Library Code of Conduct

The Madison County Public Libraries offer library services to all full- and part-time residents of and visitors to Madison County regardless of age, economic status, race, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation.

Library staff are committed to providing a safe and welcoming atmosphere for all library patrons, volunteers, and fellow staff. The behavior and use policies outlined below are designed to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy and to set expectations to ensure patrons, volunteers, and staff experience a comfortable, safe, healthy environment that supports appropriate use of library services and grounds.

This policy applies to all library patrons and/or persons on library property and in virtual library spaces when applicable. Any disruptive behavior is determined by library staff.

Personal Conduct

- Patrons are expected to wear appropriate clothing for a public place in the library. Attire should not be disruptive to the library environment.
- Patrons should keep smaller personal belongings and bags with them at all times. Personal belongings such as camping backpacks, luggage, etc. should not be brought into the library. Patrons should not block aisles, exits or entrances.
- Patrons are welcome to enjoy drinks in containers that can be closed throughout the libraries, with the exception of computer areas. Food is allowed only in designated areas with approval from library staff.
- Patrons are expected to dispose of trash properly in the correct receptacles.
- Children under age 10, or other persons needing supervision, must be accompanied by an individual 18 years or older who acknowledges responsibility for the individual and remains in their direct presence during the entire Library visit.
- Service animals, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), K9 officers, and animals invited by the library for special programs are welcome in the libraries. The term “Service animal” does not include an animal used or relied upon for well-being, comfort, or companionship. These animals should not be in the library.

Prohibited Behavior

- Lying on tables or floors, putting feet on tables or walls, and coming to the library for the purpose of sleeping is prohibited.
- Bathing, shaving, changing clothes, or other unintended uses of restrooms are not permitted.
- Campaigning, petitioning, or soliciting, including asking for money, for any purpose is prohibited. This includes the distribution of literature or posting notices without prior authorization.
- The use of all forms of tobacco is prohibited in the library including vaping and electronic cigarettes and other inhalants.

- Disruptive behaviors including, but not limited to noisy, boisterous actions, running, or loud talking (including loud use of cell phones and electronic devices), misuse of library property, uncooperative attitude, or actions that prevent the legitimate use of the library and its resources are not allowed.
- Harassment of staff and other patrons is not allowed. Harassing behavior includes, but is not limited to, staring at or following another person, unwelcome physical contact, abusive or obscene language, and verbal and nonverbal propositions.
- Damaging, defacing, or misusing any Library materials or property. This includes disabling or unplugging Library equipment, changing hardware or software, or using a Library computer for purposes not designated by the Library.

Illegal Activities

- Violation of Internet and Wi-Fi Usage Policy will not be tolerated. Patrons must comply with local ordinances, state, and/or federal law.
- No concealed or open carry weapons are allowed on library property. (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-415)
- Alcohol or illegal drugs may not be brought into the Library or onto Library grounds, nor may persons under the influence of either use the Library.
- Intentional damage or defacement of library materials or attempted theft of library property will be prosecuted according to NC General Statute § 14-398. Any library materials that are accidentally damaged or lost must be replaced by the patron responsible for such damage or loss.
- Disorderly conduct in public buildings or on the surrounding grounds or premises is a misdemeanor in accordance with NC General Statute § 14-132. Madison County policy states that the Sheriff's Department or Marshall Police will be contacted. NCGS § 14-132 also prohibits marking on, defacing, or injuring the walls of any public building or facility, or any statue or monument situated in any public place.

The rules set forth in this policy are in addition to, and do not supersede, the requirements and prohibitions applying to every person under state and federal laws.

All library staff members are required to apply this code in a fair and equitable manner for the benefit of all. The Library Director or designee is the final authority in regard to enforcement of this policy.

The consequences of misconduct may be any of the following: verbal warning, suspension of library privileges, or prosecution to the full extent of the law. Anyone refusing to leave the library premises when requested by library staff is subject to arrest and prosecution under trespass laws (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-134) of North Carolina. Patrons may appeal to the Library Board of Trustees for review of suspended privileges.

Approved by Board of Trustees, revised 9/16/2025