



Library Code of Conduct Policy

Board Approval: September 25, 2018

Revised: July 30, 2020

Implemented: November 5, 2018

Replaces: General Library Rules; Staff Guidelines for Dealing with Problem Behavior; and Policy Governing Conduct in Colchester-East Hants Regional Library Branches.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to establish rules and regulations governing use of the Colchester-East Hants Public Library, such that maintain a safe and welcoming environment for all.

The Library is for everyone's use and enjoyment. The Library provides free and equitable access to a wide range of knowledge, experience, intellectual activity and thought, in a welcoming and supportive environment. Everyone has the right to equal treatment and access to Library facilities and services, without discrimination or harassment on the basis of any of the protected characteristics set out in the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*.

The Library is committed to maintaining a welcoming environment that ensures the dignity and safety of the public and the staff. The Library asks for your cooperation in supporting this environment.

2.0 APPLICATION

This policy applies to everywhere the Library conducts its business, whether in a physical or virtual environment, including on Library property, in the community, over the phone or email, and online. This policy applies to all individuals in the Library environment, including staff, volunteers, security personnel (where applicable) and the general public.

3.0 REQUIREMENTS / STANDARDS

3.1 Safe and Welcoming Environment for All

- 3.1.1 Everyone is equal in dignity and human rights without regard to: age; race; colour; religion; creed; ethnic, national or aboriginal origin; sex; sexual orientation; physical disability; mental disability; family status; marital status; source of income; gender

identity; gender expression; and all other protected characteristics set out in the *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*.

- 3.1.2 Everyone has the right to equal treatment with respect to access and use of the Library's services and facilities.
- 3.1.3 Discrimination and/or harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- 3.1.4 Library patrons and staff have the right to expect a safe, comfortable environment that supports library service.

3.2 Code of Conduct

- 3.2.1 The Library's Code of Conduct has a three-fold purpose: to protect the rights and safety of Library patrons, to protect the rights and safety of Library staff, and to preserve and protect the Library's materials, facilities and property.
- 3.2.2 The Library is for everyone's enjoyment. Conduct that prevents the enjoyment of the Library by others, or interferes with library operations is not permitted. This includes, but is not limited to the following **minor offenses**:
 - a) Emitting strong, pervasive odours, including odours caused by perfume or cologne that unreasonably interfere with library patron and staff comfort, safety and use of the Library;
 - b) Entering the Library without clothing covering the upper and lower body, or without shoes or other acceptable footwear;
 - c) Bringing animals into the Library, except: service animals, and animals in authorized Library programs;

Persons who commit one or more minor offences (#a - c) will be excluded from the premises until the issue has been corrected.

- d) Soliciting, canvassing and unauthorized selling in and about the Library premises (see *Selling and Soliciting Policy*);
- e) Interfering with free passage on Library premises. This includes restricting passage with bicycles, skateboards, strollers, scooters, animals, large backpacks, or anything that creates obstacles;
- f) Making unreasonable use of the Library's rest rooms, including laundering clothes and bathing;
- g) Smoking or using e-cigarettes inside Library facilities;
- h) Refusing to follow Library procedures or cooperate with staff requests;

Persons who commit one or more minor offences (#d - h) will be given one warning, then will be asked to leave the premises for the day.

- i) Making loud or unreasonable noise or other disturbance, including disruptive use of personal communications and entertainment devices;
- j) Sleeping, lying down, or placing feet on Library furniture;

Persons who commit one or more minor offences (#i - j) will be given two warnings, then will be asked to leave the premises for the day.

3.2.3 Conduct that endangers the rights and safety of Library patrons, staff and property will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to the following **major offenses**:

- k) Engaging in physical altercations including assaults and fighting;
- l) Engaging in sexual activity, including solicitation of prostitution, harassment, or indecent exposure;
- m) Destroying, damaging or defacing Library property;
- n) Committing or attempting to commit a theft;
- o) Possession and/or use of alcohol, cannabis, or illicit drugs;

Whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that a person has committed one or more major offences (#k - o), he/she shall be asked to leave the premises without first being given a warning. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, conduct may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Persons who commit a major offence (#k - o) may have library privileges revoked for a period of up to 1 year.

