

Washington Public Library

20 West Carlton Avenue

Washington, New Jersey 07882

Phone: 908 689-0201

Fax: 908 835-0803

Procedures governing the suspension of library privileges

In most cases, patrons who violate the code of conduct will first be asked to stop the offending conduct. If the patron refuses to do so, or repeatedly ignores staff requests, privileges will be suspended and/or the police will be called to handle the bad behavior. However, if a crime is being attempted or committed, the police will be called without delay.

Patrons who violate sections 1 a. and d. will be reported to the police without prior notification. Sanctions will be determined on an individual basis, but may include suspension of privileges for up to three years.

Patrons who leave disruptive young children unattended in the library will be asked to remove them. Children who are left unattended at closing time will be dealt with in the following manner: when a library staff member becomes aware of the situation, the parent will be contacted to collect the child. If the parent does not arrive before the library closes, a staff member will remain with the child for up to 15 minutes. Thereafter, the police will be called to come take the child to the station to await the parents there. Parents who become habitual offenders will lose both their own library privileges and those for their children for up to a year at a time.

Inappropriate eating or drinking in the library, smoking, and interfering with another person's use of the library or the performance of the staff will result in an increasing amount of suspension of privileges. The patron will first be requested to stop the inappropriate behavior and not resume it in the library. If the behavior is resumed the same day, s/he will be required to leave the library for the rest of the day. If the patron persists, s/he will have privileges suspended for one to two weeks depending on the severity of the complaint. If the bad behavior still persists, the suspension period will increase at the discretion of the Library director and Board of Trustees.

Violators of the rules against use of roller skates, skateboards, bicycles, etc. will be asked to stop, or to leave the property. The library cannot be responsible for injuries sustained while engaging in these activities.

Inappropriate use of the restrooms will result in sanctions appropriate to the misuse. This may include expulsion from the library or calling the police.

Subsequent offenses by the same individual will result in suspension of privileges for successively longer periods of time up to one year.

Violation of the rules for use of the Internet and other computers will result in a request for the patron to cease the activity. If the patron continues to use the machines in a disruptive manner, s/he will lose Internet privileges for one or two weeks for the first offense, longer if the behavior is repeated. Attempts to reconfigure the library's software or break into the library's private files will also result in suspension of Internet/computer privileges, first for two weeks, then up to a year.

Approved by the Board of Trustees
November 22, 2004

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Patrons who consistently return materials late or in damaged condition will be initially restricted to two items at a time (placed on probation in the circulation system), and if the bad behavior persists, will lose their privileges until restitution has been made. Patrons who leave the area without surrendering their cards or clearing their records will lose their privileges until they update their patron information and either move back into the Borough or buy a nonresident's card.

If a patron does not return an item after three months, it will be considered stolen, and the patron will be summoned to court to try to obtain the return of the materials, or restitution for them. In this case the patron will owe not only the ordinary fees to the library, but will also be responsible for paying court costs. Fees will consist of the replacement cost of the items plus a \$5.00 handling fee. If the items are returned in tact, the fine will not exceed the replacement price of the item plus \$5.00. If the patron is a minor, a final letter signed by the chief of police will be sent, strongly encouraging the patron to return the items. In this case, the borrowing privileges of the entire family at that address will be suspended until the matter is resolved.

Lost or overdue items: Items reported lost before the due date will be charged to the patron at the replacement cost of that book or a similar title. No overdue fines will accrue.

Items not returned by the due date are overdue, and fines will accrue at the current rate up to the cost of the item. In addition, if a certified or return/receipt letter has been sent, there will be an extra \$5.00 fine.

Items that are missing, but that the patron claims to have returned ("claims returned" books) will be marked missing in the circulation system, which will stop the accrual of fines. The library staff will make a thorough search of the building, in case the item was misfiled, and the patron will be asked to continue looking wherever the item might have been taken. If the item is in great demand (e.g. a best seller or reading list book), it will be replaced immediately. Otherwise the library will wait six months and decide whether to replace the item exactly or with something more current. After a year the record for the missing item may be deleted.

In all cases of discretionary sanctions, the Library Director will make the final decision, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees if the situation warrants. Should a patron wish to appeal such a decision, s/he may contact the Chairman of the Board of Trustees to request a hearing at a regular Board meeting. If the patron does not receive satisfaction at this level, s/he should contact the Mayor.

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November 22, 2004