

Patron Behavior, Responsibility, and Conduct Policy

Adopted March 20, 2018 by the South Georgia Regional Library Board of Trustees

The South Georgia Regional Library Board of Trustees has the responsibility to provide pleasant, orderly facilities conducive to concentrated and effective use of Library materials and services.¹ Its responsibility does not extend to provision of space for work or study by groups or individuals not using Library materials or services. Visitors to the Library are expected to be engaged in activities associated with the use of public libraries while on or in any of the Library's properties.² Visitors who choose to violate these standards for behavior may be subject to a restriction or loss of Library privileges.

The Library staff has the responsibility for maintaining order in the Library to assure a pleasant experience for all users. To meet this responsibility, the staff will need to intervene in situations at the Library that present danger to the safety of persons or property, interfere with the rights of others, constitute disturbing or inappropriate uses of the Library, and that involve the commission of illegal acts.³

The following has been adapted and shall be available at each member Library:

- **Children under the age of 12 may not be left unattended in the Library.**⁴

BEHAVIOR AND ACTIONS PROHIBITED BY RULES

- Disruptive behavior will not be permitted. This includes but is not limited to disorderly conduct, noise or activity, whether intentional or inadvertent, that interferes with the rights of others, physical abuse, abusive or threatening language and misuse of Library property.⁵
- Engaging in any action which violates established Library policies.
- Sexual acts, indecent exposure, or any other sexual misconduct.⁶
- Misuse of restrooms including changing of clothes or bathing in restrooms or taking Library materials into restrooms.⁷
- Leashed, controlled, and tagged trained service animals are permitted. All other animals, including comfort companions, are prohibited in the library. Animals cannot be left tethered near library buildings, entrances, or walkways.⁸

¹ O.C.G.A. § 20-5-41: County and regional public libraries will be governed by a board of trustees

² O.C.G.A. § 16-11-36: Loitering or Prowling

³ O.C.G.A. § 16-11-39: Disorderly Conduct

⁴ In accordance with the Lack of Supervision Guidelines on the Georgia Dept. of Human Resources webpage

⁵ O.C.G.A. § 16-11-39: Disorderly Conduct

⁶ O.C.G.A. § 16-6-8: Public Indecency

⁷ O.C.G.A. 20-5-52: Theft or Damage to Library Property

⁸ A.D.A. Titles I, II, and III: Defines service animals

- Any kind of solicitation or canvassing (for example soliciting signatures for a petition, nomination papers, and the like), including selling or solicitation for money or items or services.
- Smoking and/or use of any tobacco product, including smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping, etc is prohibited in Library buildings or on Library property, including parking areas and grounds. All Library buildings and properties are designated as smoke and tobacco free areas.⁹
- Eating: Food is prohibited in public areas except at special Library meetings or events. At the Willis L. Miller Library main branch eating is permitted in the café area and North Lobby only.
- Uncovered beverages: Covered beverages are permissible in public areas (except near computers) and shall be disposed of when finished.
- Loud, unreasonable, and or disturbing noises created by persons, electronic devices, cell phones, including wearing headphones with the volume turned up loud enough for others to hear and persistent noise or crying of children. Cell phones should be set to silent or vibration mode. All conversations should be no louder than the general noise level of the area.
- Harassing, threatening, or intimidating other patrons or Library staff: This includes, but is not limited to, physical or verbal abuse, including obscene or derogatory language or gestures; annoying persistently to create an unpleasant or hostile situation; interference with another patron's use of the library or with library staff's performance of duties.¹⁰
- Engaging in disruptive or abusive behavior. This includes, but is not limited to, fighting, hitting, shoving, throwing objects, accosting, or skating that interferes with the normal operations of the Library or that disturbs Library patrons or staff.¹¹
- Offensive bodily hygiene or scent
- Public displays of affection: Excessive displays of affection are inappropriate behavior in the library.
- Running
- Damaging, abusing, or defacing Library materials, furniture, and property, including computer equipment and networks or personal property of Library patrons or staff. Parents can be liable for damage done by a child under the age of eighteen.¹²
- Climbing on Library facilities, equipment, furnishings, railings, fences, or landscaping.

