

**DECATUR PUBLIC LIBRARY
SECURITY POLICY**

I. BASIC CONDUCT

Patrons shall be engaged in activities associated with the use of the public library while in the building. Patrons not engaged in reading, studying, or using library materials may be required to leave the building.

Any misconduct which is disturbing or disrupting to library users or staff, or that interferes with individuals who are using the library and its materials, is prohibited. In any case of misconduct, the police may be called and appropriate charges filed in addition to possible banishment from the library. Repeat offenders will receive progressively stricter treatment. Suggested penalties are in parentheses. Such misconduct may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- A. Any criminal activity, including fighting, dealing drugs, or possessing weapons. In these instances, police will be called and the individual(s) will be banned from the library for at least one year.
- B. Theft and/or destruction of library materials (banned for six months.)
- C. Harassing other library users and/or library employees verbally, or through threatening and/or sexual actions, including lewd exposure of the body (banned for six months).
- D. Loud and boisterous behavior, including use of profanity to other library users or staff

DECATUR PUBLIC LIBRARY SECURITY POLICY

Page 2

- F. Playing in, or with, the public elevator at any time (one warning, then asked to leave if behavior persists).
- G. Running in the library at any time (one warning, then asked to leave if behavior persists).
- H. Misuse of library furniture, including feet on chairs or tables, spinning of chairs, writing on tables, etc. (one warning, then asked to leave if behavior persists).
- I. Eating or drinking in the library except in staff room or meeting rooms, as arranged in advance (see section on "Food and Drink").

Police will be called if an individual or individuals are caught fighting, dealing drugs, possessing weapons, or engaging in other criminal activity. Individuals using profanity to library users or staff will be told to leave the building immediately. With other disruptions, the individual will receive one warning. If the behavior persists, he/she will be told to leave the library for the remainder of the day. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, the individual may be prohibited from using the library for a designated period of time.

DECATUR PUBLIC LIBRARY SECURITY POLICY

Page 3

- B. Distribution or posting of leaflets or other promotional material on library property is prohibited. Community groups may submit material to the Library Administration for approval; the material may then be displayed in the racks located in the library lobby area. If unauthorized material is found in the library, it shall be discarded. Particularly offensive materials (racist, sexual, homophobic, anti-religious) should be brought to the attention of Administration.

Surveys and petitions are not allowed in the library.

- C. Animals are not permitted in the library, with the exception of handicapped aide animals such as seeing eye dogs.
- D. Shoes and shirts must be worn at all times in the library.
- E. Sleeping in the library is not an activity associated with the use of the Library. If sleeping interferes with the use or enjoyment of the Library by others, the individual sleeping will be asked to leave the building. In that instance, staff member(s) will approach the individual and attempt to awaken him/her by saying "Sir" or "Ma'am" or tapping on a nearby table. Touching the individual should be avoided if possible. If the individual is ill, a staff member should call for help while another stays with him/her

DECATUR PUBLIC LIBRARY SECURITY POLICY

Page 4

table, one individual per single seat carrel, and one individual per chair. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of library staff on duty, only in the case of a special project or to facilitate access to specific library materials.

- G. The library is not responsible for personal belongings left unattended. Library users may not ask staff members to assume responsibility for personal items when they wish to leave the building for lunch, shopping, etc. Rather, they should be encouraged either to use the lockers located near the elevators, or to keep their possessions with them at all times.

III. STEPS FOR LIBRARY STAFF TO TAKE IN CASES OF MISCONDUCT BY LIBRARY USER(S)

Police will be called in all cases of alleged criminal activity.

- A. In cases of violent behavior, dealing drugs, and displaying weapons, library staff members are to distance themselves from the disruptive person(s) until authorities arrive; i.e., do not approach them, and keep other individuals away as well. The individual(s) involved will be subsequently banned from the library for at least one year.
- B. For most other offenses, library users will be approached by staff member(s) and given

DECATUR PUBLIC LIBRARY SECURITY POLICY

Page 5

When a disruptive person is told to leave, the library staff member must escort him/her out of the building personally, no matter how busy he/she may be at that moment; that is to say, if someone is told to leave from the basement level, staff on first floor will not be expected to "take over" once the person has come upstairs. If the individual refuses to vacate, he/she will be informed he/she is now trespassing and the security guard on duty should be alerted, or the police called if there is no guard. If the Librarian in Charge (LIC) is unavailable, any public service staff person may call police. In that case, the LIC should be notified as soon as possible that authorities are on the way.

A Patron Report (Library User Situation) describing any incident where users are asked to leave or police are called, must be completed as soon as possible by the guard and/or staff members most directly involved. It should be as thorough and detailed as possible and copies should be distributed the same day, if possible, or in the morning of the first subsequent working day in the case of an evening disruption.

IV. FOOD AND DRINK

Individuals in possession of food and/or drink in the library should be informed that eating

DECATUR PUBLIC LIBRARY SECURITY POLICY

Page 6

in a waste container in the building or take them outside; individuals may not "dispose" of food/drink by consuming it in the library. If the individual resists, he/she will be asked to leave the library for the rest of the day.

V. CHILDREN

Children under seven years of age must be under the supervision of a parent or other adult while in the library. If a child appears to be unattended or is being disruptive (running, screaming, disturbing other users), he/she will be taken to the caretaker adult by staff member(s), who will politely ask the adult to watch the child more closely. If the same child is found alone again, or if disruptive behavior persists, the adult and child will be asked to leave the building for the rest of the day.

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees
December 16, 1993
amended December 15, 1994