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# IN A PICKLE

## Introduction

A library is usually a pleasant place to work and most of our patrons are friendly and appreciate our efforts. Occasionally you may experience some rudeness, which is part of life in any public service occupation.

In some situations, behavior will go beyond rudeness and become disruptive. We have created Library Rules of Conduct (appendix A) to govern behavior in the library and these rules spell out unacceptable conduct. The Rules of Conduct address the most common disruptions and have been approved by our Board of Trustees.

In some rare cases, you may encounter a serious or potentially serious situation. To deal with these situations, we have developed this manual for staff. It is designed to spell out library policies and procedures regarding behavior problems as well as give guidance on enforcing these policies.

Training, skill and use of the tips in this manual will minimize the problems you may face. Before we discuss specific problems and responses, here are a few general approaches to keep in mind.

### SAFETY FIRST!

If you see a potentially dangerous situation, respond immediately. If there is a supervisor or guard nearby, notify them immediately. If not, call the police. **EACH STAFF MEMBER IS AUTHORIZED TO CALL THE POLICE IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.** When calling the police you will need to give your name, agency and address. Remember to be specific and emphasize that immediate help is needed. In case of any situation which could threaten the safety of staff or patrons, it is better to err on the side of caution than to risk a tragedy.

Calling the police: **BRANCH LIBRARIES - DO NOT CALL USING 911!** In many library locations, the police will see this call as coming from the Main Library, no matter where it really comes from, due to the way calls are routed through the library central switchboard. There have been cases where staff have called 911 and the police have actually gone to Main. To avoid this, use the proper local number.

The emergency number for this library is \_\_\_\_\_ and our address is:

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## **GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH CHALLENGING SITUATIONS**

The following guidelines are not meant to replace your need to think and respond appropriately. The person in the situation is the best person to arrive at a solution. The guidelines will help but ultimately it is your responsibility to assess the situation and arrive at the response which will best meet the needs of the patrons and staff.

1. Stay calm. To deal with any problem, you first have to be sure you are calm and approach the situation in a positive, helpful frame of mind. Take a deep breath.
2. Listen! Be sure to listen to the patron carefully and get the entire story before proceeding. Don't interrupt.
3. Proceed based on facts. Avoid making assumptions about a person based on age, economic status, etc.
4. Use teamwork. The bigger the problem, the more the need for teamwork. Using two staff members to approach the situation increases safety. With two staff members, there is also a better chance of finding a creative, positive solution.
5. For everyone's safety, keep the interactions in a public area. Don't take an irate patron into a private office. If you want to get away from the circulation desk, but then move to a near-by public table and sit on the opposite side from the patron. If you cannot have another staff member come with you, be sure that a co-worker knows where you are going so he/she can check constantly.
6. Stay on the issue. Don't get into unrelated, general conversations about library, books, government, people these days, etc. Avoid arguing and focus on the current situation. "How can I help you with your library issue?" "What do you want me to do?", etc.
7. Never touch or physically restrain a patron.
8. Give the patron the benefit of the doubt as long as it does not compromise safety or the ability of others to use the library. Sometimes we can make minor exceptions and prevent problems. You do have the authority to make exceptions. Use your best judgment to enforce our rules in a way that is fair and reasonable. Be sure to tell the patron you are making an exception to library policies or procedures in his/her case.
9. If you can't take care of their needs (e.g. checking out a reference book), look for alternative solutions. Try to find a helpful way to respond. The fact that the patron sees you making every possible effort will go a long way to preventing unpleasant incidents.
10. If you cannot resolve the issue, refer it to the department manager, branch manager or the library administration. Inform the patron that you are not authorized to do what he/she wants but will pass it on to the appropriate person. Get information in writing and be sure to get the patron's

name, address and phone number if they would like a response. If you feel you cannot clearly summarize the complaint, ask them to write it down and then you can forward it.

11. Patrons can be ejected from the library if their behavior is criminal, dangerous, or disruptive to other patrons. People engaging in dangerous or criminal behavior may be removed immediately. People engaging in disruptive behavior should be warned and informed that their behavior can lead to ejection. Do not threaten to eject someone unless you are willing to go through with it. If you eject a patron from the library and the patron does not leave, call the police. Anyone staying here after being told to leave can be charged with criminal trespassing.

The person in charge at a branch library is the branch manager or the person designated by the branch manager. At the Main Library, the person in charge is the staff member listed as the Officer in Charge (OIC). The switchboard operator will have a list of the OIC at Main.

### ENFORCING POLICIES

The way we approach enforcing our policies can make a difference in how patrons react. If we do it right, life will be easier for everyone. If not, we increase the risk of everything from bad public relations to an angry confrontation. Here are a few tips:

1. Remember that not everyone knows our rules and policies. The rules may be second nature to us but that is not always the case for our customers. A good way to start is to give a copy of our Rules of Conduct to the person when first addressing an issue. E.g.: "I'm sorry, you aren't allowed to come into the library barefooted. Shoes are required. Here's a copy of our rules and you can see that right here." This also helps the patron understand that the staff member is following established rules. If the patron objects to the rules, he/she should be referred to the branch manager, the library director or the Board of Trustees to address changing the rule.
2. An important part of enforcing policies is fairness. Our rules apply to all patrons equally, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, income, national origin, etc. We can't tell teens to lower their voices but allow a group of well-dressed older people to talk loudly. We can't wake up a homeless person but allow someone else to sleep. Doing so undermines your credibility, exposes the library to lawsuits and sets up difficult confrontations with patrons.
3. Most of the violations will be minor (talking, eating, sleeping, etc). A good approach is a three step process which gradually gets more firm if the patrons don't respond.

Step One - Inform the patrons that they are violating a rule, give them a copy of the rules and possibly use the script described in this manual for the specific issue.

Step Two - If problems continue, remind them again about the rules and introduce a consequence, such as being asked to leave the library if the problem continues.

Step Three - If the problem continues, the next step is to tell them to leave the library for the rest of the day. Use your judgment to adjust this as needed. If it is a really minor offense, such as a few kids making a bit of noise, you may say something to them a few times before bringing up the option of being told to leave the library. We need to begin friendly but be prepared to become more firm as needed.

4. In severe cases, you can tell a patron to leave the library under the first offense. Something such as vandalism of material or property, or violence towards staff or other patrons typically merits immediate removal from the library.
5. If a patron is asked to leave the library and does not, the police can be called. Refusing to leave is considered criminal trespassing. Sometimes telling the person you will call the police is enough to get him/her to leave. Don't hesitate to call the police if a person has been told to leave and refuses.
6. Normally, when staff tells someone to leave, it is for the rest of the day. If a stronger measure is needed, talk to the branch manager. For the worst offenders, the director will issue letters banning them for longer periods.

### MAKE A PLAN FOR DEALING WITH RECURRING PROBLEMS

Most of the problems come from a few people and often we have some idea of who they are and what they do. We can use this to our advantage by making a plan. If we know that Joe G. comes in most mornings and takes all the newspapers, for example, we can make some decisions about how to handle this. The branch manager and staff can talk about the problem, review the options, decide what to do and who will do it when this happens next. In the example, a designated branch staff member or two will go up to Joe G. as soon as he comes in, sit down with him at a table and talk to him about the problems his behavior causes and tell him he should not take more than three newspapers at a time.

By discussing the problem together and at a time the patron is not in the building, all the staff can work together to develop plans in a calm, rational environment.

### COMMUNICATION TIPS

1. Listening is the key in any interaction. Be sure to fully understand the patron's viewpoint before responding.
  - Ask clarifying questions to get the information you need.
  - Summarize to be sure you understand "you said you are still getting overdue notices even though you returned the video three weeks ago, right?"
  - Take brief notes if necessary.
  - Give your complete attention to the speaker.
  - Try to move away from distractions.
  - Avoid mentally formulating your response until the speaker is done. Keep an open mind.
2. Use a calm, pleasant tone and avoid raising your voice. Be polite but not patronizing.

3. Make eye contact. Look directly at the person and focus, both when talking and when listening. Be sure the person knows you are giving him/her your undivided attention.
4. It's OK to apologize for an inconvenience. "I'm sorry that our only copy is reference and has to stay in the library."
5. Explain reasons for why you can't do what they request. Try to avoid saying simply "it's against our policy." By doing this, you will reduce the chance that the person will see you as the opponent.

