



## **Patron Conduct Policy**

Under the provisions of Chapter 43 of the Wisconsin State Statutes, specifically section 43.52 (1), the Belleville Public Board of Trustees may enact regulations that serve to ensure that library facilities are safe, welcoming, and provide equitable access to materials and services to all library users.

The Belleville Public Library is a gateway to learning and community engagement. We strive to provide a vibrant, welcoming atmosphere where people of all ages may come together to read, browse, do research, study, and attend programming. To maintain a pleasant atmosphere, each person is requested to act in a considerate manner and to cooperate with the following conduct rules when visiting the library.

Our Children's Area is a major part of our main level. We welcome children and encourage the development of lifelong enjoyment of the library and learning. To that end, a more casual atmosphere and higher noise level may exist when children are present. Conversation by staff and patrons is appropriate and the level of quiet may fluctuate throughout the day. Due to the open floor plan, those using our patron computers may expect a work environment similar to a coffee shop. Patrons may use headphones at the computer if desired. Earbuds will be available for purchase at a nominal cost.

Those seeking a more quiet work space may reserve a study room or use the Quiet Reading Room. Study tables, outlets, and comfortable seating are provided for those who wish to read or bring a laptop to use. Quiet conversation is permitted in other areas of the library.

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### **Policy In Effect During COVID-19 Pandemic**

Safety of our patrons and staff is our number one priority. The Library has taken steps to reduce the risk of coronavirus transmission based on advice from public health officials. Anyone not following established safe policies set forth may be asked to leave the facility.

- Those exhibiting upper respiratory symptoms consistent with COVID-19 are asked to not enter the building. If you or any person in your household is not feeling well, please remain home for the safety of everyone. Staff are happy to assist you by phone, schedule a curbside pick up, or arrange for a healthy family member to pick up your library materials.
- Visitors over the age of 2 are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering when at the Library to help protect children who are not able to be vaccinated yet and those with limited immune response.

- Library patrons attending programs as part of a group in an enclosed room may be required to wear a face covering during times of high Covid activity in the community.
  - Library patrons are encouraged to use hand sanitizer and maintain physical distancing while inside the facility.
  - The Library may operate at a reduced capacity to support physical distancing. Areas of the library or specific services may not be available to patrons.
  - Restrictive tape or barriers of any kind may not be removed to accommodate access.
  - Library patrons may not consume food or drink while in the Library if masking is required.
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## Food and Drink in the Library

Food and drinks are allowed in the Library under the following conditions:

1. Non-alcoholic drinks with secure lids (e.g. covered cups, soda and water bottles) may be consumed in all portions of the library.
2. Snack items (e.g. wrapped items that are consumed by an individual) are permitted in the library, except when using the library computers.
3. Patrons are expected to be responsible for food and drink consumed in the library, to ensure all areas are left clean for others, and to dispose of trash in appropriate containers. Payment for any damage to library materials or equipment caused by food or drink in the library will be the responsibility of the library patron (or parent/guardian if patron is a minor).
4. Food and drink are allowed as part of library programming at the discretion of the Director.

## Patron Conduct Rules

The following actions or behaviors are not allowed on Library property:

1. Any act that constitutes a criminal offense under federal, state, or local law.
2. Bringing guns, weapons, knives (other than pocket knives), or items designed or intended to injure or harm people, unless permitted for Library programming.
3. Disorderly conduct, including, but not limited to: fighting; engaging in violent or seriously disruptive behavior; or threatening or intimidating library staff or patrons.
4. Harassing or stalking library staff or patrons, including: filming or photographing any person after being asked to desist; engaging in conduct (such as persistent staring or gestures) that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety or feel distressed, alarmed, or harassed.
5. Engaging in any physically intimidating or assault-like behavior, including making any threats of violence or unlawful activities. **The Library has a policy of zero tolerance for threats or acts of violence. Any person engaging in such behaviors will be ejected from the Library.**

