

Patron Behavior

Welcome to the Great Falls Public Library! The Library strives to serve our community by providing a safe and inviting environment to be enjoyed by all. The library is intended to be a place where its users can study, do research, browse books, use computers and generally go about their business in a comfortable, non-threatening environment. Patrons are expected to respect the rights of others who require a quiet environment in which to study, compute, research and write.

Disruptive Behavior

Patrons are prohibited from engaging in any disruptive behavior that unreasonably interferes with any other Patron's rights or ability to use or enjoy the Library, Library staff's performance of their duties or degrades any Library resources. Prohibited behaviors include, but may not be limited to the following:

1. **Harassing or Annoying Others:** Behaving in any manner which reasonably can be expected to disturb another Patron's peaceful enjoyment of the Library such as taunting, provoking, or touching another person; staring at another person so as to annoy that person; following another person about the building so as to annoy that person; or engaging in any other behavior that could reasonably disrupt, annoy, or otherwise compromise another Patron's right to use or enjoy the Library. This includes interfering with another patron's first amendment rights.
2. **Causing Unreasonable Noise:** Causing disruptive, distracting, and/or intentional noise, interruptions, or disturbances that could reasonably interfere with another Patron's use or enjoyment of the Library such as boisterous or loud talking to others or in monologue, engaging in unnecessarily loud or prolonged cell phone or in-person conversations, singing, humming, playing sound on electronic devices including cell phones and computers and/or headphones at a level audible to others.
3. **Violating Internet Use and Other Policies:** Accessing illegal content or violating the Library Internet and Computer Use Policy or other Library policies. The Internet and Computer Use Policy is posted near all computers in the Library.
4. **Improper Use of Library:** Using the Library or Library resources for purposes other than those associated with the use of a public library while in the building. Authorized purposes include reading, writing, studying, quiet contemplation, using/seeking Library materials, asking for assistance, or participating in Library sanctioned activities.
5. **Improper Use of Restrooms:** Using restrooms or other Library facility for improper purposes such as bathing, shaving, washing hair, preparing food or drinks, or laundering.
6. **Improper Clothing:** Entering or being present on Library property without being fully clothed. All Patrons must wear a shirt or other upper-body covering; pants, shorts, skirt, dress, or other lower-body covering; and shoes or other footwear.

7. **Poor Hygiene:** Exhibiting such offensive body odor due to poor personal hygiene, smoking, or overpowering perfume/cologne so as to constitute a nuisance or unreasonably interfere with another Patron's ability to use the Library; or wearing filthy clothing or shoes that emit an odor that unreasonably interferes with another Patron's ability to use the Library or may dirty furniture. Patrons who violate this rule will be asked to leave the Library, but may return to the Library once the problem is corrected.
8. **Monopolizing Library Space:** Hindering, impeding, or preventing the movement of another Patron into, out of, or about any Library facility or vehicle; using furniture, tables, or equipment to the exclusion of other Patrons, such as by blocking aisles or study areas with one's self or personal belongings; re-arranging furniture; or lying down on any floor or furniture. Bringing in articles that are too large to fit beneath one library chair.
9. **Unattended Items:** Leaving any personal items such as backpacks, suitcases, wheeled carts, bags, study supplies, books, computers, or clothing unattended for extended periods of time inside the Library or on Library property. Patrons may, at their own risk, temporarily leave personal items unattended while using other Library amenities within the building such as seeking Library resources, asking for assistance, taking a phone call to the lobby, or using the restroom. Patrons may also use the bike rack in front of the building to store their own bicycle. Repeatedly leaving unattended items inside or outside of the Library may result in loss of Library privileges.
10. **Running; riding; skating; etc:** Chasing and running in the Library building; using bicycles, skateboards, roller blades, roller skates, or similar wheeled devices anywhere in the building, and on the grounds where prohibited by a posted sign.
11. **Altering Library Property:** Tampering with the arrangement of Library materials, attempting to remove or actually removing any Library property from the premises, and damaging or mutilating any Library materials or facilities. This rule does not apply to Library materials that are properly checked-out for borrowing.
12. **Littering:** Leaving any belongings or refuse behind.
13. **Animals in the Library:** Bringing pets or animals, other than service animals, into the building, except as authorized by the Library Director. Therapy or support animals are not classified as service animals and are not allowed in the Library.
14. **Entering Restricted Areas:** Entering private or non-public areas of the Library without Library staff permission. All private and non-public areas will be clearly marked.
15. **Smoking:** Smoking, including electronic cigarettes, vaping or any other type of smoking device, is not permitted in the library. Smoking is also not permitted on library property within 30 feet of any library entryway or air intake apparatus.
16. **Drug and Alcohol Use:** Being under the influence of alcohol/marijuana/illegal drugs, or selling, using, or possessing alcohol/marijuana/illegal drugs.
17. **Soliciting:** Soliciting donations or selling non-Library materials anywhere in the building or on the Library grounds without prior authorization by the Library Director. These activities must be conducted in a non-aggressive manner that does not unreasonably interfere with another Patron's use or enjoyment of any Library amenities.

