

Aram Public Library Policy 2.7

Patron Behavior Policy

Revised August 21, 2025

The Patron Behavior Policy is designed to protect the rights of library patrons, to provide guidance to staff members with what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and to protect library staff, materials and facilities.

Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 43.52 (2), states: "Every public library shall be free for the use of the inhabitants of the municipality by which it is established and maintained, subject to such reasonable regulations as the library board prescribes in order to render its use most beneficial to the greatest number. The library board may exclude from the use of the public library all persons who willfully violate such regulations."

Purpose of the Library

The purpose of the Aram Public Library (APL) is to provide library service to all people within its service area. APL defines "library service" as providing information, programs, events, and other library services to the general public. To fulfill this purpose the Library must maintain an orderly, safe, pleasant and attractive environment. Any behavior that disrupts this environment could impede the Library from fulfilling its purpose, and must be considered unacceptable.

Consequences for Unacceptable Behavior

Unacceptable behavior on the part of patrons may result in loss of library privileges. Depending on the severity and regularity of the offense(s), the Library will institute discipline ranging from a verbal warning, denial of specific privileges (such as use of public computers), denial of the right to use the Library (banning) for a specified time period up to a year, to involvement of the Delavan Police Department.

Staff members observing unacceptable behavior will take appropriate action. Usually, but not always, that action begins with a verbal warning. Upon request, the patron will supply his/her name to library staff. If a patron refuses to leave or if they return before their ban has expired, the Delavan Police Department will be notified. Staff members should fill out an Incident Report about the behavior problem and forward it to the Library Director and file it in the staff notes binder. Further disciplinary actions can then be taken by the Library Director if needed. When disciplinary action is taken, provided the Library has a patron's address, a letter of explanation will be sent to the patron. In the case of a minor child under 18 years of age, the letter is sent to his or her parent or guardian. When deemed appropriate by the Library Director, copies of Incident Reports and/or letters will be forwarded to the Delavan Police Department or other appropriate law enforcement agencies. Incident Reports and letters of this severity will be presented to the Library Board. When necessary, Incident Reports and/or letters may also be forwarded to other Lakeshores Library System libraries.

Examples of prohibited activities and unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to, those listed below. Patrons engaging in behavior that could be harmful will be asked to cease such activity and/or to leave the building or library grounds.

Prohibited activities

1. Smoking or the use of tobacco products when on library property.
2. Using or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs when on library property.
3. Solicitation or sale of any item, article, service, food or product of any kind whatsoever, unless approved by the Library.
4. Distributing or posting any leaflet or similar item, unless approved by the Library.
5. Purposely rearranging library materials or furniture.
6. Littering on Library property, or in any way defacing or vandalizing Library property.
7. Stealing, defacing, vandalizing or in any other way tampering with Library materials.
8. Attempting to remove any library property from the building without authorization such as avoiding the established lending procedure. Such instances will be considered theft, and the Library will involve the Delavan Police Department.
9. Engaging in conduct that violates Federal Law, Wisconsin State Law or the City of Delavan Municipal Code.
10. Loitering in the library building or on library property, including the parking lots.
11. Displaying or using language or gestures that a reasonable person would find inappropriate for use in a public library.
12. Sending, receiving, or displaying on library or personal computer screens any text or graphics that may reasonably be construed to be obscene or offensive to other patrons or to staff.
13. Harassing other patrons or Library staff members physically, verbally, by staring with the intent to annoy that person or persons, or by any other threatening or intimidating act.
14. Engaging in any other behavior disturbing to library patrons or staff, endangering other persons, or preventing use of or damaging physical property.

Behavior with restrictions

1. Noise level is to be kept to a minimum. This includes, but is not limited to, talking loudly, listening to music/video at levels that others can hear, and cell phone usage where others can hear it.
2. Patrons are expected to use Library equipment and facilities in an equitable manner (additional policies cover use of specific Library equipment). Patrons are expected to surrender the use of equipment when their scheduled time is over and/or when staff so request.
3. Food and beverages may be consumed in the Library in designated areas (Canteen Area)
(a) covered drinks are allowed, but no beverages are permitted near the computers, and
(b) refreshments may be served in the meeting room when so authorized by the Library.
4. Bicycles are not to be brought into any enclosed area of the building nor are they to be left near the library entrance, but should be left in the rack.
5. Appropriate clothing must be worn in the library including shirt and shoes.
6. Cell phone calls may be used in the library with consideration for others especially in computer areas.
In unusual situations, a patron may be allowed to use a Library phone briefly at the discretion of library staff. In most such instances, the call will be kept brief, typically under 5 minutes.

Voice levels on calls should be kept to a minimum. A patron whose call disturbs others will be required to terminate that call immediately or continue it outside the building on a cell phone.

7. Patrons must leave any enclosed area of the building by closing time. Exceptions are granted for library-sponsored or co-sponsored programs that are scheduled to extend beyond closing time. When patrons attend meetings that run past closing time, they must conclude all business with Library staff, such as check out materials, prior to closing time, and must agree to be escorted from the building in a group.
8. No pets or animals of any kind, with the exception of assistive animals or animals being trained as assistive animals, are allowed in the Library unless part of an official library program.
9. The Library does not have a place for patrons to store items. Patrons are responsible for their possessions brought to the Library; library staff will not watch items when they are left unattended. Personal items left unattended for more than thirty minutes will be considered abandoned and placed in the library's lost and found collection.

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