⁹ O.C.G.A. § 31-12A-1 - § 31-12A-3: Smoke-free Air

¹⁰ O.C.G.A. § 16-11-39: Disorderly Conduct

¹¹ O.C.G.A. § 16-11-39: Disorderly Conduct

¹² O.C.G.A. 20-5-52: Prohibition of Theft or Damage of Library Property

- Entering areas designated for staff or unauthorized areas of the building or grounds or remaining in the building or on the grounds after operating hours unless authorized by Library staff. Staff will give a warning prior to closing time. Patrons are responsible for knowing the closing time for the day.
- Patrons not reading, studying, using Library materials, attending events or patrons wandering from one area to another may be required to leave the Library. Visitors to the Library are expected to be engaged in activities associated with the use of public libraries while on or in any Library property. ¹³
- Unauthorized use of parking lot or designated special parking spaces, including stopping to let individuals out and picking them up and use of parking lot when not using Library services.
- Distributing or posting printed materials/literature that have not been approved by the Library.
- Removing Library materials from the premises without authorization through established lending procedures. Personal items are subject to inspection to ensure compliance. ¹⁴
- Tampering with Library security or safety devices. ¹⁵
- Leaving personal items unattended. Library staff are not responsible for monitoring personal items. Personal belongings left in the Library at closing time will be locked in the building until the Library is next open to the public. Any items left in a member Library will be held at that location for thirty days. The Library and Library staff is not responsible for lost items. If they have not been claimed by the end of the thirty day period, lost items become the property of the Library. Library Managers may dispose of lost items as he/she chooses.
- Possessing or consuming alcohol or illegal drugs or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Inappropriate clothing. Shirt and shoes are required.
- Using a wheelchair, walker, shopping cart, child stroller, or other wheeled device to transport items or personal belongings into the Library. Bedrolls, blankets, frame backpacks, suitcases, or bags measuring more than three feet in length or height are not permitted in Library buildings. No items may be allowed impede others.
- Bicycles or other similar devices must be left in designated areas outside of the building.
- Littering

¹³ O.C.G.A. § 16-11-36: Loitering or Prowling

¹⁴ O.C.G.A. 20-5-54: Prohibition of Concealing or Removing Library Property

¹⁵ O.C.G.A. 20-5-52: Prohibition of Theft or Damage

- Loitering in Library buildings or on Library property.¹⁶
- Using more than one chair at a time, or monopolizing or rearranging library furnishings, equipment, materials, facilities, outlets, or spaces
- Sleeping or putting one's head, feet, or legs on furniture.
- Disobeying the reasonable direction of any Library staff member.
- Any illegal acts or conduct in violation of Federal, State, or local law, ordinance, or regulation.

Persons committing theft, vandalism or other illegal acts are subject to prosecution.

Patrons confronted with the violation of any of these rules should inform a Library staff member immediately.

UNRULY BEHAVIOR

When the behavior of a patron constitutes a disruption which interferes with the use of the South Georgia Regional Library by other patrons, or with a staff member's ability to complete his/her duties, progressive action will be taken by staff members to end the disruption. Such action may include, but will not be limited to, verbal warnings, requesting that the patron leave the building, banning the patron from the Library building or property, or calling the authorities.

In extenuating circumstance, or where the behavior of a patron constitutes a continuing disruption, the patron may be suspended from South Georgia Regional Library for a period of time to be determined by the Library. Questions about a Library suspension should be directed in writing to the Library Director. A response from the Library Director can be expected, usually within 10 days of receipt of the written request. An appeal to the decision may be filed in writing with the Library Board of Trustees within 10 days after notice of the Library Director's decision is given to the group or individual requesting review. The Board of Trustees will, during its next regularly scheduled board meeting, hear the appeal. The group or individual requesting review will be notified of the date, time, and place of such board meeting, and shall be given an opportunity to be heard. The Board of Trustee's decision concerning appeal of the Library Director's decision shall be final.

The authorities should be called any time a staff member feels that a patron's behavior is threatening to the safety of other patrons or staff members. Staff members may intervene with a patron in order to prevent injury or property damage.

¹⁶ O.C.G.A. § 16-11-36: Loitering or Prowling