

Boca Raton Public Library - Rules of Conduct

The Boca Raton Public Library ("Library") provides quality library services and resources necessary to meet the educational, recreational, and informational needs of Library Users. The Library has adopted these Rules of Conduct ("Rules") in order to: maintain an appropriate atmosphere conducive to accomplishing the Library's mission; protect all of the Library Users' right of access to Library facilities; protect Library books, materials, equipment, and facilities from damage; and maintain a safe and healthy environment for Library Users and Library Staff. While on Library Premises, Library Users shall only engage in activities normally associated with the use of a public library, as defined in these Rules. [[View a PDF of this document.](#)]

Section 1. Enforcement and Administration

The Manager of Library Services shall be responsible for the administration and enforcement of these Rules, and these Rules shall be enforced in a consistent and impartial manner. The Manager of Library Services may delegate the enforcement of these Rules to other members of the Library Staff and/or other City employees. When enforcing these Rules, the Boca Raton Police Services Department shall be contacted if: (1) a Library User refuses to leave the Library Premises after being asked to leave by Library Staff due to a violation of the Rules; (2) a Library User is on Library Premises in violation of a [Notice of Exclusion](#); (3) in the event of a Level Two or Level Three offense; or (4) if otherwise determined appropriate by Library Staff.

Section 2. Definitions

For purposes of these Rules and for all other Library policies, including, but not limited to, the Library's [Unattended Personal Property Policy](#), [Unaccompanied Children Policy](#), [Internet Safety & Use Policy](#), and [Tutoring Policy](#), the following definitions shall apply:

"*Activities normally associated with the use of a public library*" include, but are not limited to, selecting and checking out Library books or materials, reading, studying, writing, researching, accessing ideas and information, homework help, using Library materials or equipment, and attending programs, meetings, classes, or events.

"*City*" means the City of Boca Raton, Florida.

"*Library Premises*" or "*Library*" means the Downtown Library and Spanish River Library buildings and any exterior areas adjacent to these buildings where scheduled meetings, programs, or events are held. For purposes of these Rules, the term "Library Premises" or "Library" shall not include a Library parking lot.

"*Library Staff*" includes full-time Library employees, part-time Library employees and Library volunteers.

"*Library User*" means a person using Library Premises and is synonymous with the term Library patron or customer.

"*Notice of Exclusion*" means a notice which advises the Library User of an exclusion from Library Premises for a violation of these Rules.

"*Parent / Caregiver*" means a child's parent, caregiver, legal custodian, permanent guardian, household member or other person responsible for the child's welfare.

"*Prohibited Activities*" are activities or behaviors that are not allowed on Library Premises.

Section 3. Prohibited Activities - Level One Offenses

The following shall be considered Level One Offenses:

(a) Engaging in noisy, boisterous, or disruptive conduct, including, but not limited to using unreasonably loud speech, profanity, singing, shouting, or whistling that disturbs other Library Users or Library Staff.

(b) Running, jumping, or roughhousing.

(c) Using personal electronic equipment (including, but not limited to personal computers, cellular telephones, tablets, music devices, stereos, or televisions) at an unreasonable volume that disturbs other Library Users or Library Staff.

(d) Entering Library Premises barefoot or without upper or lower body garments, or removing one's footwear or upper or lower body garments while on Library Premises.

(e) Bathing, shaving, brushing teeth, or washing clothes or other personal items in Library restrooms.

(f) Bringing animals on Library Premises, except service animals pursuant to the City's policy regarding service animals, or as otherwise authorized by the Manager of Library Services.

(g) Bringing bicycles, scooters, grocery carts, or luggage carts onto Library Premises; provided this shall not be construed to prohibit wheelchairs, mobility scooters, and other aids for the disabled or elderly.

(h) Using athletic equipment on Library Premises, including, but not limited to balls, skateboards, kick scooters, skate shoes, or roller skates.

(i) Smoking, using tobacco products, or vaping on Library Premises, except in designated areas.

(j) Consuming or possessing an alcoholic beverage on Library Premises, except pursuant to an approved City special event permit.

(k) Blocking or obstructing aisles, exits or entrances on Library Premises.

(l) Lying down on Library floors or furniture, or placing feet on Library furniture, books, materials, or equipment.

(m) Sleeping or appearing to sleep in a non-sitting, reclined, or head down on table position on Library Premises, except for infants or toddlers accompanied by a Library User.

(n) Entering Library Staff work areas or Library storage areas without the express permission of Library Staff or using the Library's telephones without express permission of Library Staff.

(o) Entering designated Youth Services areas of the Library by an adult Library User unless: the adult is accompanying a child and the adult is the child's Parent/Caregiver; or the adult is briefly selecting Library books or materials from the designated Youth Services area.

