

Patron Behavior Policy

The mission of the Ventress Memorial Library is to foster connectedness by providing collections, programs, and technology to promote literacy and an informed citizenry through open and equal access to cultural, intellectual, recreational and community resources.

The Board of Library Trustees is responsible for establishing the rules of behavior necessary to protect the rights and safety of library patrons, volunteers, and staff, and for preserving and protecting library materials, equipment, and facilities.

The Children's Room is reserved for use by children under the age of 12, their parents, caregivers, and adults interested in children's literature while they are retrieving material from the collection. The Teen Zone is reserved for teens and those who accompany them, and adults interested in teen literature while they are retrieving material from the collection. Seating in the teen room is reserved for teens ages 12-18 at all times. Use of the Makerspace is arranged with the coordination of Library staff.

For the comfort and safety of patrons, volunteers, and staff the following acts and behaviors are not appropriate and are prohibited:

- Engaging in any activity in violation of federal, state, local or other applicable law, or library policy.
- Carrying firearms and dangerous weapons of any type (except by law enforcement officers).
- Being under the influence of illegal drugs and selling, using, or possessing illegal drugs or selling alcohol, cigarettes or marijuana.

Library Specific Violations:

- Engaging in any activity in violation of a library policy. Library users are expected to comply with all library policies (a complete list of policies can be found on the library's website). ventresslibrary.org
- Disruptive behavior, such as creating a disturbance by making loud noises, talking loudly, screaming, yelling, or engaging in disruptive behavior (MGL Ch.272, Section 41).
- Verbally or physically harassing other library patrons, volunteers, or staff, including but not limited to, stalking, staring or lurking, offensive touching, and obscene acts such as indecent exposure, lewd speech or behavior.

- Threatening the safety or rights of library users or staff, or interfering with the library staff's performance of their duties. This includes harassment or intimidation by means of disorderly behavior, abusive, obscene, threatening or profane language, or by the possession of weapons (MGL Ch. 269, Section 10).
- Smoking or vaping: lighting a cigar, cigarette, pipe or other tobacco or non-tobacco product designed to be combusted and inhaled (MGL Ch. 270, Section 22).
- Beverages with covers and small snacks are permitted in the library. Patrons are expected to observe reasonable caution with food and drink in the library.
- Patrons must use headphones or earbuds to listen to computers or other devices in the library. The volume of such devices must not disturb other patrons.
- No animals, except trained or in training guide or assist animals, are permitted in the library.
- No soliciting or distributing of leaflets in the library.
- Appropriate attire, which includes shirts and shoes, must be worn at all times.
- No running, jumping, pushing, shoving or throwing things in the library.
- Roller skates or roller blades are not allowed in the library.
- Bicycles should be placed in the outside bike rack and locked. They are not to be left inside the building or on the sidewalk leading into the building.
- Neither the library nor staff are responsible for **personal belongings left unattended** by patrons.
- Using restrooms for bathing or shampooing, or doing laundry.
- Theft, defacement, or damage of library materials or property (MGL Ch. 266, Section 99, Section 99A, and Section 100). Parents/guardians can be held liable for damage done by a child under 18 (MGL Ch. 231, Section 85G).
- The use of false identification to obtain a library card or to check out library materials, or the use of another person's library card without that person's permission (MGL Ch.231, Section 99A).
- No entering areas designated "Staff Only" without authorization.
- Failing to comply with a reasonable staff request to cease behavior that interferes with the effective functioning of the library and the use of the library by others, including being asked to leave the library.

Consequences of violating policy:

1. The staff will give a verbal warning of inappropriate behavior and explain the rules to the patron and suggest alternatives.
2. In the event of continued disruptions, after warning and explanation of rules, patron may be asked to leave the building for the rest of the day.
3. If the offending patron refuses to leave when requested, or if the staff feel there is a potential danger to themselves, other staff or other patrons, the police may be called.
4. If a patron repeatedly ignores the warnings issued by the staff and/or the police, the staff has the right to remove the patron for specified periods of time. A specific date and time will be attached to the restriction, and it will be posted for the information of the entire staff.

Adopted by the Board of Library Trustees August 17, 2016, revised March 20, 2019, revised November 30, 2022.