

PATRON CODE OF CONDUCT

In order to provide an appropriate library environment; to ensure constructive use of Red Hook Public Library facilities, materials, and services; and to protect the safety and personal comfort of all our library patrons and staff, the following Code of Conduct is in effect at all times.

Anyone who violates or deliberately subverts the Code of Conduct, or who violates any federal, state, or local criminal statute or ordinance, may be banned from the library, and risks prosecution to the fullest extent of the law.

The Library Board has the right to amend the Code of Conduct at any time.

1. This is a Public Library

No patron may disturb others using the library. Patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of a public library, such as reading and writing, using library services, or attending programs. Appropriate behavior is required at all times or patrons will be required to leave the building.

Patrons may not interfere with the staff's performance of duties. This includes, but is not limited to, engaging in extended conversation or behavior that engages or forces the attention of staff for an inappropriate period of time, inappropriate personal comments, sexual advances, invasion of personal space, bullying, or physical and/or verbal harassment. These offenses may result in the suspension of library privileges.

Patrons who ignore or disobey reasonable requests from library staff will be asked to leave the library. Repeat offenses will result in the suspension of library privileges.

Misconduct which includes, but is not limited to, the use of foul, offensive, hateful, or threatening language and gestures, lewd or indecent behavior, physical or verbal harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, bullying, public drunkenness or drug usage, sale or exchange of alcohol or drugs, illegal gambling, being disruptively loud, running, pushing, and fighting, and other offensive or intrusive behavior is not allowed on Library property. Sleeping, staring, soliciting, loitering, littering, and use of hateful or intimidating speech are prohibited. Overnight parking of vehicles, including cars and bicycles, is prohibited. Repeat offenses may result in the suspension of library privileges. Theft, attempted theft, or vandalism of library or personal property is prohibited. Weapons of any kind are prohibited except as worn by law enforcement personnel.

Unlike a street, sidewalk, or park, a library is considered a limited public forum. First amendment protections only apply as far as they are consistent with the mission and purpose of the library. According to the Library Users Bill of Rights, the ALA Code of Ethics, and New York State law, patrons have the right to expect privacy and confidentiality regarding their library use.

Casual amateur photography and filming is allowed in the library provided it does not invade the privacy of patrons, harass staff, or otherwise interfere with the normal activities of the Library. It

should be limited to brief pans and must not include patron faces or activities without express permission of those patrons. If a patron asks not to be photographed, that is to be honored. Photography or filming of anyone under 18 is forbidden without express permission of the child's parent or guardian on Library grounds. It is the responsibility of the person photographing or filming to obtain permission.

Professional photography or filming can be arranged with permission of the Director, their designee, or the Board of Trustees.

The Police Department will be alerted to any behaviors that threaten the safety and security of library patrons or staff or violate existing law.

2. Use of Library Space

Only authorized employees, Trustees, volunteers, and invited others are permitted to enter non-public areas of the library.

Adults without children are allowed to use the children's or teen spaces for limited amounts of time at the discretion of library staff. These areas are designed to be used by young people.

The library does not offer reservations for any space. When a space such as the Community Room is open to the public, it is available on a first come-first served basis.

Individuals may not publish or distribute any notice indicating the Library as their place of doing business or otherwise imply Library sponsorship of their activities. Individuals may not publish or disseminate for-profit business advertising without the express permission of Library staff.

The Library has the right to prohibit groups of people from congregating in the building.

3. Children and other Patrons at the Library

The Library cannot assume responsibility for the care or supervision of any individuals.

Parents and caregivers of children under 10 must remain in the library at all times, including when a child is engaged in a library activity. Exceptions may be made in the case of some programs for which there are permission slips. In any and all cases, parents and guardians are responsible for determining whether their child is mature enough to safely spend time in the library.

Parents and caregivers are solely responsible for supervising the behavior of their children and their child's use of Library materials and equipment. Any restrictions on a child's use of Library services, materials, and equipment rests solely with the child's parent or legal guardian.

In accordance with school attendance laws, and in support of education, children under the age of 16 are not permitted on Library property during school hours, unless accompanied by a parent, teacher, or legal guardian.

Students in need of a safe space will be permitted to be in the Library, without a parent or guardian at the discretion of the Director.

A parent/guardian or caregiver 18 years of age or older must be responsible for monitoring the activities and managing the behavior of vulnerable adults during their Library visits. A vulnerable adult is an individual over the age of 18 who has a disability or condition that may significantly impair their ability to provide adequately for their safety, personal needs and/or behavior without assistance.

The Police Department will be contacted as a last resort, after attempting to contact parents or guardians regarding any individual requiring supervision left unsupervised in the library.

4. Animals in the Library

Pets are not permitted in the library except for properly identified service animals or animals licensed by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, or as part of an approved Library program.

5. Dress and Personal Hygiene

Patrons shall be fully clothed, including footwear.

Patrons shall maintain a generally acceptable standard of personal hygiene and cleanliness in order to prevent the disturbance of other library users and their use of the facility. Body odor which makes it difficult for others to use the space is unacceptable. Patrons exhibiting unsanitary hygiene or whose odor initiates a complaint from other patrons and/or staff will be asked to leave the library until they can meet the standards of hygiene and cleanliness.

Patrons whose perfume or other scents may trigger allergic reactions will be asked to refrain from wearing such scents in the future.

