

Board of County Commissioners Leon County

Policy No. 21-3

Title:	Library Code of Conduct
Date Adopted:	June 8, 2021
Effective Date:	June 8, 2021
Reference:	N/A
Policy Superseded:	Policy No. 96-18, Library Patron Rights and Responsibilities, adopted November 12, 1996; Policy No. 98-15, Library Patron Rights & Responsibilities, adopted October 13, 1998; amended April 8, 2014; revised September 13, 2016

It shall be the policy of Leon County, Florida, that Policy No. 98-15 entitled “Library Patron Rights & Responsibilities”, adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on September 13, 2016, is hereby repealed and superseded, and a new policy entitled “Library Code of Conduct” is hereby adopted in its place, to wit:

The Leon County Public Library (Library) is supported by public funds and serves the community by providing a welcoming space for patrons to pursue lifelong learning. Leon County has adopted the Library Code of Conduct to protect the rights of individuals to use and enjoy library property, materials, and services as they were intended; to conduct library business without improper interference; to preserve library materials and facilities from harm; and seek to ensure the rights and safety of library users, staff, and volunteers.

The Code of Conduct is in force on all Library premises, including buildings, interior and exterior; walkways; entryways; grounds; and parking lots. The policy applies to all individuals in or on the Library premises. The violation of any federal, state, or local criminal statute or ordinance will also be regarded as a violation of the Library’s rules.

Leon County imposes the following reasonable restrictions on the manner of Library access and behavior.

1. Individuals who violate any of the following rules while on Library premises will be given an informative moment for the first offense, a verbal warning for the second offense or failure to correct the behavior following the informative moment, and upon a third offense will be required to leave the Library premises for the remainder of the business day.
 - a. Producing disruptive noise, including but not limited to, loud talking, yelling or singing; or using devices without headphones or at a volume where sound can be heard despite headphone use.
 - b. Running or engaging in horseplay.

- c. Failing to maintain control of personal items by either leaving items unattended, allowing items to block access to Library materials or equipment, or by allowing items to interfere with a Library staff member's or individual's use of the Library.
- d. Blocking aisles, passageways or exits/entrances (including emergency exits) with their bodies or belongings.
- e. Lying on the floor, table, or seats in the Library, or sitting or reclining on the floor unless part of a Library program or in an area designated for children.
- f. Monopolizing library furniture, electrical outlets, public access computers and/or other resources to the exclusion of others.
- g. Using Library restrooms improperly, including but not limited to, bathing, shaving, laundering, or cutting hair.
- h. Taking Library materials into public restrooms.
- i. Failing to wear shoes, pants, and shirts while on Library premises. Exceptions will be made for children under the age of 3 years old in strollers, carriers, infant seats, or other carrying devices.
- j. Sleeping in or on Library premises.
- k. Campaigning or petitioning in Library buildings and entryways. These activities are allowed outside of Library buildings so long as they do not interfere with patron safety or access to Library buildings.
- l. Soliciting Library customers, volunteers, or employees for money or donations.
- m. Selling merchandise or services in or on Library premises except in conjunction with a Library-sponsored activity or program.
- n. Bringing animals into a Library building, other than service animals as defined by section 413.08(1)(d), F.S.
- o. Using skateboards, scooters or similar motorized and non-motorized recreational conveyances inside Library buildings or on Library property.
- p. Consuming any food or drink outside of designated areas or around Library computers, printers, electronics or other Library-owned equipment; consuming hot foods, carry-out or delivered snacks and meals, or foods that may be considered by Library staff to present possible harm to Library materials or furnishings; and consuming beverages not in enclosed containers. Exceptions may be made for foods served at Library- or County-sponsored programs held in designated meeting rooms.

After being ejected from the Library twice within one year for the same behavior(s), an individual will be subject to a one-year trespass if behavior(s) is/are repeated. The Library Supervisor on Duty, in consultation with the Library Director, will contact appropriate law enforcement and request a one-year trespass warning be issued by the responding officer(s). Any individual returning to a Library facility during a period of trespass for violating Rules 1.a.-p. will be reported to law enforcement immediately.

2. Individuals who violate any of the following rules while on Library premises will be given an informative moment for the first offense, a verbal warning for the second offense and upon a third offense will be ejected from Library premises and prohibited from future use of all Library facilities and services for one year.
 - a. Failing to comply with or ignore a directive of a Library staff member or security officer.
 - b. Harassing any person verbally, physically, or sexually.
 - c. Being under the influence of, consuming, possessing, selling or distributing any alcoholic beverage or illegal substance.
 - d. Smoking, using smokeless tobacco products, electronic cigarettes or similar devices in the Library or near a Library entrance.
 - e. Trespassing on Library premises beyond regularly scheduled hours.
 - f. Using another's Library card or card number without permission.
 - g. Failing to follow computer access procedures or failing to comply with established Library lending procedures.
 - h. Attempting to access any restricted areas designated for staff use only.
 - i. Use of designated youth and teen areas by an adult, unless the adult is a parent/guardian/caregiver accompanying a minor or has permission from staff.

