

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Hershey Public Library ("Library") strives to create a welcoming, safe, secure, and enjoyable environment for the public to use the facility and library resources.

Library Patrons are able to receive assistance from Library staff and use the Library and its services subject to compliance with the Library's requirements, rules and code of conduct. Library Patrons have a responsibility to behave in a manner that does not violate the rights of others and their use of the Library or interfere with Library services and operations, including Library personnel's performance of their duties. All areas of the Library, including meeting rooms, entrances, restrooms, furnishings, and equipment and virtual meeting space must be used in a manner and form acceptable to the Library for their intended purposes and such use shall be subject to compliance with this policy.

The Library is considered a limited public forum.

General Guidelines for Patrons of the Library:

- Ask for help when needed or if you are not finding the resources you need.
- Be considerate of others.
- Respect the facility, equipment, and materials.
- Be responsible for children under your care.
- Be responsible for personal belongings; do not leave them unattended.
- Follow reasonable staff direction.

Prohibited Behaviors include, but are not limited to:

1. Engaging in intrusive or disruptive conduct that disturbs others, including the use of cell phones.
2. Use of abusive, threatening, harassing, or offensive language. Verbally or physically threatening or harassing any person, including stalking, staring, touching, or using offensive language.
3. Use of Library computers or virtual meeting space to harass or bully others.
4. Use of tobacco in any form, smoking, e-cigarettes, or use of a controlled substance.
5. Soliciting, handing out pamphlets, or selling items with the exception of fundraising activities of the Library or permission from the Library Director or Board of Directors.
6. Wearing inappropriate attire and/or not wearing a shirt or shoes. Appropriate attire, including shirts and shoes, must be worn at all times.
7. Activities (such as bicycling, skateboarding, or running) that present safety hazards.
8. Roller skates, roller blades, skateboards and bicycles are not allowed in the Library. They should not block sidewalks or the entrances to the Library.

9. Library staff is not responsible for a patron's personal belongings. Personal belongings should not be left unattended.
10. The Library reserves the right to inspect all bags, purses, briefcases, packs and the like.
11. The use of audio equipment without headphones. Audio equipment and computers must be used with headphones.
12. Engaging in sexual activity including solicitation, sexual harassment, and indecent exposure.
13. Monopolizing library space or equipment to the exclusion of others.
14. Presenting personal hygiene with offensive and pervasive odors.
15. Failing to leave the premises promptly at closing time or during an emergency evacuation.
16. Leaving individuals needing care or supervision (including children age 12 or under), unattended or unsupervised by a responsible caregiver.
17. Purposeful damage done to Library materials, equipment, furniture or building, or other property of the Library.

Animals in the Library

Animals are not allowed in the Library unless they are service animals or service animals in training (as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act regulations). Exceptions may be granted by the Library for programming purposes. For more information, see Appendix A.

Pets are not permitted in the Library and may not be left unattended on Library property.

Food and Drinks

Non-alcoholic beverages in closed containers and snacks that do not create messes or have a strong odor may be permissible by the Library. Decisions about consumables are at the discretion of Library staff. Please notify staff immediately about any spills or damage.

Any person who violates these rules and regulations may be asked by a staff member to leave the Library or withdraw from virtual meeting space. Access to Library facilities or virtual meeting space may be limited for a period of time if the applicable rules, regulations and the code of conduct are not observed. Library employees may ask for assistance from the local police department. Subsequent or repeated violations may result in the loss or restriction of Library privileges.

Enforcement Procedures

Every effort will be made to respond to unacceptable, questionable and/or disruptive user behavior and/or user behavior that has been the subject of a complaint from a patron or staff in a timely, respectful, direct, and open manner that is consistent and fair.

We prioritize building relationships with our patrons to encourage appropriate and successful use of the Library.

Unlawful activities will be reported to local law enforcement agencies. For violations unlikely to cause immediate harm to others and not perceived to be threatening, the person violating the rules may be given one warning at the discretion of the Library staff; if such behavior continues, the person will be asked to leave the premises for the day. In the event the Library staff determines that the behavior and/or action is of such a nature that the individual is not entitled to a warning and/or that the individual should immediately vacate the property, nothing herein prevents the Library from having the ability to ask the individual to immediately vacate the property.

For violations of these rules that cause or are likely to cause immediate harm to others, the person violating the rules may be immediately excluded from the Library without first being given a warning. Refusal to leave when requested may result in a criminal trespass issued by the Derry Township Police Department. In the case of a minor being excluded, every attempt will be made to contact the child's parent or guardian to give notice of the exclusion.