Patrons may not use the public restrooms for bathing, shaving, washing hair, changing clothes, illicit or illegal behaviors, or other activities. Patrons are expected to leave the bathroom reasonably tidy and in a condition suitable for public use. When possible, use carry-in carry-out procedures.

Police may be called at any time for assistance, as a last resort. Repeat offenders may lose library privileges.

6. Smoking, Food, and Beverages

In accordance with New York State and local law, the library is a smoke-free establishment. Additionally there shall be no smoking within 100 feet of the building. Vaping or the use of e-cigarettes is also prohibited.

Chewing tobacco is not allowed in the library.

Alcohol and drugs are prohibited from use in the library. Non-alcoholic beverages in covered containers are permitted. Patrons may be asked to put away food or drink that may potentially damage library equipment or whose odor is disturbing to others.

7. Safety

For everyone's safety, patrons may not run or may not use roller blades, skateboards, scooters, bicycles or other wheeled transport on Library property. Only wheeled or motorized vehicles necessary for personal mobility are permitted. The library cannot be responsible for any of the above left outside the library.

The library reserves the right to make rules regarding hygiene, behavior, personal protective equipment (PPE), and other health-related measures that provide for a safe environment.

8. Library Materials and Equipment

Library materials are valuable shared resources. Requiring a card to check out items protects the trust placed in the library by the public, and other Mid-Hudson Library System libraries. Further, requiring a card to access account information protects patron confidentiality regarding the materials checked out, and other information stored in the Integrated Library System (ILS).

Library staff ask for identification in order to issue a library card. Alternate forms of ID may be allowed at the Director's discretion. A valid library card is required to borrow library material, and must be presented at check-out, to renew or request items. A library card barcode is necessary to renew items over the phone or discuss one's library account. In the absence of a library card, a photo ID with an address that matches account information is also acceptable for checking out materials.

A signed use agreement may be required before checking out some particularly valuable items.

Library materials must be returned on time and in good condition. Overdue materials deprive the access of others in need of those materials.

Anyone who owes \$10 or more in fines and fees will have an automated stop on their library card. They will not be able to take out materials, renew items, or use library computers until the amount owed is less than \$10.

Patrons may not violate copyright law when using the copier to copy materials.

A library patron who deliberately alters a library computer database or damages or destroys computer equipment will forfeit all library privileges, will be subject to financial liability for damages, and may be subject to criminal and/or civil penalties.

A library patron who vandalizes, steals, or destroys any library material, equipment, fixture, furniture, or building component, or who uses same in a manner inconsistent with customary use, or in a destructive, disruptive, abusive or potentially damaging manner likely to cause injury to the patron or others, will forfeit all library privileges, will be subject to financial liability for damages, and may be subject to criminal and/or civil penalties.

Library phones are for staff use only.

The library cannot be responsible for personal equipment, such as a laptop computer or phone, that is brought into the library.

All briefcases, oversized handbags, carryalls, luggage, packages, overcoats, and shopping bags may be subject to inspection by library staff or police.

9. Tutoring

To ensure the Library premises are available for use by its patrons in furthering their educational needs the Library permits private tutoring, on a paid or volunteer basis. The Director has final discretion as to whether the activity is tutoring and permissible under this policy.

Tutors may not publish or distribute advertisements or letters identifying the Library as their place of doing business or imply Library sponsorship of their activities. The Library can't reserve space for tutoring.

10. No Soliciting

No one may solicit, petition or distribute written materials or canvass for political, charitable, or religious purposes on library property without permission.

11. Revocation of Privileges

A patron whose privileges have been denied may have the decision reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

12. Patron Complaints

Red Hook Public Library endeavors to provide the highest levels of satisfaction and library services to its patrons. We recognize that occasionally, patrons may wish to raise a complaint pertaining to an issue which interferes with their use and enjoyment of the Library.

A Library patron initially may choose to raise their complaint on an informal, verbal basis with Library administration. If there is no resolution, the patron may request a Patron Complaint Form. The Director will promptly review the completed form and attempt to resolve the situation.

If the patron is not satisfied with the response provided, and/or if the Director identifies the situation as one in which Board input is warranted, either or both parties may bring the written complaint to the attention of the President of the Board of Trustees. Patrons may also request in advance an opportunity to address the Board, according to its rules of public comment, at one of its monthly meetings.

The Board will promptly review all complaints presented to it, provide a written response, and take any further action it deems warranted. The decision of the Board of Trustees will be final.

Patron Complaint Form

Patron Information

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

Email Address: _____

Address: _____

Please briefly explain the nature of your complaint in the space below. If your complaint pertains to an incident, include in your description: the date and time of day when the incident occurred, the location in which the incident occurred, the names (if known) of any Library staff or patrons involved and the nature of their involvement, any previous efforts made by you and/or Library staff to resolve the complaint, and any other significant information regarding the nature of the complaint.

Complaint Description:

Patron Signature: _____

Name (printed): _____

Date: _____

We will attempt to resolve your complaint quickly and fairly.

This form should be completed promptly and submitted to the Director. If the Director is unavailable, this form should be given to the administrative staff on duty, and will be shared with the Director upon their return.

Alternatively this form may be submitted to the President of the Board of Trustees.

**Updated by the Board of Trustees
July 29, 2021**