

CUSTOMER POLICIES

CUSTOMER CODE OF CONDUCT

Board Policy:

DATE REVIEWED: 08/28/2025

DATE APPROVED: 08/28/2025

EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/01/2025

REPLACING POLICY EFFECTIVE: 06/01/2024

The Board of Trustees of the Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) is responsible for establishing the rules for public behavior in the library and on the library's websites and other virtual presences necessary to:

1. Promote a safe environment for library customers, employees and volunteers;
 2. Protect the rights of individuals to use library material, facilities, services and websites;
 3. Create an environment that is conducive for library employees and volunteers to conduct library business without interference;
 4. Encourage the use of buildings, materials, services and resources by the greatest number of individuals; and
 5. Safeguard library property and facilities from harm.
- A. CML employees have the responsibility for maintaining the environment in the library and enforcing the established Customer Code of Conduct policy. Signage with reference to the Code of Conduct will be posted in all library facilities, and employees will make this policy available to library customers upon request.
- B. The following behaviors are prohibited by the Code of Conduct:
1. Improper dress, including bare feet and no shirt.
 2. Offensive odor.
 3. Storing personal belongings on library property, including leaving personal belongings unattended.
 4. Consuming food or beverages (in type or quantity) that are disruptive or damaging because of odor, waste or spills or eating or drinking outside of designated areas.
 5. Eating at public computers.
 6. Leaving children under age 7 unattended.
 7. Insufficient supervision of children resulting in acts disruptive to customers and staff.
 8. Bringing animals, other than service animals, into the library.
 9. Sleeping, if age 7 or older.
 10. Improper use of furniture, equipment or materials.
 11. Smoking, chewing tobacco or vaping in non-designated areas.

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12. Unreasonable noise including loud talking, singing, boisterous activity/cell phone use, or loud headphones or speakers.
13. Monopolizing/obstructing space, seating, tables or equipment, including restrooms.
14. Profane, obscene or abusive language.
15. Using public computers or Wi-Fi to access or view sexually explicit content that is inappropriate in a public setting and may be offensive, harmful to minors or create a hostile or intimidating environment.
16. Unwelcome conduct and/or unwelcome comments of a romantic or sexual nature, including, but not limited to, references to a person's body or physical appearance as well as requests for dates or personal information.
17. Gambling, panhandling or soliciting money, goods or services.
18. Use of the internet for unlawful purposes as defined by federal, state and local laws.*
19. Running, pushing, rough play or other disruptive physical activity.
20. Distributing/posting unauthorized printed materials. (Materials must be submitted to and approved by CML staff prior to posting or distribution.)
21. Personal grooming such as bathing, shaving or washing clothes on library property.
22. Failure to comply with applicable health and safety regulations as mandated or recommended by federal, state or local health officials.
23. Public urination
24. Intentionally damaging or destroying property belonging to CML, another customer or staff.
25. Possessing weapons or replicas of firearms, dangerous ordnance, explosive devices (including fireworks) or other items that a reasonable person would consider to be dangerous to themselves or others in a public library environment, excluding knives.*
26. Brandishing or using knives or other items in an unsafe manner that could reasonably result in personal injury or property damage.
27. Trespassing, including refusing to leave library property when asked.*
28. Theft of personal or library property.*
29. Inducing panic, including making false 911 or emergency calls.
30. Harassing or threatening customers or staff. Repeated or severe behavior and/or comments that are unwelcome, intimidating, hostile, offensive or threatening. Acts, statements, jibes, jokes, images or epithets which may reasonably create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.
31. Possessing or using drugs or alcohol.*
32. Actively distributing drugs or alcohol.*
33. Engaging in or soliciting any sexual act. Indecent exposure.*
34. Fighting, physical abuse or assault.*
35. Other acts disruptive to customers and/or staff.

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*Violation/incident type likely requires calling police in addition to addressing directly.

- C. CML staff are required to bring to an individual's attention any act or omission which violates the Customer Code of Conduct and/or related library policies. Assuming the behavior is not illegal and/or does not present an immediate threat to the safety and security of staff and customers, the individual will be asked to change their behavior to conform to library policy. If such a change is not evident or forthcoming, that individual will be asked to leave CML property.
- D. Depending on the severity of the violation, individuals who have been asked to leave may be suspended and barred from returning to any Columbus Metropolitan Library location for varying periods of time as outlined in the Suspensions Procedure.
- E. Any individual suspended from the library has the right to appeal the suspension by following the steps outlined in the Suspensions Procedure.
- F. Individuals displaying behaviors prohibited by the Customer Code of Conduct on library websites or other virtual presences will have their comments removed and/or their ability to participate suspended.
- G. CML staff may ask to inspect personal belongings when there is a reasonable suspicion that a theft of CML property has occurred or is occurring. CML does not detain customers for theft. Customers refusing to comply with the search are free to leave. Charges may be filed if there is evidence of theft.

Related Policies/Forms:

- Computer Security and Internet Access
- Photographs, Videos and Press Conferences
- Suspensions
- Unattended and Disruptive Children
- Weapons