

**VIII**  
**Marshall District Library**  
**Patron Behavior and Code of Conduct Policy**

**A. Introduction.**

The Marshall District Library (the “Library”) is open for specific and designated civic, educational, and cultural uses, including reading, studying, writing, participating in scheduled Library programs, and using Library materials. In order to provide resources and services to all people who visit the Library facilities in an atmosphere of courtesy, respect, and excellent service, the Library Board has adopted this Patron Behavior Policy. The purpose of the Patron Behavior Policy (“Policy”) is to assist the Library in fulfilling its mission as a community resource enriching life, stimulating intellectual curiosity, fostering literacy, and providing educational, recreational, and technological services.

The following rules of conduct shall apply to all buildings – interior and exterior – and all grounds controlled and operated by the Library (“Library Property”) and to all persons entering in or on the premises, unless otherwise specified.

**B. Rules for a Safe Environment.**

1. **Violations of Law.** Committing or attempting to commit an activity in violation of federal, state, or local law, ordinance, or regulation (including but not limited to assault, indecent exposure, larceny, removing Library material from Library Property without authorization through the approved lending procedures, vandalism, or copyright infringement) is prohibited.
2. **Weapons.** Carrying guns, pistols, knives, or other weapons, except as specifically permitted and exempt from local regulation by law, on Library Property is prohibited.
3. **Alcohol; Drugs.** Possessing, selling, distributing, or consuming any alcoholic or intoxicating beverage, illegal drug or edible, or drug paraphernalia is prohibited; provided that alcohol may be permitted at certain Library-sponsored events if specifically approved by the Library. Persons noticeably under the influence of any controlled substance or alcoholic or intoxicating liquor are not allowed on Library property.
4. **Recreational Equipment and Personal Transport Devices.** Use of skateboards, rollerblades, roller skates, or other wheeled form of recreational equipment (including toys that can be ridden or wagons) is not allowed in the Library or on Library Property. Library patrons must park bicycles or other recreational vehicles only in authorized areas. Wheelchairs, scooters, and other power-driven mobility devices are permitted in by those individuals with disabilities in accordance with Library rules, unless a particular type of device cannot be accommodated because of legitimate safety requirements.
5. **No Blocking of Doors, Aisles or Entrances.** All doors, aisles and entrances must remain obstacle-free. This includes a prohibition of running power cords across aisles or other areas that are used for walking.

6. Animals. Animals are not permitted in the Library other than service animals (as defined by law) for those individuals with disabilities, those used in law enforcement or for Library programming. Animals may not be left unattended or be off-leash on Library Property.
7. Incendiary devices. The use of incendiary devices, such as candles, matches, and lighters, is prohibited inside the Library.
8. Staff Only Areas. Patrons shall not be permitted in any areas designated as “staff only” unless otherwise permitted by the Library Director.
9. School Groups. School groups using the Library must have approval of the Library Director and must have a teacher and other appropriate staff present to ensure that the students use the Library in conformance with these rules.

**C. Code of Patron Conduct:**

1. Library Activities. Patrons shall engage in activities associated with the use of the public library. Patrons not reading, studying, attending a library program, or using library materials and/or equipment may be required to leave the building. This includes sleeping on Library furniture, the floor, or outside on Library Property.
2. Loud Noise. Patrons shall respect the rights of other patrons, and shall not harass or annoy others through noisy or boisterous activities. This including yelling, cheering, talking loudly (with others or in monologues) or noises from electronic, entertainment, and communication devices, such as cell phones, tablets, headphones, and radio, is prohibited. Patrons may use headphones or earbuds but at a volume that cannot be heard by other Library patrons or staff. Patrons may engage in quiet conversation that does not disturb others. Adults may read aloud to children in the Youth Area, provided that they are reading in a voice that would not reasonably disturb others.
3. Considerate Use. The following behavior is prohibited in the Library or on Library Property:
  - a. Spitting;
  - b. Running, pushing, shoving, fighting, throwing items, provoking a fight or other unsafe physical behavior;
  - c. Climbing on furniture;
  - d. Using obscene or threatening language or gestures;
  - e. Engaging in sexual behavior (1) that is a violation of the law, (2) which can reasonably be expected to disturb Library users or staff while such staff or patrons are in the Library or on Library property; or (3) that interferes with the Library patrons’ use of the Library or the ability of the staff person to do his or her job.
4. Interference with Staff. Patrons may not interfere with the staff’s performance of duties in the Library or on Library property. This includes engaging in conversation or behavior that monopolizes or forces the attention of staff for an inappropriate period, inappropriate personal comments, sexual advances, or physical and/or verbal harassment.

