

Policy 60-1

Patron Responsibilities

The Grand Rapids Public Library welcomes everyone to use the library and its resources. In order to maintain a clean, safe, and comfortable environment for all of our patrons and staff, everyone accessing library buildings or grounds has the responsibility to:

1. Follow all local, state and federal laws:

This includes, and is not limited to:

- a. Children should not be left unattended.
- b. No trespassing, including non-public areas within library buildings.
- c. Smoking, vaping, or the use of related products is not allowed.
- d. No public intoxication.
- e. Clothing covering the upper and lower body is required in addition to shoes or other footwear.
- f. Do not display obscene materials or images.

2. Follow library policies and procedures about the use of library materials, services and property.

This includes, and is not limited to:

- a. Do not damage, vandalize, tamper with or improperly remove library property, including furniture and computers.
- b. Patrons may consume covered beverages and food in designated library spaces to help maintain the cleanliness of shared public spaces. The use or possession of alcoholic beverages is not allowed, except with prior approval of the library director.

3. Preserve the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of themselves and others.

This includes, and is not limited to:

- a. Refrain from disruptive or aggressive behavior, including verbal or physical fights or altercations.
- b. Do not use profane, obscene, violent, or injurious language. Hate speech is not tolerated.
- c. Do not damage, tamper with, or improperly remove property that does not belong to you.
- d. No sleeping is allowed on library property. Patrons who are sleeping or appear to be sleeping will be woken up to ensure their safety.
- e. Parents, caregivers, and other responsible adults are solely responsible for minors' usage of library materials, services, and spaces.
- f. Library access may be restricted in the event of disruptive personal hygiene.

4. Maintain a welcoming space for all patrons and staff.

This includes, and is not limited to:

- a. Do not ask other patrons for money or items nor attempt to sell goods or services to others.
- b. Do not bother or willfully annoy others.
- c. Do not make comments about other peoples' bodies or attractiveness.
- d. Do not use shared library space for personal grooming, including restrooms.

5. Maintain physical access for all patrons by keeping pathways clear.

This includes, and is not limited to:

- a. No sitting or laying on the floor except in kids/teen sections or while browsing lower shelves.
- b. All personal items and belongings should not be left unattended in public areas.
- c. All belongings should be stored out of the way and fit within designated GRPL guidelines.

Any person who does not adhere to these responsibilities may be asked to leave library property, be denied library privileges, or be banned from the library. Violation of local, state or federal laws may result in criminal prosecution.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

1a. Follow all local, state and federal laws: **Children should not be left unattended.**

Detail:

Patrons birth - 8 should be directly supervised in the library at all times.

Children 9 and older may use the library independently and do not need to be accompanied.

Children 15 years and older may supervise other children in library spaces.

Rationale:

GRPL is unable to directly supervise children.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

1b. Follow all local, state and federal laws: **No trespassing, including non-public areas within library buildings.**

Detail:

If a patron has been asked to exit library property by staff, failure to comply is considered trespassing.

Rationale:

Patrons are only asked to leave library spaces when they are behaving in an unsafe manner or negatively impacting the experience of other patrons or staff. Failure to comply creates or furthers an unsafe situation or a situation that negatively impacts other patrons' library experience.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

1c. Follow all local, state and federal laws: **Smoking, vaping, or the use of related products is not allowed.**

Detail:

Smoking, vaping, and related products must not be visible or used. This includes the charging of vaping equipment and rolling joints or cigarettes.

Smoking, vaping, and related products also cannot be used within ten feet of any GRPL location's front entrance and/or front steps.

Rationale:

Children are allowed in all shared GRPL spaces.

Enforcing rules around smoking, vaping, and the use of related products becomes particularly difficult if the products can be visible.

Having to walk immediately past or through smoking or vaping creates an unwelcoming environment for patrons.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

1d. Follow all local, state and federal laws: **No public intoxication.**

Detail:

Alcohol containers should not be visible in library spaces.

If a patron is intoxicated to the point of being unable to get out of a chair or exit the library on their own, Emergency Services will be called for medical assistance and the patron's library access will be modified for a period of time.

Rationale:

Enforcing rules around alcohol consumption and the use of related products becomes particularly difficult if the products can be visible.

GRPL takes reasonable steps to ensure patron safety and if someone is intoxicated to the point of being unable to walk safely, GRPL is unable to ensure their safety.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

1e. Follow all local, state and federal laws: **Clothing covering the upper and lower body is required in addition to shoes or other footwear.**

Detail:

Exceptions to footwear may be made for children under age 5 in children's sections only.

Fully unbuttoned shirts or jackets with no clothing underneath should be buttoned or zipped up.

Rationale:

The library is a public space and there may be materials or objects present that can cause injury. Appropriate attire helps to mitigate this risk.

Exposed feet can pose a health risk to other patrons.