### WORKING WITH GUARDS

At the Main Library and a number of branch libraries, the library employs uniformed security guards. Guards should be familiar with the Library Rules of Conduct and the library's approach to enforcing these rules.

When there is an incident such as noise, suspected vandalism, sleeping patrons, etc., staff may ask the guards to deal with the situation. If the situation appears to be a little more challenging (second time to talk to the person or group, an unusually loud group, etc.), a staff member may want to accompany the guard.

Guards may ask patrons to leave the building under the same circumstances as staff but should always inform the person in charge when asking a patron to leave. Only library administration has the authority to ban a patron permanently.

In case of any emergency which threatens the safety of staff or patrons, call the police department's emergency number before contacting a guard. Do not lose valuable time in case of an emergency. The guards are not expected to intervene in situations which put them or others at risk.

## ADULT ABUSE/NEGLECT

### DEFINITION

Abuse - the willful infliction of physical pain, injury, mental anguish or unreasonable confinement.

Neglect - when an adult is living under such circumstances that he/she is not able to provide for himself/herself or is not being provided such services as are necessary to maintain his/her physical and mental health and that the failure to receive such necessary services impairs or threatens to impair his/her well being.

Incapacitated person - any adult who is impaired by reason of mental illness, developmental disability, physical illness, physical challenge, advanced age or other causes to the extent that the adult lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to communicate or carry out responsible decisions concerning his/her well-being.

Emergency - a situation in which an adult is living in conditions which present a clear or substantial risk of death or immediate and serious physical harm to himself or others.

Although librarians are not included in the category of professionals who are required to identify or remedy adult abuse, the Dayton Metro Library is concerned about the safety and well being of the community.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

#### STAFF MEMBER

1. If abuse/neglect is suspected, report incident to Person-in-Charge.
2. In a life threatening situation, call the police department's emergency number. Report call immediately to Person-in-Charge. If the situation escalates, refer to **Verbal Abuse**.

#### PERSON-IN-CHARGE

3. In a non-emergency situation of neglect or abuse, or if the person seems incapacitated, call the police department's non-emergency number.
4. If unsure if the person may be in need of assistance, ask him/her if intervention is appropriate. Offer the street card handout.
5. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

## ANIMALS

Animals of any kind, wild or domestic, are not allowed in the library's buildings. Exceptions may be made for certified dogs assisting persons with visual or hearing impairments, certified dogs assisting persons with physical challenges, guide dogs in training, or for library owned pets and special library sponsored events.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

STAFF MEMBER

1. Politely inform the patron that animals are not allowed in the library. This is not a problem behavior situation.
2. If uncertain if the pet is certified to assist, request proof of certification.
3. If the situation escalates refer to **Verbal Abuse**.

## **ARMED OR PHYSICALLY THREATENING BEHAVIOR**

Staff and patron safety are the first priority in any physically threatening situation. The protection of library property is of secondary importance. This guideline applies to any physically threatening situation in the library, including incidents between patrons as well as between patrons and staff. In case of any situation which could threaten the safety of staff or patrons, it is better to err on the side of caution than to risk a tragedy.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

#### **STAFF MEMBER**

1. Be calm and non-threatening. Do not attempt to physically overpower the person. Comply with any demands that may defuse the situation. If possible, maintain a barrier (e.g. desk or chair) between you and the patron.
2. Call the police department's emergency number. If unable to call, use a prearranged signal to notify another staff member to call the police.

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#### ***Try Saying***

"I'm sorry I can't help with that but I think Mr. Webb can. Cathy can you please go in the back office and call Mr. Webb?"

Note: Mr. Webb is used as a prearranged code for the police department's emergency number.

---

3. Assess the risk to other patrons and staff and take appropriate protective measures including possible evacuation of the building.
4. Notify Person-in-Charge as soon as possible if he/she was not notified before the police were called.
5. If armed or physically threatening person attempts to leave the building, do not interfere or attempt to detain the person. If possible, observe person's vehicle, direction of travel, vehicle description and license plate number.
6. Complete Suspect Description Form (appendix D).

#### **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

7. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

#### **BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER**

8. Alert staff so that repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

**ASSAULT**

**DEFINITION**

Actual or threatened physical attack involving library patrons and/or staff.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

**ACTION**

**STAFF MEMBER**

1. Any staff member who observes an act of assault should immediately call the police department's emergency number.
2. Notify the Person-in-Charge as soon as possible if she/he was not notified before the police were called.
3. Complete Suspect Description Form.

**PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

4. Assess risk to other patrons and staff and take appropriate protective measures, including possible evacuation of the building.
5. Offer assistance and privacy to any victim and advise victim to remain in the library until the police arrive.
6. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

**BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER**

7. Alert staff to incident so that repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

## **BIOHAZARDOUS WASTE**

### **DEFINITION**

Biohazardous waste are materials that have been contaminated with body fluids such as blood, semen or fecal matter.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

#### **STAFF MEMBER**

1. If you suspect you may have come in direct contact with a biohazard, wash affected body part and rinse thoroughly. Report the incident to Person-in-Charge
2. Complete and forward Employee Accident and Incident Report Form.

#### **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

3. Dispose of Biohazard Material. Use latex gloves when handling suspected biohazard material. Place material in biohazard bag without contaminating the outside of the bag. Remove and place contaminated gloves in bag; avoid hand contact with contaminants. Tie biohazard bag and place in biohazard transport container. Forward transport container to the Facilities Manager for disposal. Wash hands and rinse thoroughly.

## **CELL PHONE USE**

### **POLICY**

The Dayton Metro Library allows the use of cell phones in all areas of the library. Policies regarding disruptive behaviors such as loud talking and laughter apply to cell phone usage. If cell phone conversations become disruptive, patrons should be politely informed of the library's policies and the consequences of not adhering to them.

Also see:

**Noisy and Rowdy Behavior**  
**Offensive Language**  
**Verbal Abuse**

## CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY

### POLICY

While children are always welcome in the library, our Policy on Unattended and Disruptive Youth (appendix E) spells out rules to make their visits safe and positive for everyone. Any child visiting the library that is 8 years old or younger must be accompanied by a parent or responsible guardian. This person is accountable for the child's behavior and safety while the child is in the library. The responsible guardian must be at least 15 years old and keep the child in sight at all times. This includes when the parent/guardian is using the Internet computer, a time when some parents/guardians pay less attention to the child.

The only exception is when the child is in a story time or other library activity. In those cases, the guardian must remain in the building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.

Several library locations are designated as a 'Safe Place', meaning that children who feel threatened can come to the library seeking help (appendix F). The library staff can contact Daybreak at 461-1000 to find help for these youngsters.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

#### STAFF MEMBER

1. Children are subject to the same rules as all library patrons. For minor infractions, such as running, or loud talking, staff may want to address the child directly. For more serious or ongoing problems, staff should find the parent or guardian, give them a copy of the rules and ask that they address the behavior issues.
2. Children under the age of 15 are not to be left alone after the library closes. About 30 minutes before closing, look for children who don't have an accompanying adult with them. Inform them that the library will be closing soon and ask if they have a ride home. An uncertain plan may indicate that they will not be picked up at closing time. Offer to let them make a call.

---

#### *Try Saying*

"The library closes in 30 minutes. Do you need to call someone to come pick you up?"

"We're getting ready to close. How are you getting home tonight?"

---

#### PERSON-IN-CHARGE

3. If the child remains at the library at closing time, call a parent or other responsible party.

Continued on next page.

**CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY**

**PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

4. If a parent/responsible person is contacted, insist that the child be picked up immediately. A staff person in charge and one other staff member should wait with the patron in the library for 15 minutes.
5. If a parent/responsible party can not be located, call the police department's non-emergency number or designated agency to request that someone pick up the youth as abandoned.
6. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form if the police are called.

***BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER***

7. For any youth left at the library after closing, obtain and forward the parent/responsible person's name and address to the Director. The Director will send a letter to the parent/responsible person.

## **DRESS**

As stated in the Library Rules of Conduct (appendix A), shirts and shoes are required to be worn while in the Library.

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### ***Try Saying***

“A shirt and shoes are required to be worn in the Library.”

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Also see:

**Eccentric Behavior and Other Non-Disruptive Behavior**  
**Smelly Patron**

## EATING AND DRINKING

Eating and drinking (including bottled water) are not allowed while in the Dayton Metro Library public areas, except by authorized groups in the meeting rooms or during authorized library programs.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

STAFF MEMBER

1. Politely inform the person that eating and drinking are not allowed.
2. If the situation escalates, refer to **Verbal Abuse**.

