



BRACEBRIDGE LIBRARY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy Number: OP-11
Title: Library Patron Code of Conduct

Category: Operational
Policy Replacing: OP-11 Patron Code of
Conduct (2022)

Board Approval Date: March 2025

Year of next review: 2028

PURPOSE:

The Bracebridge Library is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all patrons and staff. The Code of Conduct is in place to ensure the safety, comfort, and respectful use of library spaces, collections, and services. Library staff will make every effort to apply this policy fairly, consistently and in a dignified manner so as to protect the rights of all individuals while maintaining an environment that fosters learning, exploration, and community engagement.

This Code of Conduct applies to all interactions within library property, community outreach activities, library programs, and all forms of communication, including phone calls, emails, text messages, and social media engagement with the library.

The mandate to set such rules is given under the Public Libraries Act, Section 23 (4), which states that the Library Board may make rules:

- for the use of library services
- for the exclusion from the library of persons who behave in a disruptive manner or cause damage to library property
- suspending library privileges for breaches of the rules
- regulating all other matters connected with the management of the library and library property

Any behaviour that does not support a welcoming environment and/or violates the Patron Code of Conduct may result in cost-recovery charges, suspension of library privileges, exclusion from the Library on the basis of the Ontario Trespass to Property Act and prosecution. These Rules have been approved by the Bracebridge Library Board. An Individual has the right to appeal their exclusion as described in the Appeals Process section.

The Library is committed to reviewing the Patron Code of Conduct and its application on a regular basis to support fair and equitable access for all.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Our Staff & Patron Safety Commitment

The Bracebridge Library recognizes its responsibility to uphold the Ontario Human Rights Code while also maintaining a safe and respectful environment for staff and patrons. While the library strives to accommodate individuals' needs, accommodations must align with our duty to protect all staff and visitors from harm, intimidation, and harassment.

Library staff are empowered to enforce this Code of Conduct and will do so in a professional and consistent manner. We appreciate the cooperation of all patrons in maintaining a welcoming space for our entire community.

The Library asks for your assistance in creating a supportive environment conducive to study and enjoyable use of the Library.

Behaviour that violates the law, or compromises the use and enjoyment of the library by others, or interferes with library employees in the performance of their duties are prohibited.

During your visit to or interaction with the library, please:

Respect Others

- Be considerate of fellow patrons and staff, which includes, but is not limited to:
- Speak and work at a reasonable and respectful volume.
- Set your mobile device to vibrate or mute.
- Adhere to the Internet Usage Policy while accessing the Library computers and wireless internet.
- Refrain from foul, abusive, or discriminatory language or actions.
- Respect the sensibilities of others when viewing materials in the Library.
- Bring in only registered or service animals.
- Obtain permission from the Library to distribute literature or post materials on Library property.
- Solicitation is not permitted in the Library.
- Obtain permission from the Library and any parents/guardians before taking photos or videos in the Library.
- Respect others who may have sensitivities to scents, and limit use of scented products.
- Dress appropriately for a public space (e.g., wearing tops, bottoms, and footwear).
- Take responsibility for those in your care. Children under the age of 10 and those requiring supervision must not be left unattended on library premises.
- Report disruptive behaviour to a Library employee

Maintain a Safe Environment

- Stay alert and awake while using the library.
- Use the Library's materials, computers, furniture, equipment, and spaces for their intended purposes.
- Keep personal belongings with you at all times. The Library is not responsible for damage or loss of personal property within the facility.

- Follow the directions of Library staff
- Leave the Library facility in a safe, efficient and respectful manner during fire, fire drills or other emergencies.
- Throw out or recycle your garbage in designated areas.
- Keep aisles, corridors, and spaces around you clear so that others can easily access them.
- Park bicycles, scooters, and small recreational motorized vehicles outside the Library. Small items such as skateboards or roller blades may be brought in but may not be used inside the Library or near the entrance.

Prohibited Behaviors

Certain behaviors may result in the suspension of library privileges, exclusion from library property, financial liability, and/or legal action. These behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Aggressive, abusive, or violent behavior or language including threats, intimidation, or harassment of staff or other patrons. The Library will reinforce zero tolerance of such behaviours.
- Disruptive or intrusive conduct that interferes with others' ability to use or enjoy library services.
- Discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or any other protected characteristic under the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Possession or use of weapons or dangerous items on library property.
- Illegal activity, including theft, vandalism, or the use, possession, or distribution of illicit substances.
- Smoking, vaping, or alcohol consumption, except in designated areas when a liquor license has been obtained for an authorized event.
- Refusal to leave the library when directed due to a policy violation or emergency situation.
- Unauthorized use of library spaces, such as entering staff-only areas, use of washrooms for non-intended purposes, or using the library as a place of business.

Enforcement

Library staff are empowered to intervene, remedy, or prohibit any activities or behaviours that violate this Code of Conduct. If an issue cannot be resolved by individual staff members, the Library's CEO or a designated representative will intervene. In cases where individuals refuse to comply with staff directions or vacate the premises, police assistance may be requested.

Library staff will make every effort to resolve conduct issues through education. However, violations may result in:

1. Verbal Warning – Staff will explain how they violated the Library's Code of Conduct and provide an opportunity to correct the behaviour.
2. Written Warning – If the behaviour continues, a formal warning may be issued outlining the Code of Conduct violation(s).
3. Temporary Suspension of Privileges – A patron may be temporarily barred from accessing some or all library services, depending on the severity of the violation(s), see appendix A.