18. **Sleeping:** Lying down, sleeping or dozing is not permitted in the library, except this rule shall not apply to children.
19. **Overnight Closure:** Library property is closed from 10:00 pm to 6:00 am. People may not be on Library property during those hours.
20. **No Camping:** No camping is allowed on Library property at any time. Camping is defined as the use of an area for temporary residence or sleeping purposes, which includes storing personal property, leaving unattended personal property, erecting any structures, attaching any rope, cable or other wire to a tree or a Library structure, using the Library building and/or band shell for shelter or occupying any area in a way that inhibits the use of Library property for others.

Illegal Activity:

Patrons are prohibited from engaging in any dangerous or criminal activity that violates any local, state, or federal law. ***Illegal behavior may be reported to law enforcement.*** Such criminal activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Disorderly conduct such as quarrelling or making loud or unusual noises; challenging to fight or fighting; using threatening, profane, or abusive language; disturbing any lawful assembly or public meeting; hindering the ability to freely enter or exit a public place; transmitting a false report or warning of fire or other catastrophe in the Library; or creating a hazardous or physically offensive condition by any act that serves no legitimate purpose.
2. Carrying firearms or weapons of any type (except by law enforcement officers and those carrying a concealed firearm with a valid concealed carry permit)
3. Leashing dog to fixtures on Library grounds or allowing dog to be unrestrained. No animal is allowed to become a nuisance and unattended leashed dogs or loose dogs are a potential nuisance due to biting, barking, intimidation, or defecation.
4. Criminal sexual conduct on Library property such as predatory loitering by a sexual offender, indecent exposure, accessing materials which are child pornography and sexual assault
5. Abusing a child or endangering the welfare of a child on Library property by violating one's duty of care, protection and support.
6. Intending or attempting to damage, remove, or steal any Library property.
7. Making threats or false alarms against Library property or from Library property.
8. The Library park is closed from dusk to daylight. Presence in the park from dusk to daylight is not allowed.

Other Activities

- Wheeled devices (bicycles, scooters, etc.), with the exception of strollers and those required by persons with a disability, shall be left outside and may not obstruct traffic entering or exiting the building. Skateboards and roller blades/skates can be carried into the library, but cannot be ridden or worn in the building.
- Patrons may not store belongings (bags, carts, suitcases, etc.) on Library property.
- Cell phone use is allowed in the library. As a courtesy to others, we ask that cell phones be turned to silent (vibrate), and that telephone conversations be held at volumes which do not disturb others.

Food and Drink

Certain food and drink items are allowed in the library if consumed responsibly.

- Patrons whose food creates a mess or is distracting to others because of the aroma will be asked to eat outside of the library
- Drinks are limited to those in closed containers such as covered travel cups, or capped water or soda bottles
- No food or drink is allowed in and around the computer, bookshelves, or other equipment areas
- No food or drink is allowed in any public areas on the third floor
- Patrons are expected to clean up after themselves, discard trash in appropriate containers, and notify staff immediately of any spills

Children

Great Falls Public Library is not designed or licensed to provide childcare. Library staff is not responsible for the supervision of children but will intervene if aware of a problem. Therefore, in order to create an environment of safety and maintain an atmosphere where patrons can enjoy all that the library offers:

