



Rules of Conduct

This policy is for application to those libraries within the City of Buffalo (Central Library, including the Washington Street Ramp and Ellicott Street walkways) and Buffalo Branch Libraries.

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (the "B&ECPL") serves as a public center for information, education-, and entertainment. Under applicable provisions of the New York State Education Law, including Article 5, Section 262 of such law, the Board of Trustees of the B&ECPL has adopted these Rules of Conduct to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all library patrons.

Library patrons are expected to:

1. Respect other patrons and library staff.
2. Respect library property and property of others.
3. Obey the law and all library policies.
4. Comply with all lawful directives and requests from library staff.

Failure to comply with these Rules of Conduct or any other established library policy, rule or regulation, or violations of local, state or federal law, may result in immediate suspension of library privileges, including removal from library property, and/or, where necessary, civil liability and/or criminal prosecution. Persons who enter or refuse to leave library property after being removed may be charged with trespassing.

The following are examples of prohibited conduct at all Buffalo libraries:

1. Engaging in disorderly conduct, fighting, challenging another person to fight or provoking others to violence;
2. Deliberately disturbing or annoying other patrons, staff or volunteers, including by engaging in noisy or boisterous activities, playing any audio device without earbuds;
3. Interfering with staff or volunteers in the performance of their duties or interfering with another patron's use of library materials or facilities;
4. Carrying weapons of any kind;
5. Vaping, smoking or otherwise using tobacco or marijuana products inside of the library, on the Central Library Access Ramp or within 100 feet of any entrances, exits or outdoor areas of the Central Library or its branches (in accordance with New York State Public Health Law Section 1399-O).
6. Possessing, distributing or consuming alcohol or illegal drugs or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
7. Engaging in sexual conduct, lewd behavior (e.g., exposure or inappropriate touching) or sexual harassment of another patron, staff member or volunteer;

8. Harassment or discrimination in violation of the B&ECPL Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Harassment Policy;
9. Making unreasonable use of the restrooms, including bathing;
10. Sleeping or lying down in the library;
11. Impairing the ability of patrons or staff to enter or exit the library; and
12. Skateboarding, rollerblading, roller-skating, bike riding, sitting on outer walls, or other potentially dangerous or destructive activities.

Adopted May 16, 2002 (Supersedes Rules of Conduct dated May 15, 1997 and Policy Governing Unattended Children dated April 21, 1988).

Amended February 20, 2003.

Amended September 28, 2006.

Amended June 14, 2012.

Amended May 21, 2015.

Amended October 20, 2016.

Amended December 21, 2017.

Amended October 18, 2018.

Amended May 16, 2019.

Reviewed by Policy Committee June 29, 2020 – no changes.

Reviewed by Policy Committee November 18, 2021 – no changes.

Amended April 21, 2022.

Amended September 15, 2022 (Incorporates superseded Central Library Access Ramp Rules dated November 18, 2021).

Amended April 18, 2024 per Res. 2024-8.