4. Long-Term Exclusion – In cases of serious or repeated violations, exclusion from the library for an extended period may be necessary, see appendix A. Patrons excluded for 12 months or longer must apply in writing for reinstatement to the Library CEO & Chief Librarian.

A formal exclusion notice will be issued in writing. It will outline the reason and duration of the exclusion, as well as provide the reinstatement date. The notice will also include information about the appeal process.

Exclusion Appeal Process

Patrons have the right to appeal an exclusion decision, within 15 business days from the date of the exclusion letter. Written Appeals must be submitted to the CEO & Chief Librarian, with the following information:

- Name
- Contact information (phone number, email, or mailing address)
- Date of the exclusion notice
- Reason for appeal

Review Process:

1. First Appeal – CEO & Chief Librarian:

- The CEO & Chief Librarian will review the case, including the patron's past behavior, reasons for the appeal, and any mitigating factors.
- Upon receiving an appeal request the CEO will inform the Library Board Chair, using the official Library Board email address.
- The CEO & Chief Librarian's decision will be communicated in writing. If applicable, details on appealing the decision will be provided. The appeal decision will be cc'd to the Library Board email address.
- If the appeal is granted, the exclusion will be lifted or modified.
- If the appeal is denied, the patron may proceed to the second appeal.

2. Final Appeal – Library Board:

- If the patron disagrees with the CEO & Chief Librarian's decision, they may appeal in writing to the Library Board within 15 business days of receiving the written decision from the CEO.
- The Library Board's decision is final and will be communicated in writing, within 15 business days of receiving a written appeal.

The Library Board recognizes and supports the authority of library staff and the CEO in enforcing the Library's Code of Conduct and exclusion decisions. The Board will only consider overruling or amending a decision in cases where there is compelling evidence that the decision was made in bad faith, with procedural irregularities, or in a manner that significantly deviates from the Library's policies and values. The Board's role

in the appeals process is not to reassess the facts of the incident but to ensure fair and consistent application of policies.

Reinstatement

- Before reinstatement, the patron must meet with the CEO & Chief Librarian to review the Code of Conduct and commit to moving forward together in a mutually respectful and safe manner, adhering to all Library policies.
- The decision to reinstate will be based on:
 - A review of past conduct and any improvements.
 - A commitment to follow library rules moving forward.
 - Any additional mitigating factors.

Previous Revisions: OP-11: Library Patron Code of Conduct (2022); Facilities Use #1: Standards of Acceptable Behaviour (February 15, 2011); Facilities Use #1: Standards of Acceptable Behaviour (June 14, 2016)

Related Documents: Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; Ontario Trespass to Property Act, Ontario Human Rights Code; Bracebridge Library Code of Conduct Enforcement Procedure & Exclusion Matrix; OP-18; Animals in the Library

Appendix A: Library Code of Conduct Exclusion Matrix

Exclusion Matrix

The following Exclusion Matrix outlines common behaviors and corresponding actions taken to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all patrons and staff. While this list covers a range of behaviors, it is not exhaustive. The CEO or their designate reserves the right to assess situations on a case-by-case basis and implement appropriate actions, including exclusions or other measures, as needed to protect the safety and well-being of all individuals in the library.

Behaviour	Action	Authority	Notes	Follow-Up
Excessive noise - disrupting others by yelling or making undue excessive noise	Three verbal warnings. If behavior continues, patron(s) asked to leave for the day.	All staff	Document with incident report if patron is asked to leave for the day.	
Smoking/vaping on library property - First occurrence	Asked to leave for the day.	All staff	Document with incident report.	
Smoking/vaping on library property - Second occurrence	Asked to leave for 1 week.	All staff	Ensure individual knows they cannot return until a specific date. Document with incident report.	
Smoking/vaping on library property - Repeated occurrences	Asked to leave for 1 month.	All staff	If this is the third or subsequent offence, a one-month exclusion will be issued. Document with incident report.	Official exclusion letter sent out.
Possession or consumption of open alcohol on library property	Asked to leave for the day.	All staff	Document with incident report.	

Misuse of facilities (e.g., refusing to follow staff direction for health and safety purposes, using sports equipment, entering staff-only spaces, viewing inappropriate content, soliciting or panhandling)	If staff direction is repeatedly ignored, may be asked to leave for the day.	All staff	Document with incident report if patron is asked to leave.	
Verbal harassment or abusive language towards staff, patrons, or security (e.g., cursing, yelling, name-calling) - First occurrence	Asked to leave for 1 week.	All staff	Document with incident report.	
Verbal harassment or abusive language towards staff, patrons, or security - Second occurrence	Asked to leave for 1 month.	All staff	Document with incident report.	
Verbal harassment or abusive language towards staff, patrons, or security - Repeated occurrences	Asked to leave for 6-12 months, depending on severity and number of offences.	CEO or designate	Document with incident report.	Official exclusion letter sent out for longer suspensions.
Threatening violence (verbal or physical gestures)	Contact police if the threat is imminent. 12-month exclusion issued.	CEO or designate	Document with incident report.	Official exclusion letter sent out.
Threatening violence with a weapon or producing a weapon	Contact police (911). Permanent exclusion issued.	CEO or designate	Document with incident report.	Trespass letter issued by OPP.
Physical assault or attempted physical assault	Contact police (911). Permanent exclusion issued.	CEO or designate	Document with incident report.	Trespass letter issued by OPP.
Illegal activity (e.g., indecent exposure, drug use, theft, vandalism, etc.)	Contact police (911). Exclusion length determined based on severity.	CEO or designate	Document with incident report.	Possible permanent exclusion.