- p) Engaging in discriminatory, threatening or harassing language or conduct of any kind;

Persons who commit this major offence (#p) will be asked to leave the premises immediately for the day. Any subsequent offences may result in Library privileges being revoked for a period of up to six months. Depending on the seriousness of the offence, conduct may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

3.2.4 Parents and guardians are responsible for the supervision and behavior of their children in and about the library premises; children ages 7 years old and younger must be accompanied by an appropriate caregiver. (See *Safe Child Policy*).

3.2.5 Members of the public are not allowed in “staff only” areas unless authorized.

3.3 Enforcing the Code of Conduct

3.3.1 The Code of Conduct applies to everyone, regardless of age.

3.3.2 Library patrons have a right to address conduct they feel is inappropriate by communicating their concern directly to another patron and/or advising library staff.

3.3.3 Library staff will make every effort to apply these rules in a fair and dignified manner for the benefit of all.

3.3.4 The Library is not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen personal property.

3.3.5 Library staff reserve the right to ask patrons to modify their behavior or to leave the Library premises if they violate the Code of Conduct.

3.3.6 Library staff reserve the right to ask for the identification card in respect of each service dog team, issued by the Province, in accordance with the *Service Dog Act*.

3.3.7 Library staff reserve the right to notify the appropriate law enforcement agency if an individual fails to heed staff requests.

3.3.8 Illegal activity, including damage to Library material and property, may result in cost recovery charges and/or prosecution.

3.4 Responsibilities of Library Staff

- 3.4.1 Library staff will take a proactive approach addressing inappropriate conduct by:
- Notifying the appropriate law enforcement agency or emergency service when a patron's conduct poses an **immediate threat** to the life, safety or health of any person;
 - Communicating directly to the patron by telling him/her that their conduct is inappropriate and reviewing this policy with them when a patron's conduct is **non-threatening**, as appropriate to the situation;
 - Seeking the appropriate authority (security personnel or supervisor on duty) when uncomfortable approaching a situation alone, and/or when a library suspension or exclusion is required;
 - Writing incident reports for incidents in which they are either directly involved or witnessed, and submitting them to the supervisor on duty (or designate).
- 3.4.2 Library staff will not use physical force. In cases where voluntary compliance is not achieved, the appropriate law enforcement agency may be called for assistance.
- 3.4.3 Library staff will not try to prevent anyone from leaving the Library premises.
- 3.4.4 Library staff cannot issue an exclusion/suspension lasting more than one day.

3.5 Responsibilities of Library Supervisor on Duty

- 3.5.1 Library supervisors on duty are employees in charge of a particular location, and may include the Branch Manager, Branch Assistant Manager, Department Supervisor or designate.
- 3.5.2 Library supervisors on duty will take a proactive approach addressing inappropriate conduct by:
- Ensuring that a staff member is designated to handle issues when the Library supervisor is unavailable;
 - Ensuring incident reports are completed in a timely manner;
 - Ensuring the library has posted the required notice regarding patron conduct as outlined in *Section 5.0 – Standard Signage* of this policy;
 - Reviewing and mediating unresolved issues;
 - Issuing verbal library suspensions and/or exclusions when deemed appropriate; whenever possible a library staff or security personnel should serve as witness;
 - Requesting the appropriate authority (law enforcement agency or security personnel) to escort the patron from the premises if the patron refuses to leave when a suspension/exclusion has been issued;
 - Consulting with and making recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer for library suspensions lasting more than one day.

3.6 Responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer

- 3.6.1 The Chief Executive Officer will consult with the appropriate library supervisor and/or staff to determine the appropriate length of a library suspension, for suspensions lasting more than one day.
- 3.6.2 The Chief Executive Officer will issue written notice of a library suspension, for suspensions lasting more than one day, to a patron as soon as possible, in cooperation with the appropriate law enforcement agency and/or security personnel.
- 3.6.3 In instances of illegal activity, the Chief Executive Officer will determine when to pursue cost recovery charges and/or prosecution, in consultation with the appropriate law enforcement agency and/or security personnel.

4.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

The Branch Manager in each location is responsible for the overall administration of the Code of Conduct in their respective Library.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the overall administration of the Code of Conduct for the region.

5.0 STANDARD SIGNAGE

The Branch Manager in each location is responsible for ensuring that their respective Library has posted the following notice regarding conduct in the Library:

The Library is for everyone's use and enjoyment.
Please be courteous and respectful.

In accordance with CEHPL's *Library Code of Conduct Policy*.