---

### *Try Saying*

“In order to protect library materials and furniture, eating and drinking are not allowed in the library.”

---

## ECCENTRIC BEHAVIOR AND OTHER NON-DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Some library users may act strangely or be a source of concern or irritation to the staff and/or public but their behavior may not constitute problem behavior. Examples include: the patron wearing three fur coats in the summer or mismatched shoes; people who exhibit bizarre mannerisms, compulsive behavior or speech; and the simply lonely talkers or watchers. The library is seen as a "safe" environment and often is sought by people who have difficulty in interpersonal or social situations.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

#### **STAFF MEMBER**

1. Eccentric patrons should be treated with courtesy, patience, and tolerance. Such patrons should be served, but not permitted to monopolize the time or energy of staff or prevent service to others.
2. When uncertain whether behavior is eccentric or disruptive, consult with Person-in-Charge.

#### **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

3. Try to observe the situation and assist as needed.

#### *BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER*

4. Staff should be made aware of resources for homeless and/or mentally ill people, and be able to refer patrons to these resources as appropriate.
5. To help prevent eccentric behavior from becoming an ongoing problem, staff discussions and communication about such behavior can be effective, particularly for recurring situations involving regular patrons. Venting staff concerns and emotions about eccentric behavior can be a positive reaction to non-disruptive behavior.

## **EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED OR PSYCHOTIC BEHAVIOR**

These patrons may exhibit unusual behavior, hallucinate, hear voices, or carry on conversations with non-existent people. Their personalities range from extremely timid to violently aggressive. They have the right to use the library and the obligation to use it in a way which does not interfere with the ability of others to use the library.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

#### **STAFF MEMBER**

1. Initially treat this patron like others. Be alert and sensitive to her/his library needs. There is no need to take any action unless the patron is violating the Rules of Conduct.
2. If the patron becomes disruptive, refer the situation to Person-in-Charge.

#### **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

3. If problem behavior continues, calmly and concisely explain the problem and what is expected.

---

### ***Try Saying***

“You may not realize it but your voice is carrying across the Library and may be disturbing others.”

“We ask everyone in the library to speak quietly so others can work. Thank you.”

---

4. Try to give alternatives. If the person does not stop talking loudly, offer a choice. “You may speak loudly someplace else, but if you want to remain in the library, you need to observe the rules and keep your voice down.” This may be repeated if necessary. Sometimes it is helpful if a different staff member makes the same request.

Continued on next page.

**EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED OR PSYCHOTIC BEHAVIOR**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

**ACTION**

5. With some unusual behaviors, you may need to work with the patron to set limits. For example, if you have a patron who takes all the newspapers to a table, say “It’s fine if you want to look at the newspapers but it is not acceptable that you take this many at one time. This isn’t fair to others who may want to read a newspaper. You may take two at a time to the table. When you return these two, you may take two more. Do you understand this rule?”

**PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

6. If the behavior does not stop, ask the patron to leave.

7. If the patron won't leave, or becomes physically threatening to himself/herself or others, call the police department’s emergency number.

8. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

***BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER***

9. Alert staff to incident so that repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

## ETHNIC PROFILING

### DEFINITION

Ethnic and racial profiling is an improper and illegal practice based on the mistaken belief that certain ethnic groups are more likely to be problematic than others. Because of this, misguided library employees will focus on the patron's 'ethnicity' rather than 'conduct'. Ethnic bias can blind library personnel and cause them to monitor only the ethnic minorities and ignore the real source of problem patron behaviors. Ethnic profiling eventually leads to a pattern of false accusations and harassment when no real probable cause exists. The result is that a particular ethnic group will be made to feel like they can't be trusted and are unwelcome in the library. Unless the wrongful conduct is corrected by management, civil rights violations may occur and could significantly damage the reputation of the Library.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

#### STAFF MEMBER

1. Action is to be taken when a patron complaint has occurred. All complaints should be treated with courtesy. When a staff member receives a complaint, he/she should observe and evaluate the situation. Advise complainant that you will forward his/her concern to the supervisor.

#### *BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER*

2. Managers should always be on the lookout for signs of ethnic prejudice from library staff and/or patrons in day-to-day conversations and in written reports. Violations should be addressed swiftly.

## EXCESSIVELY TALKATIVE PATRONS

Talkative patrons often monopolize the time of library staff, engaging in long conversations and preventing effective service to other patrons.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

#### STAFF MEMBER

1. If the patron's conversation is library related, paraphrase the request, saying that you wish to understand exactly what it is that the patron needs.
2. Set a definite time limit. Explain that you have other patrons to assist and can give only a few minutes to each person.
3. If the conversation is not library related, politely excuse yourself to help other patrons or to attend another task. Thank the patron for coming in and politely explain that you have other job responsibilities to complete, and then move away without looking at the patron.

---

#### *Try Saying*

"Thanks for stopping by (patron's name). I need to get to work now. I'm sure you understand."

---

4. If a patron consistently tries to monopolize staff time, work out an arrangement with other staff members to call you away after a few moments or excuse yourself to go to a nonpublic area.

## **GROUP BEHAVIOR**

Conduct such as interfering, impeding or hindering the use of library equipment or materials, causing disruption, mistreating library property, improper language and threatening or intimidating behavior is prohibited.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

**STAFF MEMBER**

1. Report behavior to Person-in-Charge.

**PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

2. If the situation appears threatening, call the police department's emergency number.
3. If the situation does not appear to be immediately threatening, explain to the group, with another staff present, that they are interfering with normal library operations. Suggest alternate sites, including the library meeting room, if appropriate and if available. Warn the group that if the behavior persists, they will be asked to leave.

---

### ***Try Saying***

"Perhaps you would like to move to another location where you will not disturb other patrons. Our meeting room is available until 5:00."

"Loud conversations may interfere with patrons who are studying or reading. If you continue to disturb others you will have to leave."

---

4. If the behavior continues, tell the group to leave. If they do not leave, call the police department's emergency number. Provide an estimate of the size of the group.
5. Monitor the situation until the group leaves and/or the police arrive.
6. When the police arrive, describe the incident and the direction the group took when it left.
7. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

**BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER**

8. Alert staff to incident so that repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

## HARASSING OR INTIMIDATING TELEPHONE CALLS

Harassing or intimidating phone calls involve personal verbal attacks, inappropriate comments, yelling, and or cursing. It is not always easy to tell when a call crosses the line but generally when the comments become directed at the staff member personally, it may be considered harassing. Patrons have a right to express frustration; they do not have the right to be harassing or intimidating.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

#### STAFF MEMBER

1. Stay calm. Do not argue.
2. Remind the patron that you want to do all you can to help, but will only discuss library related issues and can only be effective if concerns are discussed in a rational, polite manner.

---

#### *Try saying*

“I’ll be happy to help you with your library questions but I can’t when you use that kind of language.”

“If your language continues to be abusive, I will have to hang up.”

“Would you like me to have a supervisor call you back?”

---

3. If harassing/intimidating comments continue, explain that you will end the conversation if he/she continues to address you in an unacceptable manner.
4. If problem behavior continues, hang up and report incident to Person-in-Charge.

#### PERSON-IN-CHARGE

5. If calls persist, call the police department’s non-emergency number.

#### BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER

6. Alert staff to incident so that repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

## **HOMELESS PATRONS**

### **POLICY**

Homelessness, or the appearance of homelessness is not considered to be a problem behavior. All library policies and regulations governing patron behavior should be applied to patrons equally. Some behaviors may be associated with individuals believed to be homeless and may be more frequently observed in branches with a greater than average concentration of homeless persons. Specific behaviors such as panhandling, blocking doorways, eating/drinking or monopolizing equipment or rest rooms should be addressed as they occur. Possession of large bags or multiple parcels may impede library traffic or block passageways. Aisles, hallways and entrances must be kept clear in compliance with ADA and Fire Department regulations. If requested, staff should provide a copy of the street card handout (appendix D).

---

#### ***Try Saying***

“Our seating is limited; please use only one chair.”

“We need to keep our aisles and passageways clear for safety reasons. Please move your belongings.”

“We need to ensure that personal belongings are kept to a minimum. Please limit the number of personal items you bring into the Library.”