- Parents and guardians are responsible for the supervision, safety, welfare, actions and behavior of their children while they are in the library and on library property
- A responsible adult or caregiver aged 12 or older must directly supervise children 7 years old and younger at all times throughout the library, including the Kids' Place
- At the discretion of a responsible adult, a child age 8-11 may be left unattended for the time needed to select materials, complete a homework assignment or attend a program
- If a child under the age of 8 is left unattended, staff will attempt to locate the parent or caregiver informing them of library policy prohibiting this. If the parent or caregiver cannot be located in the building, we will contact law enforcement personnel to pick up the child
- If a child is repeatedly left unsupervised and behaves in a way contrary to the Patron Behavior Policy, parents will be notified that their child is no longer permitted to use the library unattended
- Library staff cannot be responsible for children interacting with or leaving with persons who are not the appropriate chaperone. The library cannot assume responsibility for children who leave the library premises
- Disruptive children will be given one verbal warning before they are asked to return to their parent or guardian and/or leave the building for a designated time.

Adults Unaccompanied by a Child

- Adults who visit the Kids' Place must be actively caring for a child or using the resources available for research or checkout. Adults who do not have specific reasons to use the Kids' Place will be asked to move to another area of the library.
- Similarly, adults unaccompanied by children will be asked to leave programming intended for children and teens. Adults unaccompanied by children are invited to attend adult and family programming.

Computer and Internet Use

Patrons welcome to use the Library's computer and Internet resources. (Please see the Computer and Internet Section for more information.) In order to create an environment of safety and maintain an atmosphere where patrons can enjoy all that the library offers prohibited behaviors include, but may not be limited to the following:

- Viewing of pornography is not permitted.
- Access to materials which are child pornography is against the law and can be reported to law enforcement officials.
- Any illegal activity, including copyright violation and illegal or unauthorized entry into computer files or programs is prohibited.
- Using Great Falls Public Library computers for purposes that may be interpreted as abuse, harassment or intimidation is prohibited.
- Due to bandwidth limitations, videos downloads and peer-to-peer sharing such as torrents is limited.
- Installation or copying of any programs, games, screensavers, device drivers or any other software to library computers or devices is prohibited. This includes any software available for download from the Internet.
- Food and drink are not allowed at Library computer stations. Pounding on keyboards, tampering with machines, cables, and software, and other potentially damaging activities are not permitted.
- Any activity that violates library policy regarding library-owned computers is also prohibited on user-owned equipment that is connected to the wireless network.

Patron Behavior Consequences

Failure to follow the Library patron behavior policy may result in temporary banning from Internet use or expulsion from the library. Persons who repeatedly or egregiously violate Library policy may be served with a trespass order requiring that they not be on Library property for up to 12 months. Library staff has the final authority in determining what constitutes disruptive behavior.

Generally, a patron may receive a verbal warning regarding a violation of the guidelines. Behavior resulting in a second warning will warrant expulsion from the library (includes library building, park, plaza and parking lots) and/or computers for the remainder of the day.

Continued violation of this policy will result in expulsion from the library/computers for a week. Additional warnings can result in expulsion from the library/computers for a period of time ranging from one month to one year. However, library staff members may ask a patron to leave the premises without prior warning, depending on the seriousness of the violation.

When possible, any patron who has been banned from the library/computers for more than a day will be provided with written notification indicating the reason for the ban, the time period of the ban and the appeals process. Any person who enters the library while banned from the premises will be considered in violation of library policy and the police may be contacted.

Patron Appeal:

An Internet user whose session has been terminated or whose Internet access has been prohibited due to violations of the Library Internet Use policy, a library patron who has been asked to leave the library for a length of time due to violations of the patron behavior policy, or a library patron who feels that a Library policy or Library staff action has impacted their ability to access Library services may submit a Patron Appeal Form to the Library Director.

PROCESS:

1. The Library Director will review the Patron Appeal Form and provide a written response within 14 days.
2. If the patron is unsatisfied with the Library Director's response, they may submit a written request to appeal to the Great Falls Public Library Board.
3. The patron appeal will be placed on the agenda of the next scheduled board meeting. After hearing statements from the patron, Library staff and any public wishing to speak, the Board will make final ruling on the appeal. A written response will be sent to the patron within 14 days