



## CODE OF CONDUCT

Everyone has a right to expect and receive quality library service at the Wharton County Library. Each person has a right to receive that service in an atmosphere that is calm, quiet, safe and without disturbances from other patrons. The staff has a right to provide services without fear of abuse or threatening behavior from library patrons. This Code of Conduct sets out example behaviors but is not meant to be comprehensive.

### **Disruptive Behaviors Policy (Children and Adults)**

**Disruptive behavior is unacceptable in the Library.** Disruptive patrons will be asked to leave or will be removed. Library privileges of repeat offenders will be suspended. Police will be called if any illegal behavior occurs, or if staff feels threatened in any way.

### **Behavior that is unacceptable in the Library includes, but is not limited to:**

- Running or chasing, screaming, yelling, or shouting
- Talking loudly
- Pushing, hitting, fighting, or biting
- Prolonged crying or temper tantrums
- Bullying or bothering other people
- Foul or rude language
- Bringing food or drink into the library
- Poor hygiene (excessive dirt or odor)
- Threatening or abusive language or actions
- Constant, loud talking
- Assault (verbal, physical, or sexual)
- No weapons (knives, firearms, guns, rifles, etc)
- Littering, graffiti, vandalism, or destruction of the Library property
- Entry into restricted areas, such as administrative offices and staff workrooms
- Smoking, use of other forms of tobacco, or e-cigarettes
- Use of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Cell phone use inside the library
- Inappropriate use of Library Restrooms (grooming, bathing, or washing clothes)
- Leaving children unattended and /or failure to supervise children
- No filming, photographing or audio recording of children or patrons using computers

- No filming, photographing or audio recording of children, patrons or staff without their permission

**Safety:** Safety is of utmost concern at our libraries, and those concerns include any action by any person in the library which may cause harm to that person or to anyone else.

- All children are the responsibility of their parents, not the library staff.
- Children 6 and under need to be with an adult. Children 7 to 13 must have adult supervision in the library.
- Vulnerable adults with special needs must be accompanied by an adult caregiver.
- Program access may be limited by age.
- Service dogs must be under the control of the handler. Non-service animals are not permitted except as part of library educational programming.
- Obey safety notices, including parking signs and requests from staff.
- No running, climbing, or throwing.
- Keep your belongings with you.
- Shoes are required to be worn while inside the library

**Library Bans:** Library users may be asked to leave the library temporarily or permanently if their behavior is in breach of our Code of Conduct or the law. Individuals failing to leave when requested by library staff or by a law enforcement officer may be charged with criminal trespass under Texas Penal Code 30.05. Criminal activities that occur on library property will be reported to law enforcement. In most situations, an individual banned permanently from the library may appeal the ban to the Library Director. However, a library user who commits any criminal acts on library property may be permanently banned from all library locations and such evictions will not be subject to appeal.

### **Internet Access Agreement**

Internet access at Wharton County Library is provided as a public service to allow access to information beyond our collections. The Library can only assume responsibility for the information provided on the Library's website. <https://www.whartonco.lib.tx.us/home/index.php>

### **Illegal Behavior**

Illegal behavior will not be tolerated in the Library and police will be called immediately.

Illegal behavior includes but is not limited to:

- Vandalism of Library materials or facilities
- Removal of Library materials from the Library without checking them out

### **Disruptive Children**

The Wharton County Library provides a welcoming and safe environment for patrons of all ages. This environment requires respect for staff, other patrons, and compliance with the Library's Policies.

If the child is visiting the Library **WITH** a parent or guardian:

- Children who are being disruptive will be asked by the staff to behave
- If the disruptive behavior continues, a staff member should inform the parent/guardian that his/her child is disturbing others
- If the parent/guardian refuses to cooperate or is unable to control the child, he/she and the child will be asked to leave

Unattended children in the Library may become frightened, anxious, bored and restless which could lead to the disturbance of others and possible hazardous outcomes for children. Therefore, no child under the age of 13 will be allowed to be left inside the library unattended.

Library staff is not responsible for unattended children's safety and inappropriate behavior.

*Elene Genevani MLS, MA* \_\_\_\_\_ *December 21, 2021*  
*Wharton County Library Director*