

South Country Library **Patron Behavior Policy**

Approved by Board of Trustees
May 20, 2004
Revised and Approved_1/21/10; amended and approved 2/18/10;
Amended and Approved 11/18/10
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South Country Library strives to provide a safe and educational atmosphere for all. We ask that you adhere to the following library rules. The library reserves the right to deny access to the library and/or revoke library card privileges in the event of your violation of these rules.

Behavior becomes unacceptable when it interferes with the rights of others or the intended and normal use of the library, causes damage to buildings or equipment, or is hazardous to oneself or others.

Those willing to modify unacceptable behavior are welcome to stay.

Those unable or unwilling to comply will be asked to leave and the authorities may be called. The Library unconditionally reserves the right to seek intervention of security guards, the police and/or appropriate authorities in circumstances of emergency, illness, Library closing, or when a child/teen/adult causes substantial disruption to Library operations.

Personal Property

South Country Library is not responsible for lost or stolen property.

Unattended Children

An adult or person sixteen (16) years or older should supervise any child under the age of eight (8) years old at all times. A child eight (8) years or older may use the library unattended provided they are able to maintain proper library behavior. Children can be asked to leave the library if they are disruptive.

Use of Children's Room and Young Adult ("YA" Room)

Use of the Children's Room is reserved for children from birth to fifth grade. Children under the age of eight (8) years old must be accompanied by a responsible caregiver (i.e. adult or person sixteen (16) years or older.) The caregiver must remain in the immediate vicinity, be in visual contact with the child, and monitor their behavior and activities.

The Young Adult Room is reserved for teens from sixth grade to twelfth grade..

Adults may not use the Children's Room or YA Room unless they are specifically searching the collections or accompanying a child or teen.

Any adult or teacher wishing to tutor a child or young adult may do so in the study rooms. All tutors must sign and adhere to the tutoring policy.

In order to provide optimum service to children and teens, staff has the discretion to ask adult patrons to relocate outside of the Children's Room and YA Room.

Responsibility for the welfare, behavior and material use of all minors at the South Country Library rests solely with the parent/guardian. If parents are unavailable, proper authorities will be contacted.

Examples of unacceptable behavior include but are not necessarily limited to:

1. Bringing food or beverages into the library. Food and/or beverages will be confiscated from anyone eating or drinking.
2. Using tobacco in any form or lighting matches in any area of the library including bathrooms. Library users who wish to smoke must do so outside.
3. Selling or exchanging alcohol or drugs or overtly exhibiting signs of alcohol or substance abuse.
4. Gambling
5. Soliciting funds or selling any article or service in the library.
6. Using a cell phone. Patrons who wish to use a cell phone must do so in the lobby.
7. Using audible radios, walkmans, CD players, I-Pods, MP3 players or other sound-generating devices.
8. Talking loudly or otherwise causing excessive noise.
9. Using threatening, intimidating, profane, or abusive language.
10. Possessing a weapon of any kind. Possession of a weapon is grounds for removal or police intervention.
11. Fighting or other rowdy behavior including but not limited to throwing books, or any other object is grounds for removal or police intervention.
12. Blocking entrances, exits, aisles, or walkways.
13. Bringing pets into the library except for service animals.

14. Wearing roller skates, roller blades, or using skateboards or scooters or similar items.
15. Bicycles are not allowed in the library. Bicycle racks are provided on a first-come, first-served basis. The library assumes no liability for damage or theft.
16. To ensure proper safety, playing near or on the stairs and elevator is prohibited.
17. There will be no loitering on library property.
18. Patrons must be fully clothed, including shoes and shirts when entering the library.
19. Patrons shall maintain a generally acceptable standard of personal hygiene. Patrons whose bodily hygiene is offensive so as to constitute a nuisance to other persons shall be asked to leave the building.
20. Patrons may not sleep within the library building, except for young children sleeping under the supervision of a parent or caregiver.
21. Inappropriate use of library computers such as:
 - Damaging or altering computer equipment or software
 - Downloading or installing any program or files on any hard drive
 - Sending, displaying, or printing obscene material
 - Refusing to leave after one's time limit is up and others are waiting.

Criminal Behavior

Patrons are expected to abide by federal, state and local laws, ordinances and regulations. Anyone found to be in violation of such will be reported to the proper authorities.

Behaviors including but not limited to theft, vandalism, exhibitionism, assault, and verbal threats are considered criminal, and will result in the notification of law enforcement authorities.

Patron Use of Library Staff Telephones

Patrons may not use staff telephones.

Paging Library Patrons

Library patrons will be paged only in case of emergency.

Enforcement of Rules and Penalties for Violations

Enforcement Procedure: The Library Director or designee (staff and/or security guard) shall be responsible for the enforcement of these rules and regulations. Any violation of these rules shall be immediately reported to the Library Director or designee who shall immediately make inquiry of the facts and circumstances of the alleged violation, and who may thereupon direct the violator to cease and desist from the violation and/or to vacate the premises.

If the violator shall refuse to obey such direction, the Director or designee is hereby authorized to make a complaint to the police department and to sign any information, or other required document, necessary to charge the violator with appropriate violation of law. A report of the violation and the action taken shall be made by the Library Director to the Board of Trustees.

Penalties: In addition, and/or in the alternative to the provisions of the paragraph above, the Library Director is hereby authorized, at his or her sole discretion, to take any one or more of the following actions with respect to any person or persons who have violated any of these rules or regulations:

Persons who have qualified, or who are eligible to qualify, as borrowers of Library books and materials may have their borrowing privileges suspended for a period not to exceed one year. Such persons may also be subject to the revocation of their privileges to enter the library premises for a period not to exceed one year.

Persons who are not eligible to qualify to become borrowers of books and materials may be subject to the revocation of their privileges to enter the library premises for a period not to exceed one year.

Persons who have committed a violation which:

- (a) Is egregious in nature, that is, of a serious nature involving negative circumstances above and beyond the usual violation; or
- (b) They refuse to cease committing such violation thereby causing a complaint to be made to police department charging a violation of law; or
- (c) Is not the first violation committed by such person whose privileges have been suspended in the past, shall, be subject to permanent revocation of all privileges to enter the Library premises and/or to use any of the Library facilities.

Library borrowing privileges shall be suspended temporarily when fines are due and owing and/or books or materials have not been returned as required. When past due fines have been paid and overdue books or materials have been returned, suspended borrowing privileges shall be reinstated except where special

circumstances are present, for example, there is a continuing pattern of unpaid fines and/or failure to return books when due.

Appeal Procedure:

Appeal by Library patrons, and any other person to suspension of their borrowing privileges and/or their privileges to enter upon Library premises shall be made to the Board of Trustees.

Each person, not an employee of the Library, shall have the right to submit a written notice of appeal to the Board of Trustees within thirty (30) days of any action of the Library Director suspending their borrowing privileges and/or their privilege to enter upon Library premises. The Board of Trustees or their designee, shall convene a hearing at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board, as long as the notice from the appellant is received at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting date, otherwise the hearing shall be held at the meeting after the next regularly scheduled meeting. If the appellant does not appear at the hearing, the appellant waives the right to any further appeal.

At the aforesaid hearing, the aggrieved shall be afforded the opportunity to present evidence, testify and cross examine witnesses. Within thirty (30) days of such hearing, the Board of Trustees shall render a decision in writing either restoring the aggrieved person's library privileges, confirming the Director's actions, or rendering a decision to adjust the time period of the suspension and of their borrowing privileges and/or their privilege to enter library premises. The written decision will explain the reasons for the Board's action.