



Maine State Library Patron Behavior Policy (revised _____)

The Maine State Library, funded by Maine taxpayers, is a clean, comfortable, and safe place for selecting materials, reading, researching, studying, writing, and attending programs, meetings and engaging in civil discourse.

The Library is responsible for protecting the rights and safety of Library patrons, volunteers and staff, and for preserving and protecting the Library's materials, equipment, facilities, and grounds. Additionally, the Library has a strong commitment to intellectual freedom and to freedom of access to information as described in the [ALA Library Bill of Rights](#), the [ALA Core Values of Librarianship](#), the [ALA Code of Ethics](#), and the [ALA Freedom to Read statement](#).

For the comfort and safety of patrons, volunteers, and staff, and the protecting of Library property, staff may address any action deemed by staff to be disruptive to safely using the library's resources.

All persons using the library are welcome, but no one may interfere with or impinge upon any other person's ability to use the Maine State Library, or staff's ability to provide services.

Behavior of persons, regardless of age, which is disruptive or detracts from library use will not be tolerated. Acting or attempting to act in violation of state, federal, or local law, ordinance, regulation, or Library policy is prohibited.

Guidelines for Library Use:

- Ask for help when needed or if you are not finding the resources you need
- Be considerate of others
- Respect the facility, equipment and materials
- Be responsible for your children
- Be responsible for personal belongings; do not leave them unattended
- Follow reasonable staff direction

No Person Shall:

Commit or attempt to commit any activity that constitutes a Violation of Federal, State, or Local Criminal Statute or Ordinance, including but not limited to:

- Physically harm another person or group of people
- Be in possession of a firearm, dangerous weapons, explosives, incendiary devices or implements which by their nature are capable of being used to destroy or injure a person or property in the Maine Cultural Building.
- Use tobacco or marijuana products (or electronic substitutes), alcohol and/or unauthorized drugs in any form anywhere on library property
- Destroy, deface or steal Library or another person's property
- Obtain and use another person's personal data in some way that involves fraud or deception

- Engage in sexual conduct

Engage in disruptive, disorderly or unsafe conduct, including but not limited to:

- Talk loudly, make noise or use devices at a volume that disturb others
- Run, throw things, push, shove, fight, climb, jump
- Consume food or drink that leaves residue, crumbs, odors, or garbage
- Impede or prohibit access to the facility or its contents (e.g. physical impediments such as bicycles, backpacks, large groups of people, etc.)
- Use of restrooms to bathe, shave, or change clothes where it unreasonably interferes with other patrons use or staff use of the restroom or involves willful and lewd exposure in violation of ordinances and state law.
- Deliberately infect others with communicable viruses or diseases or threaten to do so.

Threaten, Harass, Harm or Violate the Rights of Library Users and/or staff, including but not limited to:

- Offensive, abusive, or threatening language, gestures or physical acts, including profanity and hate speech
- Unwelcome contact between people
- Stalk, stare, or invade personal space

Interfere With Others' Use of the Library, including but not limited to:

- Be in the Cultural Building, specifically state library facilities, barefoot or shirtless
- Leave personal belongings unattended (e.g. bicycles, scooters, backpacks, bags, personal devices)
- Loiter or sleep without using library resources or services. Staff regularly conduct wellness checks and may need to report sleeping for health and safety purposes.
- Enter the library with animals, except service animals. Only animals specifically trained to perform a task for a person with a disability, or animals that are part of a library event, are allowed. Refer to state policy. Maine statutes define “service animal” and “assistance animal” in [5 MRS §4553](https://www.maine.gov/ag/about/service_animal_policy.html). https://www.maine.gov/ag/about/service_animal_policy.html
- Use of wheeled devices such as skateboards, roller skates, bicycles, scooters, and shopping carts; devices that are allowed include wheelchairs, walkers, strollers, accessibility equipment, and other devices when used for their intended purpose.
- Post or distribute materials. The Library’s bulletin boards are restricted to postings for not-for-profit causes, and priority will be given to events in surrounding Kennebec County communities. Any items for the bulletin boards must be given to MSL staff for posting. The Library staff will post, rearrange, and remove posters and flyers from its bulletin boards. Size limits may apply.

