

Rules Governing the Use of the Library

(Adopted by the Abilene Public Library Advisory Board, November 13, 2017)



Abilene Public Library's behavior rules have a threefold purpose: to protect the rights and safety of library patrons, to protect the rights and safety of staff members, and to preserve and protect the library's materials, facilities, and property.

The Library is supported by the taxes of the people of Abilene who expect our facilities to be clean and comfortable. The library is intended for reading, studying, writing, and listening to written or electronically transmitted materials, and attending Library or community sponsored programs and meetings.

Everyone is welcome to Abilene Public Library. Our resources are made available to all in an atmosphere of respect for knowledge, one another, and community property and resources.

All users of our facilities must share community space responsibly: respecting others within the facility, sharing resources, and refraining from damaging or destroying library property intended for general use as outlined in the Texas Penal Code 28.03; 28.04.

Safety:

Texas Penal Code, Title 9, Chapter 42 describes those actions which are considered to be disorderly conduct. Items include but are not limited to: using abusive, indecent, profane or vulgar language, making offensive gestures or displays in a public place, threatening or abusing another person in a public place, making unreasonable noise, fights, brandishing or discharging a firearm, exposing themselves to others for a lewd or unlawful purpose, or violating the privacy of someone using a restroom.

Entering unauthorized areas without a staff escort is prohibited.

Blocking access to Library entrances, passageways or resources, is prohibited. Texas Penal Code 42.03

Library users are required to refrain from any action that injures or endangers the comfort, repose, health or safety of others, offends decency, is offensive to the senses, or in any way renders other persons insecure in life or the use of property.

Unlicensed/illegal weapons may not be brought into the Library.

Appropriate clothing must be worn at all times. Bare feet, bathing suits, or clothing that does not adequately cover both the upper and lower torso is prohibited.

Spreading out personal belongings unrelated to the use of Library services, is not permitted. Personal belongings/bags of any type must not be left unattended.

Abilene Public Library will uphold all state, federal and local laws and ordinances with regard to public behavior. Assistance from the Abilene Police Department or City Marshal's Office will be requested as needed.

Responsible Behavior:

We welcome service animals to the Library. Pets are not permitted. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a public entity may ask an individual with a disability to remove a service animal from the premises if –

- 1) The animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it; or
- 2) The animal is not housebroken.

No smoking within 20 feet of any operable door or window (pursuant to City of Abilene Ordinance 69-2006). This includes use of tobacco products or electronic cigarettes and personal vapor devices.

Possession or use of alcohol and/or illegal substances is strictly prohibited on City of Abilene property. Patrons may not be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while using Library facilities. Texas Penal Code 49.02

All users are required to follow Abilene Public Library's Internet Use Policy (see separate document) whether using a public computer or personal internet accessible device.

Library materials must be checked out, before taken into personal possession. If Library staff/security has reasonable suspicion that a person is attempting to exit the building with Library materials prior to them being checked out, the individual may be questioned. Library staff may ask them to open any bag or backpack for visual inspection. Theft of City of Abilene property is a serious offense and may result in permanent exclusion from all Library facilities and/or arrest.

Non-alcoholic beverages with caps or covers are permitted inside library facilities. This does not include pop-top cans. Please be careful with your beverage, to avoid damage to books or library furnishings. All library facilities maintain a no-food policy for open areas accessible to the public. In special circumstances, food may be consumed with prior permission during specific programming in specific areas.

Solicitation is not permitted inside of the library. Solicitation includes the request for funds, general assistance, or transportation, directed to library staff or the members of the public.

Restrooms may only be utilized for their intended purpose and for washing of hands and face. No bathing, shaving, washing or drying of clothes or dishes is permitted.

Sleeping in the Library is prohibited; children younger than 10 are exempt if in the care of an adult.

Leaflets or posters may be submitted to the Library Director or Branch Manager at each library facility for public posting. Priority will be given to non-profit groups and local community groups. Leaflets or posters submitted by businesses or on behalf of individuals will not be posted or approved for distribution.

Persons who violate the above rules of behavior are subject to the withholding of Library Privileges as follows:

First Offense: One warning, out for the day

Second Offense: Library privileges will be revoked for one week

Third Offense: Library privileges will be revoked for one month

Subsequent Offense: Library privileges will be revoked for one year

Anyone failing to leave when requested by Library security/staff, or a law enforcement officer, may be charged with criminal trespass under Texas Penal Code 30.05.

Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, any person may, without prior notice or warning, be immediately removed from the Library if his or her presence or conduct on the premises poses an immediate danger to any person or property.

Persons whose Library privileges are withheld for more than 30 days pursuant to the above rules may appeal to the City Library Director by making an appointment. If further appeal is necessary, appeal to the Community Services Department Director may be made. His/her decision will be final. All appeals must be within sixty (60) days after the initial suspension of privileges. Such person's suspension from Library premises shall be temporarily rescinded for the limited purpose of appealing the action with the City Library Director. An individual who commits criminal acts on City of Abilene property or who has been issued a Criminal Trespass Order may be permanently evicted from all Library locations. Such evictions will not be subject to appeal. A return to City of Abilene property after issuance of such an order may result in arrest. Texas Penal Code 30.05

These Rules of Behavior were written in consultation with the Abilene City Attorney and Library Advisory Board.