(p) Engaging in any conduct that is in violation of the Library's [Unaccompanied Children Policy](#).

(q) Engaging in any conduct that is in violation of the Library's [Internet Safety & Use Policy](#); or viewing Internet sites that are obscene or pornographic on any personal computer or personal electronic device while on Library Premises. This sub-section shall also prohibit the viewing or displaying of obscenity or pornography in any format on Library Premises.

(r) Engaging in or offering the sale of goods or services on Library Premises, except as authorized by the Manager of Library Services.

(s) Gambling on Library Premises.

(t) Petitioning, leafleting, or panhandling on Library Premises. This sub-section shall not prohibit First Amendment conduct on exterior walkways of the Library if such conduct does not block or obstruct such exterior walkways. For purposes of these Rules, exterior walkways shall not include entrances to Library Premises.

(u) Consuming any food or drink while using a Library computer, printer, or other Library technology, or consuming or storing any food or drink with offensive odors within a Library building, or disposing any food or drink container improperly on Library Premises.

(v) Having offensive body odor or personal hygiene that is unreasonably offensive so as to constitute a nuisance by substantially interfering with other Library Users' ability to utilize the Library, or by substantially interfering with the delivery of services by Library Staff.

(w) Failing to comply with a request by Library Staff to cease any other activity or behavior that substantially interferes with other Library Users' ability to utilize the Library, or that substantially interferes with the delivery of services by Library Staff.

(x) Engaging in any conduct that violates the Library's [Unattended Personal Property Policy](#).

(y) Engaging in any conduct that violates the [Library's Tutoring Policy](#).

Section 4. Prohibited Activities - Level Two Offenses

The following shall be considered Level Two Offenses:

(a) Defacement, mutilation or destruction of Library books, materials, equipment, or facilities, including graffiti, cutting or removing pages or articles from Library books or magazines, defacing Library books or magazines, writing on Library furniture or walls, or other acts of vandalism to Library books, materials, equipment, or facilities.

(b) Removal or theft of Library books or other Library materials from Library Premises without proper authorization through established lending procedures, as provided in [Chapter 13, Article IV, Code of Ordinances](#) and the terms of use for library cards (and located on the [Library Website](#)). It shall not be a violation of this sub-section if the unauthorized removal of Library books or other Library materials is attributable to an omission or oversight by Library Staff.

(c) Refusal, upon leaving Library Premises, to allow a member of the Library Staff to conduct a limited and reasonable inspection of personal property under the Library User's control—including, but not limited to, a package, backpack, shopping bag, handbag, or other container—in order to determine whether the Library User has committed, is committing or is about to commit a theft of Library books, materials, or equipment. Library Staff may only conduct a limited and reasonable inspection of personal property under the Library User's control if the Library Staff member has an articulable, reasonable suspicion that the Library User has committed, is committing or is about to commit a theft of Library books, materials, or equipment. The following notice shall be prominently displayed at each entrance to the Library Premises:

WARNING – IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE THEFT OF LIBRARY BOOKS AND OTHER LIBRARY MATERIALS, LIBRARY STAFF RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CONDUCT A LIMITED AND REASONABLE INSPECTION OF PERSONAL PROPERTY UNDER A LIBRARY USER'S CONTROL, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, ALL PACKAGES, BACKPACKS, SHOPPING BAGS, HANDBAGS AND OTHER CONTAINERS BEING TAKEN OUT OF THE LIBRARY. ENTRY INTO THIS LIBRARY CONSTITUTES CONSENT TO A LIMITED AND REASONABLE INSPECTION OF PERSONAL PROPERTY UPON LEAVING THE LIBRARY.

In the event that a Library User refuses to allow a member of the Library Staff to conduct a limited and reasonable inspection of the Library User's personal property upon leaving Library Premises, Library Staff shall contact the Boca Raton Police Services Department in accordance with Section 1 of these Rules. With respect to this sub-section, Library Staff shall be limited to supervisory employees only.

(d) Creating any fire or open flame on Library Premises, including, but not limited to, lighting matches, using a lighter, or burning candles, incense, or pyrotechnics on Library Premises, except pursuant to an approved City special event permit.

(e) Harassing, sexually harassing, or stalking other Library Users or Library Staff on Library Premises. For purposes of these Rules, the term "harass" means to engage in a course of conduct directed at a specific Library User or Library Staff member which causes emotional distress to that person. The term "sexual

harassment" means uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature. The term "stalking" means to willfully and repeatedly harass a Library User or Library Staff member.

(f) Entering Library Premises before or after the operating hours of the Library, or entering Library Premises by a Library User that has been excluded from Library Premises in accordance with Section 6 of these Rules.