5. Smoking. In accordance with the Calhoun County Clean Indoor Air Regulation, Section 1006, smoking and/or use of tobacco products is prohibited inside the building and within 25 feet of any library entrance, exit, window, or ventilation outlet. Smoking, using e-cigarettes, vaping, electronic nicotine delivery systems or chewing tobacco is prohibited on Library Property. Using, smoking or possessing marijuana on Library property is also prohibited.
6. Tables and Computers. The number of people at a table shall be limited to four (4). No additional people may stand around one (1) table.
7. Phones. Patrons carrying cellular telephones and beepers are expected to turn ringers off, or turn them down to their lowest level while in the library. Those patrons desiring to use phones to place or receive calls must use the phones quietly so as not to disturb other patrons. If a phone call disturbs other library visitors, users must move to the lobby, a study room, or outside the building.
8. Food and Beverages. Patrons may not consume food in the library, except in designated areas or as part of approved special events or meetings. Covered beverages or bottles with screw tops may be allowed in the library but must be kept away from all computer workstations.
9. Loitering. Patrons spending lengthy periods of time in the lobby shall be construed as loitering (Article V Sec. 18-51 of the Marshall City Code).
10. Attire. All patrons are expected to be fully dressed, including shoes and shirt, at all times while on library property. Visible or damp swimming suits left uncovered are not considered to be appropriate attire. No bras or sports bra tops allowed without a proper full shirt over the top. No one with uncovered undergarments will be permitted on library property.
11. Sales. Selling merchandise on Library Property without prior permission from the Library Director is prohibited.
12. Distributions; Postings. Distributing or posting printed materials/literature on Library Property not in accordance with Library policy is prohibited.
13. Panhandling or Soliciting for Money, Products, and Services. Panhandling or soliciting Library staff or patrons for money, products, or services inside the Library or on Library property is prohibited. Sales of products or services that are incidental to Library programming may be permitted if approved in advance by the Library Director.
14. Campaigning, Petitioning, Interviewing and Similar Activities. As a limited public forum, the Library reserves the right to regulate the time, place, and manner for campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing and soliciting on Library grounds as follows:
  - a. Campaigning, petitioning, interviewing, survey-taking, pamphleteering, canvassing, and soliciting are prohibited inside the Library building.
  - b. Because public sidewalks are immediately adjacent to the south entrance of the Library, petitioners shall not stand on library property but will remain on the sidewalks.
  - c. No person shall block ingress or egress from the Library building.

- f. Campaign material, literature or petitions may not be brought into the Library, posted at the Library or left on Library property.
15. Tables or Structures on Library Property. No person may use or set up a table, stand, sign or similar structure on Library Property. This does not apply to Library-sponsored or co-sponsored events.
16. Personal Property. The Library is not responsible for personal belongings left unattended and Library staff is not permitted to guard or watch personal belongings. The Library does not guarantee storage for personal property. Personal possessions must not be left unattended or take up seating or space if needed by others. Unattended personal belongings may be removed to the Lost and Found. Library staff may limit the number and size of parcels carried into the Library. For example, the Library may prohibit items such as suitcases, duffle bags, or large plastic garbage bags.
17. Odor. Offensive odor, including but not limited to body odor due to poor personal hygiene, overpowering perfume or cologne, or odors from items brought into the Library, that causes a nuisance is prohibited. (For example, if the patron's odor interferes with staff or other patrons' use of the Library, the patron violates this Policy).
18. Restrooms. Misuse of restrooms, including laundering, sleeping, shaving, excessive personal grooming, hair cutting or trimming, bathing, and sexual activity is prohibited. Unless a parent or guardian is assisting a child or a patron is assisting a person with a disability, there shall only be one person to a stall. Library materials may not be taken into restrooms.
19. Harassment. Staring, photographing, video recording, audio recording, following, stalking, harassing, arguing with, threatening, talking or behaving in a manner (1) which can reasonably be expected to disturb Library users or staff while such staff or patrons are in the Library or on Library property; (2) that interferes with the Library patrons' use of the Library or the ability of the staff person to do his or her job is prohibited; (3) would create or may result in a hostile work environment for Library staff; and/or (4) that violates Michigan or federal law.
20. Unattended Children. Members of the Marshall District Library staff are concerned for the safety of children. They cannot, however, act as babysitters nor keep watch over children. Children, either accompanied by a grown-up or left unattended, are the responsibility of their parents or guardians who are liable for their children's behavior in the library, for damage to materials, equipment, and furnishings, and for injury to themselves and others.
- a. Children should not be left alone for more than one hour and should have been trained by their parents or guardians in dealing with strangers. Children should be at the library only with the knowledge of a parent or guardian and shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of the public library.
- b. Children awaiting rides must be picked up promptly so that they are not forced to wait for lengthy periods in the library lobby, which shall be construed as loitering. Members of the staff are instructed to contact the police before leaving when unattended children are left at the library at closing time. Staff will wait until police arrive.