Leave Children Unattended

- Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult or caregiver at all times. Library staff cannot legally assume the role of parent or caregiver.
- If a child, or anyone otherwise needing close adult supervision, has been left unattended in the library, staff will attempt to locate the caregiver. If the caregiver cannot be located, or if the library is closing, law enforcement will be notified.

Conduct Surveys, Solicit Money or Signatures Inside the Cultural Building

- Selling products or services or soliciting money or signatures, except as part of a library sponsored program or library support organization, is not permitted in the library. See Maine State Government 9.4.A No Solicitation Policy – General: <https://www.maine.gov/bhr/state-hr-professionals/rules-policies/policy-practices-manual/No-Solicitation-Policy-General>

Abuse Computer Privileges

- Viewing inappropriate content is not allowed. – See Maine State Library Computer Use and Internet Safety Policy, <https://www.maine.gov/msl/about/policies/aup.htm>

Enforcement

The State Librarian delegates authority to enforce these rules to the library staff. Staff members are well-trained professionals who strive to provide excellent service to every patron. The staff has the authority to ask disruptive patrons whose behavior monopolizes their attention and/or restricts others' use of the library to leave. Security officers and/or police officers may be present during business hours to aid the staff in maintaining an orderly atmosphere. Patrons involved in criminal behavior against the library will be prosecuted. Chronic offenders will be denied use of the library.

Every effort will be made to respond to potentially difficult circumstances of user behavior in a timely, respectful, direct, and open manner that is consistent and fair. We prioritize building relationships with our patrons to encourage appropriate and successful use of the library. Our enforcement is designed to maintain a safe and welcoming library, and to teach anyone who violates this policy how to better behave so as to maintain library access.

- Unlawful activities will be reported to local law enforcement agencies.
- For violations unlikely to cause immediate harm to others and not perceived to be threatening, the person violating the rules will be given at one warning by library staff; if behavior continues, the person will be asked to leave the premises for the day.
- For violations of these rules that cause or are likely to cause immediate harm to others, the person violating the rules may be immediately excluded from the library without first being given a warning. Refusal to leave when requested may result in criminal trespass issued by Capitol Police.
- In the case of a minor being excluded, every attempt will be made to contact the child's parent or guardian to give note of the exclusion.

Exclusions may be made for progressively longer times for repeated violations or when harm or potential harm is involved, ranging in time from one week to permanent exclusion and loss of all library privileges. Library staff may interview witnesses and use security video footage. If additional information surfaces about an infraction, an exclusion length may be adjusted by the State Librarian or designee.

Appeal

A patron who has been excluded from the library may appeal the notice in writing to the State Librarian within 10 days of issuance. The State Librarian will schedule a hearing, which shall not take place more than two weeks after receipt of the written request. The hearing will be informal, and the State Librarian will consider testimony from library staff involved in the incident, from the person requesting the hearing, and from any other witnesses to the incident. At the conclusion of

the hearing, the State Librarian may affirm, modify, or cause the notice to be canceled. A written copy of the decision will be delivered or mailed within 10 days to the person making the appeal.

The State Librarian's final decision can be appealed to the Maine Library Commission (MLC), in writing to the Chair of the MLC within 10 days of the date noted on the written decision by the State Librarian. The MLC will take up that appeal at their next scheduled regular meeting date. If the second written appeal is received in writing less than 8 days before the next scheduled MLC meeting, the appeal will be heard by the MLC at the next subsequent MLC meeting in order to allow sufficient time for the MLC members to receive and review materials regarding the appeal request. The MLC may affirm, modify, or cause the notice to be canceled. A written copy of the MLC decision will be mailed within 10 days to the person making the appeal.

Reviewed and approved by the Maine Library Commission, [month, day, year]

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