to do so, staff and/or the ~~PIC person in charge~~ tells them that they have no alternative but to call the police. If they still do not leave, staff or ~~PIC person in charge~~ will call 911.

Unattended Children

During library hours, children 8 years old and under must be under the care of an adult or responsible teenager at all times, including while the adult is using a public computer or looking for library materials.

Guidelines for Staff Implementation

1. If a staff member becomes aware of a child under the age of 9 alone in the library, the child’s caregiver should be located and asked to stay with the child. A child is considered alone even if the caregiver is in the library but far from the child.
2. If the caregiver cannot be located, the staff member should inform the PIC and escort the child to the Children’s Library. The PIC or designated Children’s Library staff should attempt to contact a caregiver.
 - a. If that person is expected within 30 minutes, Children’s Library staff should keep the child under observation until the caregiver arrives. When the caregiver arrives, staff should
 - explain Library Policy about unattended children;

- say that no public place, including the Library, can guarantee the safety of a young child alone;
 - tell the person that, if he or she had not come, 911 would have been called.
- b. If the child does not know when the caregiver will return but can give contact information, staff should try to reach the caregiver.
- If successful, ask the person to come immediately for the child. If the person cannot come within 30 minutes, tell him or her that 911 will be called to pick up the child. (PIC and Children's Library staff may use some discretion in determining if an extension of the 30 minute time limit is appropriate.)
 - If not successful in reaching the caregiver, notify Person In Charge. Call 911 and inform them of situation. Notify other staff to be alert for the caregiver looking for the child so that the caregiver can be properly directed.
- c. If child cannot give contact information, call 911 as above.
3. If a staff member becomes concerned about the behavior or the vulnerability of an unaccompanied child 9 years of age or older, *
- a. staff member should notify the PIC and the Children's Library, who will assess the situation together.
 - b. if in their judgment the situation requires parental involvement, staff should follow the steps given above for contacting a caregiver or, if necessary, calling 911.
 - c. Like all other members of the public, unaccompanied children of any age, as well as children who are accompanied, must abide by the Library's Behavior Policy.

At Closing Time

Children under the age of 16 who are unattended or waiting for transportation when the Library closes will be monitored and assisted by staff until transportation or 911 responders arrive. Staff will not provide transportation to children under any circumstances.

Guidelines for Staff Implementation

If children under the age of 16 are waiting outside the Library entrance at closing, the PIC or designee will monitor them from inside the Library while closing procedures are completed. After ten minutes the PIC will call 911, report the situation, and wait with another staff member until responders arrive.

1. At closing, the PIC or designee will
 - a. ask any unattended children if they are expecting a ride, when the ride is coming, and if they need to use the telephone;
 - b. offer the use of a library telephone to any child.

2. If any children are still waiting outside the library entrance after 10 minutes and when the PIC and staff are ready to leave, the PIC and one other person will wait with the children. At that time, the PIC will
 - a. Ask the name of the children
 - b. Inform them that, for their safety, the Library is calling 911.
 - c. Discourage, but do not physically prevent, children from leaving the area unless they are in imminent danger.*
 - d. Post a notice at entrance stating that “Unattended children are in the care of 911 responders, who may be reached at 610-935-2440.”
 - e. If the ride arrives before the 911 responders, inform the driver that 911 has been called. Call 911 to say the emergency has been resolved.

3. An Incident Report will be completed then or in the morning.

*** Library staff may take action they deem appropriate and necessary to provide for the welfare and safety of an unattended child until a caregiver or emergency responder arrives.**

If staff determines that a situation is life-threatening or that a crime has been committed, 911 should be called immediately.

Approved April, 2003
Revised and approved: 7/11/11

PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS POLICY

Individuals may demonstrate, picket, or seek signatures for petitions outside the building on Library grounds provided they are quiet, orderly and do not block entrances, sidewalks, parking places, or otherwise interfere with access to or use or operation of the library; and provided they do not disturb or harass those entering or leaving the library, or insistently attempt to engage them in conversation.

It is not necessary for demonstrator(s) to request or receive the permission of the Library. The presence of demonstrator(s) does not constitute an endorsement by the Phoenixville Public Library of the opinions or points of view expressed or espoused by the demonstrator(s).

General Information and Background

The Phoenixville Public Library Board of Trustees and staff have used the following guidelines, based upon constitutional principles, in developing and approving this Policy. These guidelines are taken from the American Library Association's Guidelines for the Development of Policies Regarding User Behavior and Library Usage (adopted 1993, revised 2000).

- Regulation of user behavior must be approached within the framework of the ALA Code of Ethics, the Library Bill of Rights and the law, including state and local statutes, constitutional standards under the First and Fourteenth Amendments, due process and equal treatment under the law.
- Publicly supported library service is based upon the First Amendment right of free expression. Publicly supported libraries are recognized as limited public forums for access to information. At least one federal court of appeals has recognized a First Amendment right to receive information in a public library. Library policies and procedures that could impinge upon such rights are subject to a higher standard of

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review than may be required in the policies of other public services and facilities.