Exclusions may be made for progressively longer times for repeated violations or when harm or potential harm is involved, ranging in time from one week to permanent exclusion and loss of all library privileges. Library staff may interview witnesses and use security video footage. If additional information surfaces about an infraction, an exclusion length may be adjusted by the Library Director or designee. In a situation where a group of people are implicated in a behavior infraction, Library staff will make efforts to ascertain who is responsible. There may be cases where the whole group is treated equally responsible.

A member whose privileges have been revoked or restricted may have that decision reviewed by the Library Board of Directors by appealing the denial via written request to the Library Director within fourteen (14) days of the denial of Library service.

CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY

Children ages 6 and under must be accompanied by a responsible adult or caregiver at all times. Children ages six through 12 must be in the building with a responsible adult or caregiver at least 18 years of age or older. Children 12 years of age and older must know how to contact a parent or guardian.

Parents/guardians and children are reminded that the Library is a public facility and that they are responsible for the behavior of their children in the Library at all times. Library staff will assist with Library related activities. Appropriate behavior and supervision are the responsibility of the parent/guardian and are expected at all times. Library staff cannot and will not assume the role of parent or caregiver.

A supervisor will contact parents or Child Welfare when concerns exist regarding a child's extended stay in the Library. The Library staff will locate or page children for a caregiver if there is an emergency. Children who are left in the Library at closing without a responsible caregiver will be turned over to local police if the caregiver cannot be reached.

Library staff are not responsible for children who are left at the building and/or who leave the building.

Under no circumstances will Library staff provide transportation for any patron.

Children may be permitted to use the Library phone for short calls related to safety, such as a call for rides, to confirm that they have arrived at the Library safely or are preparing to leave.

If a problem arises with a child of any age and the staff is unable to locate a parent/guardian, the police may be called at the discretion of the Library staff. If a child remains at the Library after closing and the staff is unable to locate a parent/guardian, the police may be called at the discretion of the Library staff.

The Hershey Public Library Code of Conduct will be reviewed and subject to revision every three years or as needed, by Library administration and the Library board.

Board Approved 7/16/2024

Appendix A

Service Animals

In accordance with Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service animals are welcomed and permitted in the library.

The ADA defines a service animal as “a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability.”

The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual’s disability. Service animals are working animals, not pets.

In order to help maintain a pleasant, productive and safe environment for all Library users and staff, the following guidelines for service animals must be observed:

- Service animals must be in physical proximity with their handler and under handler control at all times.
- Service animals may not be left unattended by their handler at any time.
- Service animals must be on a leash or harness at all times unless the use of the leash or harness interferes with the animal’s effective performance of its designated task(s). If the animal cannot be leashed or harnessed, it must be under the handler’s control via voice, signals, or other effective means at all times.
- Service animals must be housebroken and their handler is solely responsible for the care and cleanup of the animal.
- Service animals must not display aggressive or disruptive behavior.*
- Service animals are permitted to accompany their handlers into all areas of the library where members of the public are normally permitted.

Users of service animals are not required to provide documentation of a disability.

Service animals are not required to be licensed or certified by a state or local government or training program, or be identified by a special harness or collar.

Staff may ask two questions: (1) Is the animal a service animal required because of a disability?, and (2) What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?

Owners of service animals will indicate that the animal is a working animal and not a pet.

Staff may not ask about the owner’s disability.

*NOTE: If a service animal’s behavior or actions pose an unreasonable or direct threat to the health or safety of others, it may not remain in the Library. If a service animal is excluded from the Library, the individual with the disability is welcomed to stay and will be reasonably accommodated by Library staff.

Emotional Support Animals

An emotional support animal (ESA) may be an animal that provides emotional support alleviating one or more symptoms or effects of a person's disability.

An ESA does not currently qualify as a service animal under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Library is not required to admit emotional support animals.

Pets

Pets are not permitted in the Library and may not be left unattended on library property.

Exceptions for Library-Sponsored Programs

The Library may offer or sponsor educational programs for the public that include various animals. These animals are permitted in the Library for the duration of the program and must be accompanied by the owner/handler at all times.

<https://americandisabilityrights.org/>

<https://www.ada.gov/archive/animal.htm>

Appendix A adapted from Tinicum Memorial Public Library "Animals in the Library Policy" adopted July 31, 2019. Used with permission.