

Patron Behavior/Code of Conduct

Welcome to Sterling Municipal Library!

Have fun. The Library is a great place to explore.

Ask questions. Questions are our specialty. If you need help, PLEASE ASK!!

Be considerate and cooperative.

Remember there are others using the Library as well.

Policy Statement

The Library is restricted to uses that advance the mission of the Library, which is to provide a quiet, safe and supportive environment for all users and staff engaged in library activities. All members of the public are encouraged to read, study, and use Library materials, programs and/or services. Users may not engage in any act which disrupts or prevents the normal or intended use of the Library by any other users or staff. All Library users and employees should be free of any threat of harm, invasion of property, or gross indignity. To guarantee these rights for all persons, the Baytown Library Board has adopted this Code of Conduct as reflected below.

Use

The use of the Library shall be consistent with the policy statement herein and shall in no event conflict with library sponsored programs. Monopolizing library space, seating, tables, computers, or any equipment to the exclusion of other patrons and staff shall not be permitted.

Rules

These rules are for the protection of all who use the Library. If you observe patron behavior that does not meet this Code of Conduct, please contact a staff member. The Library staff may take the following action when patrons are in noncompliance with this Code of Conduct:

- Give a verbal warning
- Ask patrons to leave the premises
- Deactivate and/or restrict patron's access to computers from 24 hours to six-months depending on the severity of the violation.
- Ban a patron from the Library – the period of time that a patron is banned can range from 24 hours to six months depending on the severity of the violation.
- Call the police

Alcohol/Drugs

Alcohol or illegal drugs may not be brought into the Library. Persons under the influence of either may not use the Library's facilities.

Animals

Service animals trained to assist disabled individuals are permitted in the Library. All others are prohibited.

Closing Time

Checkout of items must be completed in time to leave the Library promptly at closing time.

Computer Use

A maximum of two persons may use any computer simultaneously. Please sign off the equipment promptly at the end of your time period. Refer to the *Policy on Public Use of the Internet (Link)* for more information.

Disorderly Conduct

Disorderly conduct is not acceptable. Disorderly conduct includes, but is not limited to, (1) engaging in offensive, obscene, abusive, boisterous, harassing, or noisy actions or using offensive, obscene, or abusive language which may harass or arouse alarm, anger, or resentment in others; (2) disturbing an assembly; or (3) brawling or fighting.

Dress

Shoes or sandals and shirts are required and must be worn in the Library at all times.

Emergencies

Staff directions must be followed promptly when the alarm sounds.

Food/Beverages

Food and covered (capped) beverages are allowed in designated areas only.

Furnishings

Furnishings shall be used only for their intended purposes.

Gang Colors

No gang activity or colors/symbols are allowed in the Library.

Language

Offensive or abusive language is not acceptable.

Loitering/Soliciting

Entrances, doorways and stairs must be kept clear at all times. Panhandling or soliciting on Library property is prohibited. Refer to the *Bulletin Boards, Exhibits and Placement/Distribution of Non-Library Material Policy* for more information.

Media

No media or commercial photography or filming will be allowed without prior permission of the City Librarian. Film/photos of adult patrons require their consent. Film/photos of minor patrons require the consent of a parent or legal guardian.

Meeting Room

Use the meeting room appropriately and as scheduled. Refer to the *Meeting Room Policy* for more information.

Noise

The Library is a quiet environment. Loud talking or other loud sources of noise are not allowed. Audible use of radios, CD players, or any other electronic devices is not permissible in the Library. Typewriters may be used in designated areas only.

Cell phones must be set to silent or vibrate mode if turned on inside the Library. Talking loudly on cell phones and ringing cell phones are not allowed.

Personal Belongings

The Library is not responsible for personal belongings left in or on Library property. Please attend to personal items as you would in any public place.

Restrooms

Use restrooms for their intended purpose. Bathing and laundering are prohibited.

Running

For the safety of all patrons, please do not run in the Library.

Skateboards, In-Line Skates, Scooters and Bicycles

The use of skateboards/skates is prohibited on the Library property. If skateboards/skates are on the Library property, they must be carried at all times. Use Library parking areas, sidewalks, and lawns properly and safely. These areas are not intended for recreational activities. Scooters and bicycles must be left in the bike rack.

Smoking/Chewing Tobacco

The use of all forms of tobacco is prohibited in the Library. In accordance with Chapter 42, Article III of the Code of Ordinances, City of Baytown, Texas smoking is prohibited within 15 feet of all entrances to the Library.

Staff Areas

Non-public areas, such as offices, workrooms, and storage areas are for staff only. Do not enter unless authorized by staff.

Telephone

A telephone is available for patron use near the Circulation Desk. All calls are limited to three-minutes.

Theft/Damage to Property

Intentional damage and/or defacement of materials, furnishings, equipment or premises, or attempts at theft will be prosecuted. Intentional damage and/or defacement as used in this policy includes, but is not limited to, clipping coupons, cutting articles out of magazines, removing pages from any books or magazines, hacking or altering computer settings, writing on, scratching or in any way damaging materials, furniture, or premises. The Library and its contents and collection are public property and any damages incurred will be reported to the police and compensation required.

Theft Detection System (Security Gates)

If the security gates sound an alarm as you exit, you must return to the Circulation Desk to verify that the materials were checked-out properly.

Unattended Minors and Persons with Special Needs

Minors under the age of seven (7) must have a parent/guardian/caregiver in the immediate vicinity and in visual contact at all times while in the Library. Minors between the ages of seven (7) and twelve (13) must have a parent/guardian/caregiver present in the Library at all times. Please refer to the *Unattended Minors Policy* ([Link](#)) for more information.

Unattended persons who seek or need personal assistance for other than Library-related services, or where staff has a reasonable basis to be concerned for the safety of the unattended person, must have a caregiver present. (Examples include persons needing supervision because of physical or mental conditions).

Weapons

Weapons of any kind are prohibited on Library property.