

Holyoke Public Library Patron Behavior and Restroom Use Policy

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Patron Behavior Policy is to establish rules for behavior in order to provide all patrons with a comfortable and safe environment in which to use the library. The **patron has the responsibility** to follow all public health, safety and fire regulations, and other laws designed for the public good. The rules below will be firmly and courteously enforced by the library staff and Security personnel, and if necessary, the Holyoke Police Department.

Though this policy focuses primarily on activities inside the library facility, the scope of its coverage includes all library property including the land surrounding it, the sidewalks and the parking areas.

For the safety of children in the library, adults unaccompanied by children are asked to remain in the adult areas of the library unless they are actively using the materials or services in the children's area for purposes not served by the adult area of the building. The Teen Room and any other designated teen spaces are reserved for teens and those who accompany them, and adults interested in Teen literature while they are retrieving material from the collection.

The library encourages frequent visits by children and their families. However, parents/guardians are responsible for their children's (under eighteen) behavior and welfare in the library. They will be notified if their children are left in a vulnerable situation or require supervision due to disruptive behavior. Children *under the age of ten* may not be in the library without an adult caregiver. The library staff may contact the Holyoke Police Department if an unattended child is left at the library. The library is not responsible for the welfare of children who are left unattended in the library.

Patron rights

The Holyoke Public Library supports the rights of all individuals to:

- Receive friendly, courteous, and respectful service;
- Have free and equal access to information;
- Expect privacy and the confidentiality of the information that is shared with the Library when using our web site or other library services;
- Have a clean, safe, comfortable, and pleasant environment;
- Use the Library without discrimination;
- Use the Library undisturbed without threat of harm, invasion of property, or interference.

Categories of Prohibited Behavior

Category A: Library-Specific Violations

ANIMALS: Bringing animals into the library is prohibited except for registered service animals.

AUDIO EQUIPMENT: Playing audio equipment so that others can hear it is not allowed.

BAGS: The library reserves the right to limit the size and number of items brought into the library.

BICYCLES: Bicycles must be parked in designated areas outside the building.

BULLYING: Bullying and cyber-bullying is not tolerated.

CELL PHONES: While cell phone calls are not prohibited, phones should be set to silent or vibrate. Loud voices and ring tones that may be disruptive to others may prompt library employees to request cell phone users take the conversation away from other users and/or out to a foyer, or shut the phone off.

CLOTHING: For hygiene purposes shirts and shoes are required. For security purposes, face coverings (e.g. caps, hats, hoods, sunglasses) must be removed in the library. Masks or face coverings used for personal health or religious purposes are allowed.

CRAFT ACTIVITIES: Due to potential damage to library materials and/or property, unscheduled craft activities in public service areas involving liquid materials, such as glue, paint, play dough, etc, must be pre-approved by library staff.

DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION: *Excessive* displays of affection are inappropriate behaviors for the library.

FOOD AND DRINK: Because of the potential damage to library materials, the consumption of food and/or beverages is not allowed in the library, except in designated areas.

ODORS: Patrons may be asked to leave the library if their odor interferes with the ability of other patrons to use and/or enjoy the facility.

LIBRARY FURNITURE (MISUSE OF): In order to maintain clean and attractive library facilities and furniture, it is forbidden to sit on tables and heating units, place feet on furniture, lie on floors, move furniture, or to deface walls, tables, chairs, doors, shelving, elevators, etc. Patrons should sit one to a chair and not tip chairs back.

PERSONAL POSSESSIONS: Personal possessions should not be left unattended or at public service or entrance points for safekeeping. The library is unable to guarantee the security of such items.

RUNNING: For safety and avoiding disturbances, running is not allowed in the library building.

RAZOR SCOOTERS, SKATEBOARDS AND ROLLER SKATES: Patrons may bring these into the library while using library services/resources, however they may not be used in the building.

SLEEPING: Habitual sleepers and those who are sprawled on furniture or the floor, or those obstructing a public way, will not be tolerated.

SOLICITING: Soliciting patrons and staff for donations, for the purpose of obtaining signatures on petitions, or for any other reason is not allowed on library premises.

STAFF ONLY AREAS: Patrons are not allowed to enter areas posted “Staff Only” without permission.

Category B: Municipal and State Law Violations

COMPUTER EQUIPMENT (MISUSE OF): The abuse of library computer equipment violates state law (*see MGL, Ch. 266, Sec. 100*) and will be prosecuted. Abuse of equipment includes: banging on the keyboard or other use of excessive force, misappropriation of hardware or software, and attempts to alter software. Consult the Library’s *Computer Services Policy and Equipment Use Policy* for a more comprehensive description of acceptable use.

DAMAGES: Those who damage or deface library materials or property will be prosecuted (*see MGL, Ch. 266, Sec 100*). Parents may be held liable for damage done by a child under the age of eighteen (*see MGL, Ch. 231, Sec. 85G*)

DISTURBANCES: Creating a disturbance by making noise, talking loudly, or engaging in other disruptive conduct is not allowed (*see MGL, Ch. 272, Sec. 41*).

DRUGS, TOBACCO & ALCOHOL: The distribution of any illegal or harmful drugs on library property is not allowed. Smoking, the use of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes/vaping and chewing tobacco, and the use of alcohol is prohibited in the library and on the two reading terraces (*see MGL Ch. 270, Sec. 22*).

HARASSMENT: Harassing behaviors such as intimidation, panhandling, drug dealing, prostitution, is a violation of library policy, and in some cases, the law.

LITTERING: Littering on library property is not allowed. Patrons must dispose of trash, wrappers, and empty containers in trash and recycling bins (*see Holyoke City Code of Ordinances, Chapter 74 Article IV, Sec. 74-91*)

THREATS: Threatening patrons, volunteers, or staff, either verbally, physically, or in writing, including all forms of electronic media, is prohibited.

VIOLENCE: Violence and possession of weapons is not allowed on library premises.

Restroom Use Policy

- The Holyoke Public Library restrooms are only for library users.
- All Public Bathrooms are locked at all times. Library users *must* provide library security with a valid library card or photo ID to acquire the key to unlock the restrooms. It is the library user’s responsibility to lock the restroom after use and return the key to library security.

Adopted by the Holyoke Public Library Board of Directors – 2/13/2024

Holyoke Public Library
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- Illegal Use of the Holyoke Public Library restrooms is *prohibited* and will result in prosecution to the fullest extent of the law.
- Only one person is allowed in a restroom at a given time except for adult caregivers.
- There is a time limit of 10 minutes to use a restroom.
- Library materials (books, magazines, newspapers, etc.) are not allowed in the restrooms.
- In the interest of public health, unreasonable use of the restrooms, such as laundering clothes and bathing, is not allowed.
- Children under 18 years of age and families will be directed to the restrooms located in the Children's Room on the 2nd floor.

The Holyoke Public Library Reserves the Right to Enforce All Library Policies