A lack of clothing covering the upper and lower body can create an uncomfortable and/or unwelcoming environment for other patrons.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

1f. Follow all local, state and federal laws: **Do not display obscene materials or images.**

Detail:

Pornography is defined as genitals exposed and engaged in a sex act either alone or with others.

Pornography cannot be visible on GRPL computers, nor on patrons' personal devices.

Patrons are not asked to leave or banned for viewing nudity (as opposed to pornography) but patrons are asked not to view the materials in the library.

Rationale:

Kids can be present in any part of the library and GRPL must take reasonable steps to make sure kids do not view nudity or pornography at the library.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

2a. Follow library policies and procedures about the use of library materials, services and property: **Do not damage, vandalize, tamper with or improperly remove library property, including furniture or computers.**

Detail:

None at this time.

Rationale:

None at this time.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

2b. Follow library policies and procedures about the use of library materials, services and property: **Patrons may consume covered beverages and food in designated library spaces to help maintain the cleanliness of shared public spaces. The use or possession of alcoholic beverages is not allowed, except with prior approval of the library director.**

Detail:

Food can be consumed in the 3rd Level Atrium (the area overlooking the Lobby) of the Main Library and outdoor areas on GRPL property.

Covered beverages can be consumed in all GRPL spaces besides the Grand Rapids History Center on the Main Library's 4th Level.

Beverages may not be on tables in the Grand Rapids History Center on the Main Library's 4th Level. Patrons may not consume beverages while using special collections.

Exceptions may be made for kids and teens.

Discarded food packaging and other refuse should not be left behind, including in the 3rd Level Atrium and outdoor areas on GRPL property.

Lights are required to stay on in study rooms.

Rationale:

Many people use GRPL locations and spaces every day. Food and uncovered beverages can negatively impact the cleanliness of shared public spaces, which impacts other patrons' library experience. GRPL does not provide full janitorial services during all open hours.

Rules around food (and other prohibited items and behaviors) become practically difficult to enforce consistently if lights are off in study rooms.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

3a. Preserve the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of themselves and others: **Refrain from disruptive or aggressive behavior, including verbal or physical fights or altercations.**

Detail:

The Quiet Study Room at Main is designated as a space free of noise, including talking and phone calls.

In all indoor GRPL spaces, phone calls should not be on speaker.

In all indoor GRPL spaces, music or sound from media should not be audible for anyone other than the patron playing the music or media.

Rationale:

The Quiet Study Room is the only public space at Main designated as completely noise-free, so it is necessary to preserve quiet in the room even if only one person is there, as the presence of noise could dissuade someone from using the room for its intended purpose.

While GRPL is not aiming to facilitate a silent space (other than the Quiet Study Room), loud phone calls and media can be disruptive for other patrons.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

3b. Preserve the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of themselves and others: **Do not use profane, obscene, violent, or harassing language. Hate speech is not tolerated.**

Detail:

Violent language includes speaking disruptively about physically and/or sexually violent behavior. It also includes violent threats towards someone not physically present.

Hate speech is any kind of communication (speech, writing, or behavior) that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or group on the basis of who they are, which can include but is not limited to religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, color, gender, orientation or other identity factor (adapted from United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech).

Rationale:

Children are present in many parts of our spaces and may be in earshot at any time.

Violent language often creates an uncomfortable and/or unsafe feeling for people who hear it.

Violent language can be a precursor for physical violence and/or help escalate a situation towards physical violence.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

3c. Preserve the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of themselves and others: **Do not damage, tamper with, or improperly remove property that does not belong to you.**

Detail:

Theft results in a ban from all GRPL locations. If the stolen item(s) are returned, the ban will be significantly reduced.

Under no circumstances are patrons permitted to view security footage. If a patron has belongings stolen, GRPL staff will review security footage and communicate with the patron whose belongings were stolen. Patrons are encouraged to file a police report and provide GRPL with the police report number.

Rationale:

Reducing theft-related ban durations when items are returned incentivizes the return of stolen items.

Showing patrons security footage - especially in instances of theft or possible theft - can create a physically unsafe situation.

If GRPL has video evidence, the police report number helps match the evidence with the incident.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

3d. Preserve the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of themselves and others: **No sleeping is allowed on library property. Patrons who are sleeping or appear to be sleeping will be woken up to ensure their safety.**

Detail:

Covering one's face or closing eyes without sleeping is not permitted because it is indistinguishable from sleeping.

Emergency Services may be called if it is so difficult to wake a patron up that there is concern for the patron's safety or a patron's physical posture suggests a medical emergency may be taking place.