(g) Engaging in any other activity that constitutes a misdemeanor under federal or state law.

Section 5. Prohibited Activities - Level Three Offenses

The following shall be considered Level Three Offenses:

(a) Threats of physical violence or acts of physical violence against Library Staff or Library Users while on Library Premises. For purposes of these Rules, a "threat of physical violence" means a threat, by word or act, to do violence to a Library Staff member or Library User which creates a well-founded fear in the Library Staff member or other Library User that such violence is imminent.

(b) Engaging in or soliciting a sexual act on Library Premises.

(c) Exposing or exhibiting one's sexual organs in a vulgar or indecent manner on Library Premises. A mother's breastfeeding of her baby does not under any circumstance violate this subsection.

(d) A Library User convicted of sex offenses where the victim was under the age of 16 shall not be allowed in any area of the Library designated as a children's, youth, or teen area, or any area currently in use for a children's, youth, or teen program, regardless of whether the Library User is a Parent/Caregiver accompanying a child.

(e) Engaging in any other activity that constitutes a felony under federal or state law.

Section 6. Enforcement

Whenever a Library User is excluded from Library Premises, Library Staff shall provide the Library User with a copy of these Rules and a [Notice of Exclusion](#) which advises the Library User of his or her ability to appeal the exclusion in accordance with Section 7 of these Rules. However, the enforcement of these Rules shall not be affected by the refusal of the Library User to accept the Notice of Exclusion or if the Library User leaves the Library Premises before Library Staff can provide the Library User with a Notice of Exclusion.

(a) **Level One Offenses.** If a Library User commits a Level One Offense, Library Staff shall provide a verbal warning to the Library User to immediately cease the prohibited activity and advise the Library User that continued violation will result in access to the Library Premises being denied for one (1) week (7 calendar days). If the Library User continues to engage in the prohibited activity after verbal warning, the Library User shall be excluded from Library Premises for one (1) week.

(b) **Repeat Level One Offenses.** A second violation of any Level One Offense within a twelve-month period will result in a Library User being excluded from Library Premises for one (1) month (30 calendar days). A

third violation of any Level One Offense within a twelve-month period will result in a Library User being excluded from Library Premises for three (3) months. Library Staff shall provide the Library User with a verbal warning, as set forth in subsection (a) above, prior to issuing a [Notice of Exclusion](#) for a repeat Level One Offense.

(c) **Level Two Offenses.** If a Library User commits a Level Two Offense, the Library User will be excluded from Library Premises for one (1) month. A second violation of any Level Two Offense within a twelve-month period will result in a Library User being excluded from Library Premises for three (3) months (90 calendar days). A third violation of any Level Two Offense within a twelve-month period will result in a User being excluded from Library Premises for six (6) months. Library Staff shall not be required to provide the Library User with a verbal warning prior to issuing a [Notice of Exclusion](#) for a Level Two Offense.

(d) **Level Three Offenses.** If a Library User commits a Level Three Offense, the User will be excluded for one (1) year from the Library Premises. Library Staff shall not be required to provide the Library User with a verbal warning prior to issuing a [Notice of Exclusion](#) for a Level Three Offense. A second violation of any Level Three Offense at any time will result in a User being excluded from the Library Premises permanently.

Section 7. Appeal

(a) Request for hearing. A Library User may request a hearing to appeal a Notice of Exclusion by submitting a signed and completed [Hearing Request Form](#) (located at the bottom of the [Notice of Exclusion](#)) within **five (5) days** of the date of the Notice of Exclusion: (1) by mail to the Manager of Library Services, Boca Raton Public Library, 1501 NW Spanish River Blvd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (2) by hand delivery to a Library Supervisor at Boca Raton Public Library, 1501 NW Spanish River Blvd., Boca Raton, FL 33431 or 400 NW 2nd Ave. Boca Raton Florida, 33432; or (3) by email to brpl@myboca.us. Failure to make a timely request for a hearing within five (5) days from the date of the Notice of Exclusion will render the exclusion decision final. The filing of an appeal does not affect the enforcement of the Notice of Exclusion. Entry onto Library Premises for the limited purpose of personally delivering a Hearing Request Form shall not constitute a violation of a Notice of Exclusion.

(b) Appeal of exclusion. The appeal of a [Notice of Exclusion](#) shall be considered as soon as reasonably practicable by one or more members of the Library management team who have had no prior involvement in the exclusion decision. A decision on the appeal shall be rendered as soon as reasonably practicable and shall articulate the grounds for the decision in writing. The Library User shall be provided with a copy of the written decision, which shall be final.

Section 8. Adoption and Effective Date

These Rules were adopted by the City of Boca Raton on July 1, 2022. These Rules shall be effective immediately and shall supersede all previous Library Rules of Conduct.