



## **PATRON CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY**

### **POLICY**

This Patron Code of Conduct Policy was adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Highwood Library & Community Center to promote a safe, attractive, and orderly atmosphere; to ensure every person's ability to use the library and library materials to the maximum extent possible; and to have reasonable access to library facilities without interference from any other person. The policy cannot anticipate every possible event or situation. Employees are expected to use their best judgment in the spirit of this policy.

The Highwood Library & Community Center supports the rights of all individuals to:

- Friendly, courteous, and respectful service;
- Free and equal access to information;
- Privacy and confidentiality in their use of library services and collections;
- A clean, comfortable, and pleasant environment; and
- Use of the library undisturbed and without threat of harm, interference, or discrimination.

Use of Library facilities and resources implies acceptance of this Patron Rules of Conduct, which are based on these basic principles:

- Respect for other patrons and their right to have a positive experience of the library.
- Respect for library employees whose responsibility it is to help patrons get the most from their library experience and to maintain a safe and comfortable atmosphere for all patrons.
- Respect for all library facilities, materials, computers, equipment, and resources, and following of rules related to their use.

### **RESPECT OF OTHER PATRONS**

To ensure individuals' rights to use the library free of disruption, library patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of a public library while in the building. Patrons not engaged in reading, studying, using library materials or services, attending programs or classes, or viewing exhibits may be asked to leave the building.

Noise and conversations are expected to be kept at low levels out of consideration for other patrons. Disruptive conduct, which is any behavior that disrupts the normal functioning of the library or library programs by behaving in a manner which reasonably can be expected to disturb or be a nuisance to others, will not be tolerated. Bringing pets or animals into the



Library, other than service animals necessary for accommodation, must be authorized by the Director or designate.

Willfully annoying, harassing, or threatening another person (physical, sexual, or verbal abuse of other library users or of staff) will not be tolerated. The use of profane or obscene language will not be tolerated. No loitering, defacing or destroying library property. Skateboarding, scooters, or the use of roller-blades in the library building will not be tolerated. Interfering with free passage of users and employees in and out of the library and around the library will not be tolerated. Roughhousing, or behaving in a disorderly, loud or boisterous manner, or remaining in the building after its regular closing hours is not allowed. Patrons may be asked to leave the library if library staff believe their neglected bodily hygiene is interfering with other patrons' ability to enjoy the library.

### **RESPECT OF LIBRARY EMPLOYEES**

The safety and security of our employees and patrons are of the utmost importance. Library employees have the right to a safe and respectful workplace environment. Patrons will use polite language and keep their tone of voice moderate. Conduct that causes or threatens harm to others, interferes with library employees' performance of duties, or constitutes persistent, unwanted behavior will not be tolerated. All patrons are expected to comply with reasonable requests of any library employee.

### **RESPECT OF FACILITIES, MATERIALS, COMPUTERS, EQUIPMENT, AND RESOURCES**

It is expected that all library users will treat library materials, furniture, and equipment with care, and use library facilities, materials, and furnishings as intended.

Eating and drinking in the library is governed by the Library's Food and Beverage Policy: Food and beverages are permitted within library spaces provided the following guidelines are followed:

- Limit food consumption to designated areas
- Beverages are in a container with tight-fitting lid and straw or handle
- All trash is recycled or disposed of properly and as appropriate
- Report any spills to library staff

Designated areas for food consumption must be left in the same condition as was found. Drinking beverages is prohibited at computer stations. Consumption of alcohol is prohibited unless served by the library.

Food and non-alcoholic drinks are only allowed to be served in the Fireplace Area and Community Room.



The Community Room has to be left in the same condition as it was found. The library reserves the right to charge meeting organizers a cleaning fee and deny future room reservations if the room is not left in an acceptable condition. Smoking, vaping, alcohol, illegal drugs, and sleeping are prohibited in the library and on library grounds. Soliciting is not permitted except in support of the library and sanctioned library activities.

## **ENFORCEMENT OF THE PATRON CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY**

Library employees may at any time request that patrons show library cards and other documents (driver's license, school ID, e.g.) for purposes of identification.

- The library reserves the right to inspect all bags, purses, briefcases, or backpacks for concealed library materials.
- It is expected that patrons will follow federal, state, and local laws and policies. Library employees are authorized to call the police for assistance in the case of violent behavior or illegal activities, or to ensure enforcement of this policy.
- Library employees have the authority to decide what is considered appropriate behavior and to enforce the Patron Conduct Policy. Library staff will inform the patron of the relevant conduct policy and warn the patron that continued violation will result in loss of privileges. Staff may ask the patron to leave the Library property for one day if they are uncooperative or argumentative. The Library reserves the right at all times to immediately eject a patron who is dangerous or in any way threatening employees or other patrons.
- The Library may pursue remedies under Federal, State, or local law where applicable.
- Unattended minors who do not abide by library rules and policies, or who exhibit unacceptable behavior, will be asked to leave, and/or call their parents for a ride home. If unable to reach their parents, or if a ride is unavailable, the children may be considered abandoned and the local police department or Child Protective Services may be called.

## **SUSPENSION OF LIBRARY PRIVILEGES**

- The Highwood Library & Community Center Board of Trustees authorizes library staff and law enforcement officers to enforce the library's published Patron Conduct Policy up to and including long-term suspension of library privileges, permanent banning from the library, or prosecution.
- Depending on the nature and frequency of the behavior, consequences may include suspension of library privileges or permanent banning. The Library Director has the authority to ban from the library premises any individual whose behavior is a sufficient



threat to the ability of the library to operate in a safe manner or individuals who repeatedly violate the Patron Conduct Policy. If the individual facing exclusion is under the age of 18 a registered letter will be mailed to the parent/legal guardian informing him/her that the minor has been banned from the library. This letter will note the reason the minor was banned from the library and inform the parent/legal guardian that the child will not be allowed to return to the library unless he/she is accompanied by the parent/legal guardian and assurance is made that the unacceptable behavior will not reoccur. Reinstatement of library privileges is at the discretion of the Library Director. ***Parents and caregivers are responsible for the welfare and behavior of their minor children (under 18) while in the Library or on Library grounds, regardless of whether or not they accompany their children. The Highwood Library & Community Center assumes no responsibility for unattended children.***

- Banning or exclusion from library premises denies the patron access to the building, grounds and services of the Highwood Library & Community Center. The individual will receive the suspension notice in writing and a copy will be kept at the library. The patron may still access from an offsite computer the library's webpage and any databases available through that site.
- If any individual named in a suspension notice enters the Highwood Library & Community Center before the return date listed on the suspension notice, it will be considered criminal trespass and the individual will be asked to leave. If the individual does not leave when asked, staff will contact local law enforcement.
- Individuals who have had their library privileges suspended may appeal the suspension. The request must be made in writing and will be evaluated by the Library Board.
- It is the sole responsibility of the individual banned to apply for reinstatement of library privileges. These are not automatically available at the end of the period of exclusion. A written request must be presented to the Library Director to be eligible for reinstatement.

## **DANGEROUS WEAPONS**

Except for law enforcement officers, it is prohibited to possess on library property any dangerous weapon, including but not limited to the following items, regardless of any permit for the same: knife, billy club, blackjack, nunchucks, throwing star, martial arts weapon, pellet or BB gun, paint ball gun, dart gun, or electrical device designed to disable or incapacitate someone. An individual may possess a chemical spray, such as mace, as long as such a device is carried only for personal self-defense and is not brandished about or displayed in an aggressive or threatening manner.

**Approved: February 26, 2024**