“It's almost closing time. Do you need some help before the library closes?”

---

Also see:

**Dress**

**Eccentric Behavior and Other Non-Disruptive Behavior**

**Mentally Ill or Emotionally Disturbed Patrons**

**Smelly Patrons**

**Solicitation (Panhandling)**

## **NOISY AND ROWDY BEHAVIOR**

Disruptive and unsafe behaviors include actions such as loud talking, loud laughter, crying, screaming, making and receiving numerous calls on cellular phones, recurring pages on a beeper, running, jumping, roller blading, playing games (e.g., hide and seek, tag, etc.), throwing things, pushing and shoving which may result in disturbing other patrons, injury to patrons or staff, or damage to library property. These behaviors may be exhibited by children, teenagers, or adults, either individually or in a group. Patrons should be politely informed of policies and the consequences of not adhering to them.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

#### **STAFF MEMBER**

1. Action is to be taken when staff observe noisy and rowdy behavior or receive a patron complaint that such behavior is occurring. All complaints should be treated with courtesy. When a staff member receives a complaint, before taking action, he/she should observe and evaluate the situation. If appropriate, the staff member should suggest alternatives to the patron who complains, such as the use of a quieter area of the library.
2. If observation reveals a violation of the Rules of Conduct, request that the individual or group change the behavior by using non-judgmental, factual statements. Speak in an even tone of voice, make friendly eye contact, and avoid negative body language. You may wish to offer assistance in locating materials. No warning should be issued at this time. Communicate situation to other staff assigned to the area.

---

#### ***Try Saying***

“You may not be aware that the sound of your voice carries and may be disturbing others.”

“Please stop running (or shoving, etc.). You may hurt yourself or others.”

“I have had a complaint that...”

“We need to limit groups to four at a table.” (Wait until group breaks up.)

---

Continued on next page.

## **NOISY AND ROWDY BEHAVIOR**

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

3. If problem behavior continues, a warning should be issued at this time. Restate the problem, offer alternatives, and tell them they will be asked to leave. Alternatives to consider are:
    - a. Suggesting that large groups sit at more than one table.
    - b. Suggesting moving to another location within the library or outside the library.
    - c. Offering an unoccupied meeting room, following the meeting room booking procedures as appropriate for any group.
  4. Inform Person-in-Charge.
- 

#### ***Try Saying***

“You were asked to be quieter 15 minutes ago, and the noise level is still too high.”

“Perhaps you could break up into smaller groups or continue your conversations outside.”

“You need to be quieter or you will be asked to leave.”

“If you don't stop running, you will be asked to leave.”

---

### **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

5. The Person-in-Charge should take the initiative at this point, and decide whether to ask the offenders to leave.
- 

#### ***Try Saying***

“You have been given opportunities to quiet down (stop running, etc.) and have not done so. Now I have to ask you to leave the library.”

---

6. If all contacts fail to stop inappropriate behavior and the person(s) refuse(s) to leave, they should be informed that they are trespassing and the police will be called.

Continued on next page.

## NOISY AND ROWDY BEHAVIOR

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

- |                             |    |  |
|-----------------------------|----|--|
|                             | 7. | Call the police department's non-emergency number, unless the person(s) become(s) abusive or threatening. In that case, call the police department's emergency number. If necessary, other staff may be asked to make the call to the police. Give an estimate of the number of patrons involved.  |
| <i>BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER</i> | 8. | Repeated incidents by the same person or group may require follow-up with schools, parent-teacher groups or guidance departments. It may help to learn names and addresses of patrons involved, however you may not require them to produce identification. A discussion with parents of children or special action on the part of the Branch/Dept. Manager may also be helpful. |

## **OBSCENE TELEPHONE CALLS**

### **DEFINITION**

A caller who asks questions of a personal sexual nature, breathes heavily, offers or requests sexual favors, uses obscenities, or any other offense to decency.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

**STAFF MEMBER**

1. Do not say anything. Hang up.
2. Report incident to Person-in-Charge.

**PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

3. Alert other staff.
4. If calls persist, call the police department's non-emergency number.
5. For repeated calls, complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

**BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER**

6. Alert staff to incident so that repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

## OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE

The use of offensive language is discouraged in the library because it may disturb other patrons and prevent them from using the library in a comfortable fashion.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

STAFF MEMBER

1. Politely inform the patron(s) that their language is disturbing others.
2. If the situation escalates, refer to **Noisy and Rowdy Behavior** or **Verbal Abuse** as appropriate.

---

### *Try Saying*

“You may not be aware that the language you are using is offensive to some of our patrons. Please modify your language or conduct your conversation more quietly to avoid making anyone else feel uncomfortable. If you continue to use this type of language you will be asked to leave.”

---

## **PARKING LOT PROBLEMS**

Library staff should be aware of problems occurring on library parking lots and walkways. These problems can include unsafe roller skating, roller blading, or skateboarding, accidents, abandoned vehicles, or vehicles illegally parked in handicapped spaces.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

**STAFF MEMBER**

1. Inform patrons that roller skating, roller blading or skateboarding in the library parking lot is unsafe and is therefore prohibited.

**PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

2. All branches with Library owned or monitored parking should have signs from Sandy's Towing stating that unauthorized vehicles will be towed. These signs are available, if needed, from the Facilities Manager.
3. Abandoned vehicles should be reported to police at the department's non-emergency number. If the vehicle is not stolen, the police cannot take responsibility for moving the car. If the vehicle has not been moved after 24 hours of observation, call Sandy's Towing (937-461-4980).
4. Vehicles that are parked in spaces reserved for persons with disabilities should be carefully inspected for appropriate tag, sign, decal or license plate. If none is displayed, note license plate number and call the police department's non-emergency number.

## PETITIONS

Circulating petitions for signature in the library or outside on library property, including the parking lot, is against library rules. This includes petitions for candidates, partisan or non-partisan, voter registration drives, petitions to get issues on the ballot or those simply looking to gather public support. It disturbs the orderly operation of the library and may make some patrons feel harassed. Also, it may give the appearance that the library is supporting a specific cause or issue.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

#### **STAFF MEMBER**

1. Politely inform the person/s that circulating petitions on library property is not allowed.
2. Tell them that they are allowed to circulate petitions off the property and offer to show them where library property ends. (NOTE: For locations such as Huber Heights, Northmont, and West Carrollton, tell the person to check with the property owners.)
3. We may be able to offer them the opportunity to leave information about their issue at the public display table, depending on the topic. (Campaign literature about a political candidate is not allowed under our "Displaying and Distributing Materials" policy but information about issues is allowed.) Offering this service defuses a potential complaint that the library is opposed to the issue.

#### **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

4. Refusal to discontinue should be treated as any other rule violation, including a warning that they must discontinue or leave library property, and finally telling them to leave and calling the police if necessary.

There have been occasions when organized groups have gone to a number of libraries to circulate petitions. If you believe this may be the case, please inform the Assistant Director for Branch and Extensions, Community Relations or another member of administration so other library locations can be alerted.

**POSSESSION OF WEAPONS**

**POLICY**

The Board of Trustees of the Dayton Metro Library prohibits weapons of any kind, concealed and/or unconcealed on its property, in its buildings, or in Library owned or leased vehicles unless the owner of the weapon is a law enforcement officer. The Board of Trustees has posted the necessary notification of its status as exempt from Ohio's Concealed Carry Legislation, as required by the Ohio Revised Code.

Any Library employee who has knowledge or suspects that a patron is carrying a weapon must immediately follow the procedures listed below. In no case should an employee confront or disarm another individual suspected of carrying a dangerous weapon.

**DEFINITION**

For purposes of this policy a weapon is defined as a gun, rifle, knife, switchblade or other object used in a dangerous or threatening manner.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

**ACTION**

1. Alert other staff before approaching the patron. Do not provoke a confrontation.
2. If you feel it is safe to do so, advise the patron that library policy prohibits weapons and the weapon must be taken out of the library.
3. If the patron refuses, call the police department's emergency number.
4. If the situation warrants, alert management and patrons for a possible evacuation.
5. Complete Suspect Description Form.
6. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

**PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

## **PUBLIC COMPUTERS: MISUSE AND PROBLEMS**

The viewing of sexually explicit images on library computers is in violation of library policy and may violate Ohio and federal law. Staff should be aware of signs that a patron may be viewing inappropriate images which include pointing to the screen, telling friends to view the screen, staring at the screen for a length of time, and continually closing down the screen when a staff member walks by.