6. Trespassing, including knowingly entering Library premises when access and use of library facilities has been suspended.
7. Indecent exposure, public sexual indecency, lewd acts, or any other sexual offense.
8. Stealing or vandalizing library property or causing damage to any other person's property.
9. Possession, consumption, distribution, or selling of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, or controlled substances.
10. Shouting.
11. Use of personal electronic equipment at a volume that can be heard by others.
12. Use of profane and/or abusive language.
13. Willfully annoying, intimidating, or bullying another person.
14. Entering a library building with animals, except for bona fide service animals as defined by federal and state law, unless permitted for Library programming.
15. Leaving children under the age of six (6) unattended on library premises.
16. Entering or remaining upon library premises with bodily hygiene so offensive that it constitutes a nuisance to others.
17. Improper use of the library restrooms or facilities, including but not limited to bathing, shaving, laundering or changing clothes, or defacing facilities.
18. Violating the Library's rules for acceptable use of the internet and public computers.
19. Creating tripping hazards, or blocking aisles, exits, or entrances.
20. Leaving packages, backpacks, luggage, or any other personal items unattended. Unattended items are subject to removal without notice.
21. Patrons are allowed in the staff work area behind the circulation desk by invitation only.

### **Children and Vulnerable Adults in the Library**

Belleville Public Library welcomes all members of the public and hopes that visitors will come to know libraries as warm, inviting, and enriching places. Parents, guardians, and caregivers must realize that there can be risks associated with leaving children or vulnerable adults\* unattended at a library. The Library does not and cannot act as a caregiver, baby-sitter, or day care center and will not monitor children or vulnerable adults who are left unattended. Children and vulnerable adults are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not violate the code of conduct or disrupt other patrons. To enhance the library experience for and minimize the risk to children and vulnerable adults, the following requirements apply:

1. The responsibility for the safety and well-being of every child and vulnerable adult using the Library rests with the parent, guardian, or caregiver, not with Library personnel.
2. Children age five (5) and under must be attended at all times by a responsible adult or caregiver who is at least 12 years old.
3. Children age six (6) and older, and vulnerable adults who can understand and follow this behavior policy, are welcome to be in the library unattended if they have contact information for a responsible adult or teen who will be available to provide assistance, if needed.
4. Children are not to remain at the library after closing. If a child under 18 is left alone at the library at closing, or if the library closes because of an emergency

situation, library staff will attempt to contact a parent, guardian, or caregiver. If a responsible party cannot be contacted, or the child is not picked up within 10 minutes after closing, library staff will call law enforcement who will assume responsibility for the individual.

\*Definition: For the purposes of this policy, “vulnerable adult” means an individual who is eighteen years of age or older and who is, because of a mental or physical impairment, unable to: protect himself from abuse or exploitation by others; or comprehend or comply with the Library’s behavior policy.

### **Consequences of Non-Compliance:**

Violations of this Behavior Policy and other Library policies will result in increasing levels of action, ranging from a staff-issued warning, to the patron being asked to leave the Library for the remainder of the day, to the patron’s temporary or permanent loss of all library privileges, to legal action including criminal prosecution. The level of action shall be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Any person who violates the behavior policy will be handled in a professional and courteous manner by staff, but the degree of the violation will determine the response.

Library staff are instructed to call 9-1-1 immediately in response to any behavior that is deemed dangerous. Staff will call the police for any behavior that is in violation with federal, state, or local ordinances. Staff will call the police if a person or group of persons is asked to leave the Library and they refuse to leave and/or become difficult with the staff member.

For most other inappropriate behavior, one warning will be given. Continued violations will result in the patron being asked to leave the Library for the day. A serious violation or repeated violations, or a violation where the police are called, may result in longer exclusions from the Library up to a permanent ban from the Library.

An individual who is banned from the Library may be criminally charged with trespassing if they return to library property during the term of the ban. Any individual who is banned and whose library privileges have been revoked may request to have the decision reviewed by the Library Board of Trustees at their next regular meeting. The request must be made in writing and submitted to the Library Director and the President of the Board of Trustees of the Belleville Public Library, PO Box 140, Belleville WI 53508, within 30 calendar days of the date the ban was issued. The decision of the Library Board is final.

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