- c. Parents or guardians will be contacted if children present behavior problems or if the Code of Conduct is not followed.

21. Library Policies. Patrons must adhere to all library policies. Patrons shall comply with staff instructions and enforcement of library policies

22. Unauthorized Use. Patrons must leave the Library Property promptly at closing time and may not be in the Library when it is not open to the public. Further, any patron whose privileges to use the Library have been denied may not enter the Library or be on Library Property. Any patron whose privileges have been limited may not use the Library in any manner that conflicts with those limits placed on the patron by the Library Director, his or her designee, or the Library Board.

D. Rules for the Use and Preservation of Library Materials and Property.

1. Care of Library Property. Patrons must not deface, vandalize, damage, or improperly use or improperly remove Library materials, equipment, furniture, or buildings. Patrons shall not load or install any programs or software on Library computers without staff authorization. Patrons shall be responsible to reimburse the Library for costs incurred by the Library for violating this provision. Patrons shall not cause damage by returning books containing bedbugs or bringing bedbugs into the Library.
2. Internet Use. Patrons must abide by established time limitations and all other provisions of the Library Internet Use Policy.
3. Equipment. Library staff computers are for staff use only.
4. Authorized Lending. Library materials may only be removed from the premises with authorization through established lending procedures.

E. Violations and Appeal.

This Library Violations and Appeal Policy ("Policy") will set forth the process and procedure for violations of certain Library policies in which there is a violation and appeal provision, including but not limited to the Patron Behavior, Internet Use, and other Library Policies.

1. Library Director/Designee's Right to Suspend Privileges. Upon determining that a Library policy has been violated, the Library Director or the Director's designee may restrict access to Library facilities with immediate dismissal of the patron from the premises, by suspending the patron's access to Library facilities for a set period of time, or by denying access to specific services and/or programs pursuant to this Policy. If necessary, the local police may be called to intervene.
2. Incident reports. Library Staff shall record in writing in the form of an Incident Report any violation of Library policy that resulted in a verbal warning or a suspension of Library privileges. By the end of the day on which the incident occurred, an Incident Report shall be written and forwarded to the Library Director for logging and review. The Incident Report should include physical descriptions in addition to the name of the patron. A copy of the limitation or suspension of privileges letter should be attached, if applicable.

3. Violation of the Policy – Suspension of Privileges.
  - a. Initial Violation: Library patrons observed violating a Library policy will be asked to cease the violation with a verbal request. If the patron does not comply with the request, the patron will be asked to leave the building for the day. If the patron refuses, police may be called.
  - b. Subsequent Violations: The Director or the Director’s authorized designee may further limit or suspend the patron’s Library privileges if violations of the same rule continue. Such limitation or suspension shall be in writing specifying the nature of the violation. Subsequent violations of the same rule shall result in additional suspensions of increasing length.
4. Violations that Affect Safety and Security – Suspension of Privileges. Violations of Library policy that affect safety and security, including but not limited to violations involving verbal abuse, violence, threatening behaviors, child pornography or obscenity, sexual harassment, vandalism, drug sale or use or attempted drug sale or use, intoxication, theft or attempted theft, physical harassment, sexual misconduct or any behavior that threatens the safety and security of staff and/or patrons shall be handled as follows:
  - a. Initial Violation: The police will be called immediately if the conduct constitutes a violation or suspected violation of local, state, or federal law. Arrest or criminal prosecution may ensue. Violations of this nature will result in an immediate minimum two-week suspension of Library privileges in order to give the Library sufficient time to investigate the incident. After the investigation is completed, the Library Director or his/her designee may add additional time to the initial limitation or suspension period.
  - b. Subsequent Violations: The police will be called immediately if the conduct constitutes a violation or suspected violation of local, state, or federal law. Arrest or criminal prosecution may ensue. Subsequent violations of the same rule shall result in additional limitations or suspensions of increasing length. Such limitations or suspensions shall be in writing specifying the nature of the violation.

5. Reinstatement.

The patron whose privileges have been limited or suspended shall attend a meeting with the Director or the Director's designee to review the Library policy that was the subject of the violation before their privileges may be reinstated. The Director may also attach reasonable conditions to any reinstatement.

5. Right of Appeal.

Patrons may appeal a decision (1) to limit or suspend privileges or (2) to attach conditions to any reinstatement by sending a written appeal to the Library Board within ten (10) business days of the date the privileges were revoked or limited or the conditions were made. The appeal should be sent to the President of the Library Board at 124 West Green Street, Marshall, MI 49068. The decision of the Library Board is final.

Adopted by the Library Board on April 13, 2004, amended September 12, 2006, amended December 14, 2010, amended June 28, 2011, amended October 8, 2013, amended September 12, 2017, amended February 11, 2020, amended January 10, 2023, amended November 14, 2023.