In addition to prohibiting sexually explicit images, library policy prohibits activities on the computer that are illegal (such as software pirating and copyright violations), intimidating, or create a hostile environment.

The most common challenge with the public Internet computers is enforcing time limits. When possible, patrons should be given notice before being asked to relinquish a computer. Each agency should have appropriate signage, handouts of the library's Internet policy, and specific guidelines readily available to patrons using the computers.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

#### **STAFF MEMBER**

1. Approach the patron and inform them of the applicable library policy or procedure. Remain until the offending behavior has ceased, or offending material is removed from the screen.
2. If the patron is uncooperative or argumentative explain that refusing to comply with library rules may result in dismissal from the library and loss of Internet privileges.
3. Notify Person-in-Charge.

#### **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

4. If prohibited behavior continues, ask patron to leave the library.
5. If the patron refuses, call the police department's emergency number.
6. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

#### **BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER**

7. Alert staff to incident so repeat offenses can be noted or prevented. Alert administration if repeated offenses have occurred.

**REFUSAL TO LEAVE THE BUILDING AT CLOSING**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

**ACTION**

STAFF MEMBER

1. Two staff members should approach the patron. Explain that it is closing time. Explain that he/she must leave or the police will be called.
2. If the patron does not leave, call the police department's emergency number.

Also see:

**Unattended Youth Policy**

**REFUSAL TO LEAVE THE BUILDING DURING AN EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

**ACTION**

STAFF MEMBER

1. Two staff members should approach the patron. Explain that the library is closing due to an unsafe emergency situation. Tell the patron that he/she must leave or the police will be informed.
2. If the patron refuses to leave, the employee should leave the building and then notify the police. The employee should not remain in the building if it is unsafe to do so.

## **ROBBERY**

Robberies can occur in the library between patrons or involving staff, as in the potential demand for money from the cash register or safe. Staff and patron safety are the first priority in any physically threatening situation. The protection of property is of secondary importance.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

#### **STAFF MEMBER**

1. Remain calm. Do not resist. Comply with demands.
2. Observe suspect carefully in order to be able to provide a full description. As soon as possible, call the police department's emergency number. If you are observing a robbery, use a prearranged signal to notify another staff member to call.
3. Staff member making the emergency call must remain on site until the police arrive.
4. Notify Person-in-Charge as soon as possible.
5. Complete Suspect Description Form.
6. Do not interfere with or detain the person. If possible, observe the person's vehicle, direction of travel, vehicle description and license tag number.

#### **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

7. Protect crime scene by not letting anyone touch anything until the police arrive. Make arrangements for normal library business to continue without undue disruption.
8. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

#### ***BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER***

9. Alert staff to incident so repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

## **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

### **DEFINITION**

Acts such as exposure, public masturbation, sexual harassment, offensive touching, sexual solicitation. etc.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

#### **STAFF MEMBER**

1. Note incidents or patterns of inappropriate behavior.
2. Notify Person-in-Charge.
3. Complete Suspect Description Form.

#### **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

4. If the situation involves activities such as watching, following or leering, observe and alert person that you are aware of him/her by offering assistance in using the library. Maintain an obvious physical presence while patron remains in the building.
5. If the situation involves overt acts of sexual misconduct, call the police department's emergency number. Be specific and emphasize immediate help is needed.
6. Provide privacy to the victim of the offense, be sympathetic and understanding. Encourage, but do not force the victim to report incident to police.
7. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

#### ***BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER***

8. Alert staff to incident so that repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

## SLEEPING

### POLICY

Sleeping in the library is a violation of the Library Rules of Conduct (appendix A). Sleeping patrons may be monopolizing seating, snoring loud enough to disturb others, or blocking aisles or passageways.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

#### STAFF MEMBER

1. Approach the sleeper from the front, remaining at arm's length. Do not touch the sleeping patron. Tap the table or wall to awaken the patron.
2. Speak quietly, identifying yourself as a staff member. Inform the patron that sleeping in the library violates the Library Rules of Conduct. Warn that she/he will be asked to leave the library if the prohibited behavior continues.
3. If the prohibited behavior continues, ask the patron to leave the library.
4. If the patron refuses, call the police department's emergency number.

---

#### *Try Saying*

"Excuse me, but sleeping is not allowed inside the library."

"Our seating is limited; please use only one chair."

"We need to keep our aisles and passageways clear for safety reasons."

"You may want to get some fresh air to help you stay awake."

---

## **SMELLY PATRON OR POSSESSIONS**

Generally patrons will only be asked to leave after other patrons or staff make credible complaints. Such action should be taken only when the person-in-charge is convinced that the situation is severe enough to be considered disruptive or is infringing on the rights of staff or other patrons in the use of the library.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

**STAFF MEMBER**

1. If complaints are received from patrons or staff about offensively smelling patrons, notify Person-in-Charge.

**PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

2. Approach the patron from the front. Speak quietly, identifying yourself as a staff member. Inform patron that there have been complaints about his/her hygiene and ask the patron to leave the library until the problem is corrected.

---

### ***Try Saying***

“We have had a complaint about the smell coming from your clothing. I need to ask you to leave and come back another time.”

---

3. If appropriate, offer the patron a street card handout.
4. If the patron refuses to leave, call the police department’s non-emergency number.

## SMOKING

### POLICY

Smoking or the use of tobacco products is not allowed in any library building.

### RESPONSIBILITY

STAFF MEMBER

### ACTION

1. Politely inform the patron that smoking or using tobacco products is not allowed.
2. If the situation escalates, refer to **Verbal Abuse**.

## SOLICITATION (PANHANDLING)

Soliciting or selling in library buildings, including meeting rooms, and library property such as parking lots and garden areas will not be permitted. Sidewalks are public areas and are not subject to library control.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

STAFF MEMBER

1. Politely inform the person that soliciting is not allowed.
2. If appropriate, offer patron a street card handout.
3. If situation escalates, refer to **Verbal Abuse**.

---

### *Try Saying*

“Asking people for money is not allowed on library property.”

---

Note: Patrons observed leaving brochures, leaflets or handouts in or near library materials should be informed of the library’s policy and referred to the branch/department manager.

## **STALKING**

### **DEFINITION**

Under the Ohio Revised Code 2903.21.1, stalking is defined as “engaging in a pattern of conduct, which knowingly causes another to believe that the offender will cause physical harm to the other person or cause mental distress to the other person.” The person being stalked can be either a patron or a staff member.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

#### **STAFF MEMBER**

1. Note incidents or patterns as reported by patrons or staff.
2. Notify Person-in-Charge.
3. Complete Suspect Description Form.

#### **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

4. When alerted to a pattern of questionable behavior, try to observe the situation yourself, and confirm that it has occurred on more than one occasion.
5. Alert person that you are aware of him/her by offering assistance in using the library. Reassure staff member that you are monitoring the situation. Reassign staff member temporarily to other areas of library if appropriate and reasonable. Maintain an obvious physical presence while patron remains in building.
6. If problem persists and staff or patrons continue to feel threatened, call the police department’s emergency number.
7. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

#### ***BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER***

8. Alert staff to incident so that repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Any person who exhibits the signs and symptoms of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs (appendix H), whose judgment is affected and whose behavior in the library is disruptive or potentially dangerous may be abusing a controlled substance.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

**ACTION**

**STAFF MEMBER**

1. If a person under the influence does not exhibit disruptive behavior, assist person calmly. Continue to observe situation if person remains in the library.
2. If the person's behavior becomes erratic, harmful, or threatening, notify the Person-in-Charge.

**PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

3. Calmly, but firmly ask the person to leave. With another staff member, walk the person to the door.

---

***Try Saying***

“Your behavior is disruptive. I need to ask you to leave and come back another time.”

---

4. If the person refuses to leave, call the police department’s emergency number.
5. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

***BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER***

6. Alert staff to incident so that repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

Also see:

**Eccentric Behavior or Other Non-Disruptive Behavior**  
**Noisy and Rowdy Behavior**  
**Verbal Abuse**

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE - DRUG DEALING**

### **DEFINITION**

An activity involving the exchange of money or other valuables for controlled substances.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

**STAFF MEMBER**

1. If drug dealing is suspected, report the incident to Person-in-Charge immediately.

**PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

2. If suspects are still in building, call the police department's emergency number. Do not approach suspects, wait for police and provide a presence. If suspects are not in building, call the police department's non-emergency number.
3. Provide a detailed description of suspects and their actions.
4. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

***BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER***

5. Alert staff to incident so that repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE - SUSPICIOUS SUBSTANCE OR PARAPHERNALIA**

### **DEFINITION**

Materials, substances or items that can reasonably be assumed to be connected with the sale, purchase or use of controlled substances.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

**STAFF MEMBER**

1. If a suspicious substance or paraphernalia is found, do not touch or smell it. Report the incident to Person-in-Charge immediately.

**PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

2. If appropriate, call the police department's non-emergency number. Follow their advice regarding removal/disposal/handling of item(s).
3. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

## SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

While library staff are not legally mandated to report abuse or neglect, there may be a moral obligation to report such occurrences on library property. Additionally, staff may want to help.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

#### STAFF MEMBER

1. Discuss the situation with another staff person (if time permits) to see if they agree that there is reason for concern.
2. If you feel that it is safe, try to defuse the situation by offering to help, perhaps by reading a story to the child. If the patron becomes angry, immediately back out of the situation.

---

#### *Try Saying*

“Is there anything I can do to help?”

“May I get your child some books to read while you are working on the computer?”

“May I read your son/daughter a book while you look around the library, or go to the restroom?”

---

3. If you feel that it is not safe for you, the child or anyone else, do not approach the patron.

#### PERSON-IN-CHARGE

4. If the abuse continues, staff should try to get as much information as possible, such as the name and home address of the parent/caregiver and child, and license plate number. (Library policy does not permit searching of patron records to retrieve personal information.)
5. If staff choose to report a concern, Montgomery County Children’s Services (224-5437) should be contacted. (If staff remember the patron’s name without searching patron records, it may be reported.)
6. If you are concerned about a child’s immediate safety, call the police department’s emergency number.
7. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

#### BRANCH/DEPT MANAGER

8. Alert staff to incident so that repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

## **SUSPICIOUS MATERIAL, PACKAGE, OR SUBSTANCE**

### **DEFINITION**

Materials, packages, or substances that have been left unattended which can reasonably be assumed to pose a health and/or safety hazard.

#### **STAFF MEMBER**

1. If an unattended suspicious material, package, or substance is found, do not touch or smell it. Notify Person-in-Charge.

#### **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

2. If appropriate, call the police department's non-emergency number. Follow their advice regarding removal/ disposal /handling of the item(s).
3. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

## **THEFT OF LIBRARY MATERIALS**

Willfully removing a book or other property from the library collection is against the law.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

### **ACTION**

#### **STAFF MEMBER**

1. If you suspect or observe someone attempting to steal library materials, approach the individual and ask if you can help him/her to check out material(s), or, if he/she is leaving the building ask if he/she has forgotten to check out materials.
2. Notify Person-in-Charge.

#### **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

3. In the case of reasonable suspicion, such as the security system sounding, a request to examine handbags, briefcases, packages, strollers, etc. to search for library materials not properly charged may be made. Staff may not search the person involved or any clothing except obvious outer garments, e.g. sweater, scarf, jacket or coat. You may ask to examine pockets or other concealed locations, but you may not forcibly take any articles from the person.
4. Speak to patron and ask for name and address. Explain that the unauthorized removal of Library materials is unlawful and deprives others of access to materials. If the patron is a minor use your judgment to determine whether or not to call the parents. If this is a repeat offense, call the police department's emergency number.
5. If the patron insists on leaving, and staff has reasonable cause to suspect theft of materials, do not pursue the patron or attempt to detain them. Call the police department's non-emergency number. Complete Suspect Description Form.
6. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

#### ***BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER***

7. Alert staff to incident so that repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

**THEFT OF PERSONAL PROPERTY**

**DEFINITION**

Unlawful, unauthorized removal of property belonging to someone else.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

**ACTION**

**STAFF MEMBER**

1. Report incident to Person-in-Charge.

**PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

2. If the crime is in progress or you personally observed it, call the police department's emergency number.

3. Obtain victim's name and phone number. Ask victim if she/he can stay and speak with the police. If they prefer not to stay, encourage them to report the theft from home. Provide victim with privacy, telephone, and the designated non-emergency number. The victim must report the crime if you did not observe it in progress.

4. Offer assistance to victim, e.g., allow him/her to make a phone call to arrange for transportation home or arrange for medical assistance if injury occurred.

5. Complete Suspect Description Form.

6. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

**BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER**

7. Alert staff to incident so that repeat occurrence can be noted or prevented.

**TRUANCY**

**DEFINITION**

Truant - a pupil who stays away from school without permission.

**POLICY**

Although the Dayton Metro Library does not condone truancy, library personnel are not responsible for identifying or reporting truants. Students who attend charter schools or year round schools, or students who are in a work release program or are home schooled may all have legitimate reasons for being in the library. It is not our responsibility to determine the legitimacy of the visit. In frequent or unusual situations staff may contact the applicable school system or local truancy officer.

School/agency:

Number:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Also see:

**Unattended Youth Policy**

## VANDALISM OF LIBRARY MATERIALS OR EQUIPMENT

### POLICY

It is illegal to write upon, deface, tear, cut or destroy library books, materials and property.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

#### **STAFF MEMBER**

1. If you suspect or observe someone vandalizing library materials or equipment, approach the individual and explain that this activity is unlawful and that it deprives others of access to materials.
2. If possible, confiscate damaged materials.
3. Notify Person-in-Charge.
4. If the patron attempts to leave, do not detain him/her.
5. Complete Suspect Description Form.

#### **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

6. Speak to the patron, and ask for his/her name and address. Discuss options for compensation. If the patron is a minor, use your own judgment to determine whether or not to call their parents. If this is a repeat offense, call the police department's emergency number.
7. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

#### **BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER**

8. Alert staff to incident so that repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

## VERBAL ABUSE

### DEFINITION

Verbal abuse transcends angry behavior in that it incorporates personal attacks and/or causes staff to experience an unacceptable level of discomfort. Patrons have the right to express anger to the library staff. They do not have the right to be abusive, nor does staff have the obligation to tolerate such behavior. Guidelines regarding verbal abuse can also be applied to conflicts between patrons.

### RESPONSIBILITY

### ACTION

#### STAFF MEMBER

1. Stay calm. Do not argue. Use \*reflective language skills to attempt to diffuse the situation. Allowing the person to vent may be helpful.
2. If the situation escalates, address the patron calmly by saying, "I cannot assist you until you have calmed down."
3. If the abuse continues, notify Person-in-Charge.

#### PERSON-IN-CHARGE

4. Attempt to move the discussion away from the circulation desk, but remain in a public area. Review the situation with the patron to ascertain what precipitated the abuse. Maintain focus on the library related issue. Calmly explain appropriate policies and procedures.
5. If abuse continues or escalates, Person-in-Charge should ask the patron to leave.

---

#### *Try Saying*

"You are disturbing the staff and other patrons. You will have to leave the library or I will call the police."

---

6. If the person refuses to leave, call the police department's emergency number. Give name, agency and street address. Be specific about the level of disturbance.
7. Complete and forward Patron Accident and Incident Report Form.

#### BRANCH/DEPT. MANAGER

8. Alert staff to incident so that repeat offenses can be noted or prevented.

\*Reflective language is a way to show that you understand how the patron feels and that you empathize with them. As a result, the patron feels listened to and understood, which often calms down the patron. Most importantly, it greatly reduces the chance that the patron will take out anger or bad feelings on you. To use this approach, summarize the emotions of the patron in a succinct, honest way, either using the patron's words or a similar term. A few examples:

“So you are upset because you are sure you have returned these books yet are still getting overdue notices, is that correct?”

“If I understand, you are concerned that your children will not come back to the library because the librarian was rude to them yesterday.”

When you use reflective language, choose your words carefully. It is better to say “upset” than “mad” or “angry.”

# Appendix A

# Rules Of Conduct

## **LIBRARY RULES OF CONDUCT**

The purpose of the Dayton Metro Library is to serve our community by providing ready access to information and ideas. To do this, we want to offer a welcoming, open atmosphere as well as a quiet, comfortable and orderly environment. The Library Rules of Conduct are made to ensure such an environment, so people can use the library facilities and collections to the maximum extent possible and for their intended purposes.