The Library Supervisor on Duty, in consultation with the Library Director, will contact appropriate law enforcement and request a one-year trespass warning be issued by the responding officer(s). Any individual returning to a Library facility during a period of trespass for violating Rules 2.a.-i. will be reported to law enforcement immediately.

3. Individuals who violate any of the following rules while on Library premises will be immediately ejected from the Library premises without warning and permanently prohibited from the future use of all Library facilities and services.
 - a. Engaging in sexual misconduct including exposure, offensive touching, or sexual acts.
 - b. Carrying or displaying a weapon unless as expressly permitted by state or federal law.

- c. Causing or threatening to cause physical harm to patrons, staff or volunteers.
- d. Committing theft, or attempting to remove library materials by concealment, removal of barcodes/security devices, or by any means other than authorized checkout procedures.
- e. Intentionally destroying, damaging, or defacing any Library or other individual's property.

Violations of these rules will be immediately reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency. The Library Supervisor on Duty, in consultation with the Library Director, will request a permanent trespass warning be issued by the responding officer(s). Any individual returning to a Library facility during a period of trespass for violating Rules 3.a.-e. will be reported to law enforcement immediately.

4. Protection of Minors

- a. The Library welcomes and encourages visits by children. Library staff cannot act in the place of a parent or guardian in providing constant care and supervision of unattended children. Children under the age of 10 must be accompanied at all times by a responsible caregiver age 16 or older. An exception may be made for children registered for specified Library-sponsored programs.
- b. If a child under 10 is found unattended, Library staff will attempt to locate the parent/caregiver in the Library and inform him/her/them of the rules. If the parent/caregiver cannot be found, or if the child is found unattended multiple times, law enforcement or child protective authorities will be called for assistance.
- c. Consistent with school attendance requirements, children who have attained the age of 6 years or who will have attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any school year or who are older than 6 years of age but who have not attained the age of 16 years, except as provided in section 1003.21, F.S. or other law, are required to attend school regularly during the entire school term. Accordingly, during the school year children who are required to attend school must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian during school hours. Staff will contact the parent or guardian of any unaccompanied child to pick-up the child from the Library. If a parent or guardian is unavailable to assume responsibility for the child, Library staff will notify law enforcement or child protective authorities.
- d. Minors enrolled in homeschool or online virtual school are permitted to use the Library during school hours with a completed and duly executed Parental Permission Form carried with them while on Library property (this can be an original or digital copy). Staff reserves the right to contact the parent/guardian or school district to confirm the child's enrollment status.
- e. Children ages 10 and older in violation of the Library's Code of Conduct Policy may be asked to leave the Library after being given an informative moment for the first offense and a verbal warning for the second offense. In more serious cases, staff will contact the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian is not available, staff will contact law enforcement or child protective authorities.

- f. Younger children engaging in inappropriate behavior will be reunited with their responsible caregiver after being given an informative moment for the first offense and a verbal warning for the second offense. In more serious cases, staff will contact the parent/guardian if they are not the responsible caregiver on site, to arrange for the child(ren) to be picked up.
 - g. Minors are required to have emergency contact information with them at all times and to accurately provide this information to Library staff upon request.
5. Leaving vulnerable adults, as defined in section 415.102(28), F.S., unattended is prohibited. Law enforcement will be notified if a vulnerable adult's caretaker cannot be located.
 6. A patron will be asked to leave if he/she has offensive body odor or personal hygiene that unreasonably interferes with another patrons' ability to use the Library.
 7. The Library is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged personal items.
 8. Library staff reserves the right to take photographs and create video for promotional purposes. Patrons who wish to be excluded from such photographs and video must inform staff.

Procedure for Appeals

Individuals may request a review of a trespass warning issued based upon this Policy. An appeal must be submitted in writing, as visits to any Leon County Public Library location are prohibited and telephone conversations cannot be properly documented. The written appeal must be received at the following address within 30 days of the trespass issue date.

LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library
ATTN: Library Director
200 W. Park Avenue
Tallahassee, FL 32301

The appeal must include an address at which the Library may correspond with the individual making the appeal. The Library Director, in consultation with the County Attorney or designee, will review timely filed appeals to make a recommendation to the County Administrator for final determination. The Library Director will respond in writing within 30 days of receipt of the appeal.