

Metuchen Public Library

Library Code of Conduct

In order to better serve library users and make the library a pleasant and welcoming place for the community, the Metuchen Public Library Conduct Code will be enforced.

Please treat everyone with courtesy and respect. Please do not cause a disruption in the Library or on the Library grounds. Staff will determine what constitutes a disruption. Anyone causing a disruption may be asked to leave for the day. Repeated or severe disruptions may result in longer suspension of the Library privileges and/or eviction from Library facilities.

The Library Board of Trustees of the Metuchen Public Library has adopted the Code of Conduct to ensure all library users should have equal access to library services and materials in a safe and welcoming environment. The roles and responsibilities of the library users ought to make sure the Library's physical and virtual spaces are pleasant, safe, and secure. Public Library spaces are valuable community assets that rely on the stewardship, mutual understanding and support, and goodwill of all.

This policy sets a standard of behavior for all library users, encouraging everyone to act in a respectful and responsible manner towards each other, the library staff, the library building, and its material. This policy is to protect the rights and safety of library users, library staff, and preserve and protect the library materials, facilities, and property.

All persons shall respect the rights of others and shall not harass, annoy, or interfere with any other person by means of physical contact, communication, or other intrusive behavior. No one shall interfere with library personnel in the performance of their duties.

Dangerous, destructive, or illegal conduct, including but not limited to the following, will not be tolerated:

- Engaging in physical abuse or assault, including fighting or challenging others to fight;
- Engaging in intimidating or harassing behaviors, including following or stalking other patrons or library staff, staring fixedly or leering at others, or attempting to peer under another patron's or staff member's clothing;
- Making violent or threatening statements to others;
- Damaging, destroying, stealing, or otherwise vandalizing Library property; and
- Viewing sexually explicit or and obscene material.

A warning will be given, if possible, to anyone exhibiting disruptive or inappropriate behavior or interfering with another person's use of the library or with the library personnel's performance of their duties. Continued inappropriate behavior will lead to expulsion from the library, notification to parents or guardians if a minor, and possible police notification and involvement.

Library staff has the authority to maintain order and ensure the safety of staff and patrons. All library users must follow the directions of the staff regarding library rules and regulations.

- Parents are responsible for the behavior of their children while the children are in the library. Parents or guardians should encourage their children to use low voices and should calm or console upset children when necessary.
- No child under the age of 10 shall be left without adult supervision for any reason in any part of the library; they must be accompanied by a responsible parent or caregiver at all times.
- Children 10 years of age or older may be left in the building unattended for no more than three hours. If this policy is not observed, library staff will attempt to locate the parents of children left unattended in the library. If it is not possible to contact a parent or guardian, the police may be notified. The Library is not responsible for the safety of any child in the library.
- Cell phones should be turned off or set to vibrate/silent ring when inside the library building as a courtesy to other library users. All phone conversations should be limited to the library's lobby area.
- Please maintain low noise levels when using the library to allow others to study, read or work quietly. Listening devices should be heard only by the person using them. The use of headphones when listening to the audio on computers is required. The use of personal headphones is allowed, or users may purchase earbuds from the main service desk.
- Food and drink are not permitted in the public computer areas or when using library materials. Snacks and drinks are allowed in the library's lobby only. Patrons must clean up after themselves and throw away all garbage in nearby trash receptacles.
- No alcohol is permitted inside the building except during approved library fundraising events.
- Smoking is prohibited inside the library and outside near library entrances.
- For health and safety reasons, appropriate attire is required. Shoes and shirts must be worn at all times. Patrons whose bodily hygiene is offensive as to constitute a nuisance to other persons may be required to leave the building.
- Unhygienic behavior such as spitting, clipping nails, or changing diapers in public areas is not permitted.
- Photographing, filming, or recording other patrons without their consent is prohibited in the library unless authorized by the library administration.
- Sleeping, napping, and dozing are prohibited in public computer areas. Library staff may wake patrons sleeping in other areas of the library if needed.
- Service animals are welcome in the library. No other animals are permitted inside the building.
- All patrons must leave the library premises:
 - by closing time,
 - when the evacuation of the building is necessary, and
 - at any time when requested to do so by library personnel

- Library property should be respected. For example, books/materials should not be damaged or defaced, and feet should not be placed on furniture. Running, rollerblading, or skateboarding is not permitted in the library.
- Public restrooms are not appropriate locations for bathing, washing laundry, and shaving, loitering or congregating. If you are in need of temporary shelter or emergency services, the library staff can provide information regarding these services.
- Library users using public computers must adhere to the library's Public Computer Use Policy and Internet Use Policy. Staff members reserve the right to terminate the use of public computers for inappropriate behavior or the display of sexually explicit or obscene material. Continued inappropriate behavior will lead to expulsion from the library, parental notification if a minor, and possible police notification and involvement.
- Soliciting, petitioning, or selling is not permitted in the library.
- Library staff have the discretion to discard personal items left unattended on library property in order to preserve a safe environment for library patrons, volunteers, and staff.
- Parking vehicles on library premises for purposes other than official library use is prohibited. Vehicles in violation of this rule may be towed at the owner's expense.

All other standards and practices of polite behavior and good manners should be observed at all times by all library patrons.

1st Reading – 2/11/14

2nd Reading and Adopted 3/11/2014

Revised and Expanded 1st Reading 2/19/2019

Revised and Approved 2nd Reading 3/12/2019

Revised and Amended 10/12/2021

Re-revised and Amended 11/9/2021