### **While at the Library we encourage you to:**

- Show courtesy and respect.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Give us your suggestions about how we can improve our services, collections, and facilities.
- Enjoy the time you spend here.
- Have the expectation of reasonable privacy to read and view library material.

### **So that everyone may have a safe and enjoyable experience in the Library, PLEASE DO NOT:**

- Destroy, deface or abuse library property.
- Eat or drink, except in approved areas by authorized groups.
- Leave children eight years and under unattended.
- Play audio equipment at a volume that disturbs others.
- Use your cell phones in a loud or disturbing manner.
- Engage in inappropriate behavior, including viewing of sexually explicit images on the Internet.
- Panhandle or solicit for sales or charity.
- Bathe or wash clothes.
- Enter the library without shirt or shoes.
- Be disruptive, disorderly, harass patrons and/or staff, or otherwise interfere with any person's comfort or safety.
- Bring into the Library anything that is unsafe, including firearms or other weapons.
- Smoke inside the building or near the public entrance.
- Sleep.
- Be under the influence of, consume, or possess alcohol or illegal substances.

To provide the safe, peaceful environment that library users seek, we will ask patrons to avoid any activity which interferes with other people's safety or use of the library. Those failing to follow these rules may be asked to leave the library.

# Appendix B

# Emergency Phone Numbers

**Dayton Metro Library  
Emergency Telephone Numbers**

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Police</u>	<u>Fire Department</u>	<u>Ambulance</u>
City Branches	333-2677	333-2100	333-3473
Brookville	833-2144	833-2131	833-2144
Ft. McKinley	225-4357	225-4357	225-4357
Huber Heights	233-2080	223-2080	223-2080
Kettering-Moraine	296-2555	293-2151	293-2151
Miami Township	433-4400	433-4400	433-4400
Miamisburg	866-3344	866-3344	866-3344
Main Library	911	911	911
New Lebanon	225-6343	687-7510	687-7510
Northmont	836-2678	836-2678	836-2678
Northtown-Shiloh	225-4357	225-4357	225-4357
Trotwood	837-7777	837-7777	837-7777
Vandalia	898-5868	898-4493	898-4493
West Carrolton	859-3688	859-3688	859-3688
Wilmington Stroop	296-2555	293-2151	293-2151

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Dayton Power and Light— To report an outage: 1-877-468-8243  
Emergency Services: 331-3900

Vectren Energy Delivery: 1-800-227-1376

Animal Control— Domestic animals: 898-4457  
Non Domestic: 252-6841

Department of Jobs and Family Services: 225-6360

Montgomery County Children's Services: 224-5437

# Appendix C

## Patron Accident and Incident Report Form



**Contacts**

Contacts made (e.g. fire department, police) \_\_\_\_\_  
If contacted, name of responding officer \_\_\_\_\_  
Badge number \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction \_\_\_\_\_ Report number \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Recommended Action**

To be completed by manager.  
Do you have any suggestions on ways to reduce the likelihood of a reoccurrence of the same or a similar incident? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Planned Patron Follow-Up**

To be completed by manager. (optional)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Reporting \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Manager Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Manager to retain one copy for the branch/department and forward the original to their manager.

# Appendix D

# Suspect Description Form





# Appendix E

## Unattended and Disruptive Youth Policy

## **POLICIES ON UNATTENDED AND DISRUPTIVE YOUTH**

Due to widespread interest and concern over the growing problem of latchkey children in libraries, the Children's Services Department developed the following policies and procedures on Unattended Children and Disruptive Youth. The Board of Library Trustees adopted these in September, 1999.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The staff of the Dayton Metro Library is happy you are visiting with us. We are concerned about the safety of all library users, especially children. We strive to make the library an enjoyable place to visit so that you, your family and friends will want to return many times.

Library staff members cannot, however, supervise children or function as substitute baby sitters. Parents and responsible patrons need to be as careful of their children's safety in the library as they would be in a shopping mall or any other public building. Children can easily wander out the door, into the street or parking lot. They can be injured by swinging doors or by falls from furniture.

The Board of trustees of the Dayton Metro Library has, therefore, established the following policies for all agencies of the library system.

### **POLICY ON UNATTENDED CHILDREN**

Children age 8 and under may not be left unattended in the library. They must be accompanied by a parent or other responsible person (age 15 or older) at all times. Parents and/or responsible patrons are accountable for their children's behavior and safety while in the library.

Children shall be considered "attended" as long as they are within sight of the parent or other responsible person. An exception would be children attending a story time or other library program without a parent/responsible person in the room. However, the parent/responsible person must remain in the library building and immediately join the child at the end of the program.

### **POLICY ON DISRUPTIVE YOUTH**

Disruptive youth over the age of eight will be asked to leave after two warnings, with notification of parent and/or local authorities. Disruptive behavior is any behavior on library premises which infringes on the rights of others using and/or working in the library.

Established library procedures will be used to implement these policies.

### **PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING UNATTENDED CHILDREN AGE 8 AND UNDER**

- Children left unattended are often frightened and crying and should be comforted by the staff. If it becomes apparent that a child age 8 and under is lost or has been left unattended, a staff member will try to identify and locate the parent or other person responsible for the child by walking through the library with the child or by paging the responsible person. Meetings in progress should also be checked.
- When the parent/responsible person is located, the staff member will explain the library's policy on unattended children, stressing concern for the child's safety. The parent/responsible person will be given a copy of the policy.
- If the person responsible is not located in the library, every effort should be made to locate the child's parent/responsible person by telephone. A staff member will stay with the child in a public area while this is being done. If a parent/responsible person is reached, staff should insist that the child be picked up immediately, explaining the library's policy.
- If the child's parent/responsible person has not been located within 30 minutes, or sooner if the library is closing, the staff member in charge will call the police or designated agency, who will then assume responsibility for the child. The staff member in charge and one other staff member will stay with the child

until the proper authorities arrive. An incident report will be filed.

- Under no circumstances will staff take the child out of the library. Library staff will not take the child home or sit with the child in a car.

#### PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING DISRUPTIVE CHILDREN AGE 8 AND UNDER

- Warn the parent/responsible person verbally that his/her child's behavior is unacceptable and explain appropriate library behavior.
- If the disruptive behavior continues, the parent/responsible person will be asked to take the child out of the library.
- If the parent/responsible person refuses or cannot control the child's behavior, then the staff member in charge will call the police. An Incident Report will be filed.
- Under no circumstances should staff appear to be using force with disruptive patrons.

#### POLICY ON DISRUPTIVE YOUTH

- Disruptive youth over the age of eight will be asked to leave after two warnings, with notification of parent and/or local authorities. Disruptive behavior is any behavior on library premises which infringes on the rights of others using and/or working in the library.
- Established library procedures will be used to implement these policies.
- Warn the disruptive youth that his/her behavior is unacceptable. The staff member will explain what the appropriate behavior should be. Tell the youth that this is a verbal warning. (If circumstances warrant, i.e. life threatening situations, repeat offenders, damage of library property, verbal abuse, etc., go immediately to step 3 listed below.)
- If the disruptive behavior persists, approach the youth and give him/her a second warning. State that this is a second warning and if the disruptive behavior persists, the youth will be asked to leave the library premises.
- Youth ages 9 to 18 may be asked to leave after the second warning. If the youth is unable to use a pay phone, staff should allow the youth to use the library's telephone to arrange transportation. If the youth refuses to leave, the staff member in charge should call the police. An Incident Report will be filed.
- Under no circumstances should staff appear to be using force with disruptive youth.
- When extreme or prolonged situations or instances occur, the manager should consult with an Assistant Director for further action.

#### CLOSING TIME PROCEDURES FOR UNATTENDED CHILDREN, 14 AND UNDER

If a staff member observes an unattended child 30 minutes prior to closing, that staff member will ask the child what his/her provisions are for getting home. If the child seems unsure, the staff member in charge of the agency will call the parents. If closing time arrives and the child is still in the library:

1. An attempt will be made to call the parent/responsible person. If a parent/responsible person is contacted, insist that the child be picked up immediately.
2. If a parent/responsible person cannot be reached, the police department or other designated agency will be contacted, with the request that someone pick up the child as abandoned. An Incident Report will be filed.
3. The staff member in charge and one other staff member will remain in the building with the child until a parent, responsible person, or police officer arrives.
4. A copy of the library policy on unattended children will be handed to the child's parent/responsible person or to the child.
5. Under no circumstances shall a staff member take a child out of the building.