Rationale:

GRPL recognizes that not everyone has a safe place to sleep and depending on someone's personal circumstances, it may be difficult to stay awake in a quiet and physically safe space. We have to reconcile that reality with the responsibility to take reasonable steps to ensure safety. It can be difficult to definitively tell the difference between a nap and a medical emergency, so while GRPL staff will interact with patrons in a patient and respectful manner, it is necessary to wake patrons up if patrons are sleeping or appear to be sleeping.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

3e. Preserve the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of themselves and others: **Parents, caregivers, and other responsible adults are solely responsible for minors' usage of library materials, services, and spaces.**

Detail:

None at this time.

Rationale:

None at this time.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

3f. Preserve the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of themselves and others: **Library access may be restricted in the event of disruptive personal hygiene.**

Detail:

Examples of potential disruptive personal hygiene indicators include but are not limited to strong smells and visible or otherwise evident human waste on one's clothing.

Rationale:

Disruptively strong smells can create an unwelcoming environment for other patrons. Human waste can create unsanitary conditions for other patrons.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

4a. Maintain a welcoming space for all patrons and staff: **Do not ask other patrons for money or items nor attempt to sell goods or services to others.**

Detail:

None at this time.

Rationale:

None at this time.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

4b. Maintain a welcoming space for all patrons and staff: **Do not bother or willfully annoy others.**

Detail:

None at this time.

Rationale:

None at this time.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

4c. Maintain a welcoming space for all patrons and staff: **Do not make comments about other peoples' bodies or attractiveness.**

Detail:

This includes comments intended as compliments.

Rationale:

Comments about peoples' bodies or attractiveness can make people feel uncomfortable or unsafe, regardless of intent.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

4d. Maintain a welcoming space for all patrons and staff: **Do not use shared library space for personal grooming, including restrooms.**

Detail:

Prohibited personal grooming activities include but are not limited to bathing, washing hair, shaving, trimming finger or toe nails, and washing clothing or other belongings.

Rationale:

Personal grooming can cause health and safety concerns for other patrons.

Personal grooming can make it difficult to maintain cleanliness in shared spaces.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

5a. Maintain physical access for all patrons by keeping pathways clear: **No sitting or laying on the floor except in kids/teen sections or while browsing lower shelves.**

Detail:

This applies to study rooms and locations next to a power outlet, as well.

Laying on the ground is not permitted on exterior areas of GRPL property.

Sitting on stairs inside or outside of GRPL locations is not permitted.

Rationale:

Sitting or laying on the floor can negatively impact the physical safety of the patron on the floor.

Sitting or laying on the floor or stairs can create a tripping hazard for other patrons who may want to physically navigate the space. It may also deter other patrons from navigating the space altogether.

Laying on the ground can negatively impact the physical safety of the patron and can be difficult to differentiate from a medical emergency.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

5b. Maintain physical access for all patrons by keeping pathways clear: **All personal items and belongings should not be left unattended in public areas.**

Detail:

If belongings are left unattended inside a GRPL location, they are bagged up and brought to the Lost and Found at Main or the service desk at all other GRPL locations. In some instances a note is placed on or near the items and if the items are not removed by the patron by the date listed on the note, they are removed by GRPL.

If belongings are left unattended outside a GRPL location (on GRPL property), they are not brought indoors. Instead, a note is placed on or near the items and if the items are not removed by the patron by the date listed on the note, they are removed by GRPL.

Patron belongings limitations do not apply to library staff, contractors, vendors, or people facilitating programs.

Rationale:

Unattended patron belongings can physically impede other patrons' access to areas. Unattended patron belongings can also dissuade other patrons from entering into areas near the belongings.

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Patron Responsibilities Explained

5c. Maintain physical access for all patrons by keeping pathways clear: **All belongings should be stored out of the way and fit within designated GRPL guidelines.**

Detail:

All bags/containers/items, when combined together, must be no larger than 32" x 21" x 14" (the size of a large suitcase).

Walkers and other mobility-assistance devices are permitted and do not count against the 32" x 21" x 14" space, though any bags or items on the device do count. GRPL does not make a determination of whether or not someone is using a mobility-assistance device for mobility-related reasons.

Bedding is only permitted if it is contained (in a bag or tied up).

Bicycles and non-collapsible shopping carts are not permitted in the library. Bicycles are only allowed on bicycle racks. Skateboards, roller blades, roller skates, and scooters are allowed but cannot be used for transportation on library property.

Sometimes patron(s) will have a permissible amount of belongings but the belongings are in a walkway or otherwise blocking access for other patrons. In such instances, patrons will be asked to move the belongings to a place that doesn't impede someone's ability to navigate walkways or block access.

Rationale:

GRPL recognizes that it is sometimes necessary for patrons to have significant amounts of physical belongings with them when visiting the library. However, it is important that the library reconciles this need with the reality that other peoples' physical belongings can make it more difficult for patrons to physically navigate spaces or deter them from attempting to navigate the space altogether. Having specific limitations reduces subjectivity and promotes consistency.