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## Safety & Conduct Policy

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*Approved 07/24/2017*

### Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct is posted in each library and is available on our website. Visitors may be asked to leave the library temporarily or permanently if their behavior is in breach of the rules. It is the policy of the Library to ask groups of people to leave rather than trying to identify individuals in a group that are causing a disruption.

Individuals failing to leave when requested by library staff or 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, a customer banned from the library may appeal the ban to the Board of Trustees. However, a visitor who commits criminal acts on library property may be permanently banned from both library locations and such evictions will not be subject to appeal.

Because of the isolation of Laura's Library, minors who do not have transportation and are asked to leave should call a parent and wait on the bench inside the building until their parent comes inside to speak with a staff member.

### Safety of Children and Adults in the Library

It is the responsibility of parents to insure the appropriate behavior of their children in the library.

- Children under the age of six must always be in close proximity and within sight of the caregiver for their safety. Caregivers are required to attend library programs with their children at this age.
- Children aged seven and eight may be left unattended at library programs as long as the caregiver remains in the library building.
- Children and adults of any age with disabilities requiring assistance must be accompanied by a caregiver.
- If a child is left unattended and the parent has not been located within 15 minutes, the Sheriff will be notified. The Sheriff will take responsibility for the child.
- Under no circumstances will a staff member take a child out of the building or transport the child to another location.
- If a child of vulnerable age (8 or under) is not picked up by ten minutes after closing, the Sheriff should be called. Two staff members will remain within sight of the child inside the library until the parent or Sheriff arrives.



Regarding possible criminal behavior:

- If a person exhibits threatening behavior or has clearly violated the Texas Penal Code, staff should avoid further confrontation and the Sheriff should be called on 911. The Library Director and President of the Board should be notified immediately.
- If an adult visitor has witnessed criminal behavior, he or she should be encouraged to call the Sheriff.
- If a juvenile witnesses or is involved in criminal behavior, the parents should be notified. If the parents cannot be reached, the Sheriff's Department should be called and responsibility transferred to them.

### **Service Dogs (adapted from ada.gov)**

Service dogs which are trained to perform tasks for individuals with disabilities are welcome in the library. If someone comes into the library with a dog, staff may ask two questions only:

1. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has the dog been trained to perform?

Staff may not ask to see documentation for the dog, require the dog to demonstrate its task, or ask about the person's disability.

Service animals should be carried or on the floor, but not sitting on furniture. If a service animal behaves in a way that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, has a history of such behavior, is not under the control of the handler, or is not housebroken, that animal may be excluded. The library will still serve the patron without the animal present.

"Under control" means the animal must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered unless the device would interfere with the service animal's work or the person's disability prevents being able to use such a device. In this case, the person must use voice, signal, or other effective means to maintain control of the animal. Under control means the dog should not be allowed to bark repeatedly, but if it barks just once or barks because it is provoked, this would not mean the dog is out of control.

If a service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it, staff may request that the animal be removed from the library.

### **Other Animals in the Library**

The Library may choose to offer educational programs for the public that include various animals. Such animals are permitted in the library for the duration of the program and must be accompanied by the owner at all times. Other (non-service) animals are not permitted in the library.



Dogs may be leashed outside for brief periods so long as they do not block access to the library in any way, do not pose a threat to the health and safety of others, and do not cause a disturbance through excessive barking. The owner of the animal is liable for any damages or accidents involving the animal.

### Towing

Library parking lots are reserved for library visitors, volunteers, and staff. Any unauthorized vehicles may be towed at the discretion of staff.

### Signs

No person or entity, other than the Library District, may place or maintain a sign on District Property without approval of the Director or Board. Political signs advocating voting for a candidate may be placed on District Property in accordance with Texas Election Laws on days on which elections are held at the library, including early voting. Each candidate shall be limited to three (3) signs, which shall be no bigger than 2' feet by 3' feet.

The District, without prior notice to the owner of the sign, may remove and dispose of a sign that is placed or maintained in violation of this policy and may adopt additional rules and regulations to enforce this policy. If this policy conflicts with any other law or regulations, the more restrictive provision shall apply.

A sign is defined as an outdoor sign, display, light, device, figure, painting, drawing, message, plaque, poster, or other thing designed, intended, or used to advertise or inform.