#### CLOSING TIME PROCEDURES FOR UNATTENDED YOUTH OVER AGE 14:

If an unattended youth over 14 years old is still in the library at closing time:

1. An attempt will be made to contact the parent/responsible person by the staff member in charge of the agency. If a parent/responsible person is contacted, insist that the youth be picked up immediately. If the staff person in charge feels it is warranted, the staff person in charge and one other staff member may wait with the patron in the library for 15 minutes.
2. If a parent/responsible person cannot be contacted, the youth should be given the option of waiting outside the library, or, if the staff person in charge feels it is warranted, the staff person may call the police or designated agency with the request that someone pick up the youth as abandoned. An Incident Report will be filed.
3. For any youth left at the library after closing, the parent/responsible person's name and address should be obtained and sent to the Director who will send a letter to the parent/responsible person stressing that the library and its employees cannot be responsible for youths not picked up at the library at closing.

# Appendix F

# Safe Places

## SAFE PLACE PROGRAM

Several Miami Valley businesses and public employers, including designated DML Branch Libraries, participate in the national SAFE PLACE program.

The SAFE PLACE program, sponsored by DayBreak, a local shelter for runaway, homeless and abused youth, is designed to assist youth and families in crises situations by providing a safe and organized way of reaching the kids who need services.

Project SAFE PLACE works by creating a network of 'safe places', businesses, and public locations that display the SAFE PLACE sign on their premises. Any youth in trouble can enter a location bearing this sign and request help. Upon request for assistance a trained employee will provide the youth with a secure place to wait while DayBreak is contacted (**461-1000**). DayBreak then dispatches a trained volunteer to the SAFE PLACE site to offer assistance and provide transportation to the shelter if necessary.

The following DML branch libraries are designated SAFE PLACES:

Huber Heights Branch  
6160 Chambersburg Rd.  
Huber Heights, Ohio 45424

Northmont Branch Library  
333 West National Rd.  
Englewood, Ohio 45322

Kettering Moraine Branch Library  
3496 Far Hills Ave.  
Kettering, Ohio 45429

Trotwood Branch Library  
651 East Main St.  
Trotwood, Ohio 45426

Main Library  
215 East Third St.  
Dayton, Ohio 45402

Wilmington Stroop Branch Library  
3980 Wilmington Pike  
Kettering, Ohio 45429

New Lebanon Branch Library  
715 West Main Street  
New Lebanon, Ohio 45345

# Appendix G

## Street Card Handout

## HEALTH

Samaritan Homeless Clinic  
41 Catherine St.  
(937) 461-1376  
M, W, F 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
T, Th 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Sat. 8:00 a.m. - Noon  
medical, dental, mental health, vision care, alcohol  
and drug education/counseling

Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV)  
Bldg. 302 VA Medical Center  
4100 W. Third St.  
(937) 268-6511 ext. 1200  
Counseling and Referrals

## MEAL SITES

Life Enrichment Center  
515 S. Irwin St.  
(937) 252-5700  
T, W, Th - 9:00 - 9:45 a.m. (breakfast)

Gospel Mission  
64 Burns Ave.  
(937) 223-4513  
M, W, F, S - 11:30 a.m. - Noon  
T, Th - 5:00 - 5:30 p.m. Sun. - 2:00 - 2:30 p.m.

House of Bread  
9 Orth Ave.  
(937) 226-1520  
Mon. - Fri. - 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
Third & Fourth Sat. - 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

## LEGAL ASSISTANCE

ABLE  
333 W. First St.  
1-888-534-1432  
(937) 228-8088  
Mon. - Thurs. 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

## CRISIS COUNSELING

CrisisCare  
115 E. Third St.  
(937) 224-4646

Teen Connection  
141 W. Third St.  
(937) 228-8336 Call anytime,  
or Walk-in Hours Mon. - Fri. 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Domestic Violence Crisis Hotline  
(937) 222-7233 (24 hours)

Suicide Prevention Center  
(937) 229-7777

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Job Bank  
1111 S. Edwin C. Moses Blvd.  
(937) 496-6720

Dayton Urban League  
184 Salem Ave.  
(937) 220-6650

BVR  
111 W. First St.  
(937) 331-5029

Goodwill Industries  
1135 S. Edwin C. Moses Blvd.  
(937) 223-9826

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE/INFORMATION

Sunrise Center  
1320 E. Fifth St.  
(937) 225-4920

Montgomery Co. Dept. of Job & Family Services  
at the Job Center  
1111 S. Edwin C. Moses Blvd.  
(937) 496-6720

Social Security Administration  
200 W. Second St.  
Federal Bldg. Room 209  
1-800-772-1213 (937) 225-2542  
Mon. - Fri. 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

# Guide for the Homeless STREET CARD

**SPONSORED BY**  
The Emergency Housing Coalition  
&  
The Dayton Metro Library  
7/05

## **GENERAL**

United Way Help Link  
(937) 225-3000  
(24 hours; call collect if necessary)

Ombudsman's Office  
15 E. Fourth St., 2nd Floor  
(937) 223-4613

Community Action Partnership  
719 S. Main St.  
(937) 341-5000  
Mon. - Fri. 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

## **DAY SHELTER**

The Other Place  
(men, women and families with children)  
840 S. Patterson Blvd.  
(937) 461-7544  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. EVERY DAY

## **OVERNIGHT SHELTER**

St. Vincent Hotel  
120 W. Apple St.  
(937) 461-7837  
(call between 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. to make reservations)

## **OTHER EMERGENCY SHELTERS**

American Red Cross Emergency Housing  
(for families)  
415 Van Wert Place  
(937) 223-2985

Daybreak (ages 10 thru 18)  
50 Theobald Ct.  
(937) 461-1000 (24 hours)

Salvation Army Shelter (women with children)  
138 S. Wilkinson St.  
(937) 228-8241 (BY REFERRAL ONLY)

Salvation Army Booth House (men only)  
624 S. Main St.  
(937) 228-8210 (BY REFERRAL ONLY)

YWCA Shelter & Housing Network  
(for battered women, single homeless women,  
and pregnant and parenting teens)  
(937) 222-6333 (24 hours)

**For more sites, call  
Help Link  
(937) 225-3000**

# Appendix H

## Signs and Symptoms of Substance Use

## Signs and Symptoms of Substance Use

It's important to keep in mind that if a patron exhibits any of the following signs or symptoms, it does not necessarily mean he/she is using drugs or alcohol. The presence of these behaviors could be the product of other problems. Whatever the cause, they may warrant some attention, especially if they occur in a cluster. The key is change; it is important to look for any significant changes in appearance, personality, attitude or behavior.

- Slowed or staggered walk; poor physical coordination
- Red watery eyes; pupils larger or smaller than usual; blank stare
- Cold sweaty palms; shaky hands
- Puffy face, blushing, or paleness
- Smell of substance on breath, body, or clothes
- Extreme hyperactivity; excessive talkativeness
- Running nose; hacking cough
- Needle marks on lower arm, leg, or bottom of feet
- Nausea, vomiting or excessive sweating
- Tremors or shakes of hands, feet, or head
- Difficulty paying attention; forgetfulness
- Sudden oversensitivity; resentful behavior
- Irritability; moodiness
- Paranoia
- Secretive or suspicious behavior

### Drug Specific Symptoms

Marijuana: Glassy, red eyes; loud talking and inappropriate laughter followed by sleepiness, a sweet burnt scent, loss of interest and motivation.

Alcohol: Clumsiness; difficulty walking; slurred speech; sleepiness; poor judgment; dilated pupils.

Depressants: Seems drunk as if from alcohol but without the accompanying odor of alcohol; difficulty concentrating; clumsiness; poor judgment; slurred speech; contracted pupils.

Stimulants: Hyperactivity; euphoria; irritability; anxiety; excessive talking followed by depression or sleeping at odd times; dilated pupils; dry mouth and nose.

Inhalants: Watery eyes; impaired vision; secretions from nose or rashes around the nose and mouth; headaches and nausea; appearance of intoxication; poor muscle control; changes in appetite; anxiety and irritability.

Hallucinogens: Dilated pupils, bizarre and irrational behavior; detachment from people; absorption with self or objects; slurred speech; confusion.

Heroin: Needle marks; sleeping at unusual times; sweating; vomiting; coughing and sniffing; twitching; contracted pupils.

Source: Employee Assistance Plus