

Talbot County Free Library

Rules of Conduct

Welcome to the Talbot County Free Library. We value our patrons and strive to treat them with courtesy and respect. We hope you find the Library a comfortable and welcoming place. Please be considerate of the rights of others as you use this public facility.

To ensure access to Library Services and for the safety of all users, the following conduct is prohibited at all branches of the Talbot County Free Library:

- Engaging in any activity prohibited by law, or in violation of Library policies.
- Engaging in any activity that interferes with or disturbs the legitimate rights or safety of other Library users, staff, or volunteers.
- Exhibiting any threatening or intimidating behaviors or engaging in physical altercations, e.g., abusive language, shouting, staring, threats of violence, fighting, assault, or any type of harassment.
- Possession, use, or threatening the use of any weapon or other object in such a manner that it may be considered a weapon in library buildings or on library property, except those carried by authorized law enforcement agents or possession allowable by holding a state permit.
- Sexual harassment, indecent exposure, sex acts, or sexual misconduct.
- Loitering on Library premises, i.e. sitting or standing about or lingering aimlessly.
- Using Library Wi-Fi, printers, computers or the network in violation of the Library's *Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy*.
- Using tobacco products or e-cigarettes on Library grounds.
- Activities that may result in damage to Library property.
- Sleeping.
- Bodily hygiene/odor that is disruptive to others.
- Failing to wear appropriate attire. Shirt and shoes are required.
- Bringing animals, except for service animals, into the Library (unless part of a Library program).
- Leaving animals tied or unattended on library property.
- Selling goods or soliciting funds (unless part of a Library program).
- The time, place, and manner of First Amendment activities such as petitioning, picketing, or protesting may be regulated by library staff. Such activities may be relegated to library grounds.
- Talking on cell phones anywhere except the Library lobby. Please set your cell phone on vibrate.
- Eating and drinking, except in designated areas or meeting rooms.
- Leaving children under the age of eight unattended in the Library at any time. Parents/caregivers are responsible for supervising their children while in the Library and ensuring that their children obey Library rules of conduct. (See Maryland Annotated Code, Family Law, 5-801.) The State of Maryland requires that a caregiver be at least thirteen years old.
- Unauthorized presence in designated areas and/or entering or remaining inside Library facilities before or after posted hours of operation.
- In order to maintain a safe and pleasant environment for children and caregivers in the children's area, only children 12 and under and their caregivers are permitted in the children's area or children's bathroom. Patrons who require library materials from this area are permitted in the children's section for that purpose.

- Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited without advanced approval from the Library Director.
- Failure to comply with reasonable requests of Library staff.

Patrons must follow the Rules of Conduct established by the Talbot County Free Library Board of Trustees while visiting or contacting the Library by telephone or through online services. Library personnel may ask persons who are exhibiting inappropriate behavior to modify their behavior. Failure to do so may result in a ban from all Talbot County Free Library buildings and grounds, loss of library privileges, and possible arrest and prosecution. Library staff have the authority to make decisions that may involve contacting the police and/or issuing a ban based on patron violation of the rules established by the Talbot County Free Library Board of Trustees. The length of the ban can vary, depending on the severity of the misconduct. The Library maintains written documentation of patron offenses and bans. Enforcement of the Library's Rules of Conduct will be conducted in a fair and reasonable manner. Patrons whose Library privileges are suspended for any length of time or revoked will receive oral or written notice of the violation, the opportunity to be heard, and a fair and impartial decision.

Approved by the Talbot County Free Library Board, December 1, 2016.

Amended by the Talbot County Free Library Board, June 18, 2020.

Amended by the Talbot County Free Library Board, May 28, 2021.

Amended by the Talbot County Free Library Board, December 1, 2022.